

## **HANDY EQUIPMENT TO MAKE LIFE EASIER**

**NEWSLETTER JULY 2025**

I would like to recommend a couple of extremely useful gadgets; **seed starter trays** with lights and **self-watering pots** suitable for use in the polytunnel and green house. I can't claim credit for discovering these and would like to thank Maria, Trish, Jen and Lorraine. For years I have continued to use tried and tested methods, what one might call old fashioned but the early warm spring and subsequent hot weather has forced me to change my mind. My fellow plot holders are obviously much more innovative than me.

Seed starter trays are available in sets of five or ten seed propagation boxes, these include 12-cell insert trays, transparent covers, LED plant light switches, base trays, In addition, they have dinky plant tags and seedling tools. Some of them come with a top adjustable humidity and temperature switch. They keep the seedlings moist, reduce evaporation, allow heat to penetrate easily, and keep the soil temperature constant. The holes of the cell tray can drain excess water and prevent root rot.

Suitable for indoor germination, using a heated mat in the garage produced better results compared to growing on the kitchen windowsill. The seedlings grew strong and sturdy quite quickly and were easy to transplant.

Amazon has these for sale, prices are reasonable at about £15, money well spent.

The eco-friendly **Quadgrow Self-Watering Planter** has a positive impact on the environment by re-using water as it constantly feeds your plants, producing x2 bigger harvests. The kits are supplied with a plant feed, enough to make up 416 litres of liquid feed. They have been designed by horticulturalists to be perfect for: Chillies, tomatoes, beans, peas, peppers, and other tall cropping plants.

A set of three pots cleverly keeps your plants perfectly fed and watered for up to 2 weeks at a time thanks to the large reservoir and a feeder mat-controlled watering, so you raise healthier plants. The reservoir holds 30 litres which is more than able to cope with the heat wave conditions

we have suffered just lately. When growing in a polytunnel during the summer months with pots in water trays, they dry out quickly, so they have to be watered at least twice daily. These self-watering planters put an end to such intensive care.

An optional mulch cap & cane support kit can be useful, this provides a solid support for bamboo canes while the caps retain moisture and shield against weeds and disease.

Search [www.greenhousesensations.co.uk](http://www.greenhousesensations.co.uk).

Pricey but a good investment.

## **SOWING FOR AUTUMN CROPS**

Very often we can get some decent weather in the autumn months. Many crops can still be sown or planted this month and can be harvested until the first frosts. Personally, I will be hedging my bets and sowing directly in the ground but also sowing some at home just in case of failures. Here is a few suggestions:

Swiss Chard is an attractive and versatile vegetable. The tender baby leaves will brighten up salads, whilst larger ones can be cooked like spinach and their crisp leafstalks are a colourful addition to stir fries.

Runner beans and quick growing dwarf French beans are also ideal for harvesting sometimes as late as October; increase your yield by topdressing with a granular fertilizer such as Growmore, 70g per sq. m. (2oz per sq.yd.)

Hardy lettuce varieties, spinach, winter cabbages, broccoli, calabrese and oriental greens like Pak choi.

Swede and turnip, both like a firm bed. These can be harvested early when they are golf ball size as they are at their most tender then. All these do well as it gives them a head start before autumn.

Keep your seedlings well-watered especially in dry and hot conditions, also try succession sowings to extend your harvest season.

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY CANTEEN OPEN FROM 10AM TO 12 NOON**

**SATURDAY ONLY OFFICE OPEN FROM 10.30AM TO 12 NOON**

**A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS  
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**JOBS TO DO IN JULY**

**FRUIT CARE:**

When summer-fruiting raspberries have finished cropping promptly cut out the old canes.

If possible water tree, bush and cane fruit thoroughly once every 7 to 10 days during dry spells. Mulching will help them retain water. Keep large-fruited apples, such as 'Bramley's Seedling' particularly well watered to help to avoid problems with bitter pit.

Side-shoots that form on pinched-out grape laterals can be stopped at one leaf. Leaves that are shading grape bunches can be removed, to speed ripening of the clusters.

Thin apples and plums after the June drop if still overcrowded. Remove blemished and central fruits from the clusters first. Branches that are still heavily laden can be supported with a V-shaped stake.

Watch out for apple and pear scab, this shows up as large blackish spots on both the leaves and fruit.

Check **Codling & plum moth traps** and replace if need be. Codling moth damage shows up on apples as a single brown hole in the skin.

Coarse leaves, slightly enlarged buds, and reduced yield on blackcurrant bushes can be a sign of big bud mite or reversion virus. Unfortunately, the only cure is to dig them up and replace. There is a mite-resistant cultivar available, "Ben Hope".

Propagate blackberries and cane fruits with long, lax stems with tip layering.

**FLOWER/LAWN CARE:**

Deadhead roses and apply a small handful of **Rose Fertiliser as** this encourages further flowering. We sell economy 3kg bags. Alternately feed every fortnight with a high-potassium liquid fertiliser, such as tomato feed. Apply summer lawn fertiliser. If the weather is hot, set the mower at a slightly higher level than normal for early summer otherwise you end up with brown patches and grass under stress.

**SOW NOW OUTDOORS :** Chicory, Carrot, Endive, Lettuce, Turnips Spinach, Parsley, Radish, Fennel, Oriental vegetables, Spring Cabbage at the end of the month. **PLANT:** Winter Cabbage, Cauliflower, Savoys, Purple Sprouting Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts.

We will soon be ordering onions and garlic for Autumn Planting, seeds and Spring flowering bulbs for next year. Suggestions of different varieties are most welcome so please let us know by writing your requests on the list which is kept in the trading centre on the table by the seed racks.

**VEGETABLE CARE:**

Carrots can still be sown, but beware carrot fly when thinning existing seedlings. Use **enviromesh** to cover, only removing when weeding.

Last chance to plant out your leeks, dibbing them separately into a hole, an old broken spade handle is ideal for this job.

Beware of potato blight, it helps to keep your crop earthed as much as possible. Quick preventive action is the best method, if you are unfortunate enough to get blight, first cut off all growth above soil level and remove it from your plot, sealing any debris in a plastic bag. If the above ground growth has been removed early enough it is likely that the potatoes below ground will not have been affected by the potato blight, especially if you have previously earthed up your potato plants. Test the potato tubers by removing one from the ground. and cut it in half. If it is infected with potato blight the flesh will be stained brown and it will have started to rot.

Research from America claims that 250 to 500mg of Salicylic acid (aspirin) in 4.5 litres of water gives some protection against microbial or insect attack for plants in the nightshade family, including potatoes and tomatoes. Spray 2 to 3 times a month especially when periods of high humidity are forecast. It may well be worth a try, after all, aspirin are very cheap.

Don't forget to stop cordon tomatoes by removing the main shoot. Look for the leaf that's above the fourth truss and cut it off there. This should ensure that the fruits ripen by the end of the season. Leave bush varieties to their own devices. Keep an eye out for sunken brown patches of blossom end rot, this is caused by irregular watering.

Climbing beans may also need stopping to maximize cropping on the existing side-shoots. Stop them at the top of their supports. Beans also need sufficient water to help the pod set.

Mulching is essential to retain moisture. An easy mulch this time of the year is to use your grass cuttings.

**TRADING CENTRE OPENING TIMES - SATURDAY & SUNDAY 10.30AM TO 12.15PM SATURDAY 2.30PM TO 4.15PM.**