



October Newsletter

“October’s trees are like flaming torches lighting the way to winter.”

October normally accepted as the month of change and who knows what to expect after the changeable period we have over the past couple of months. Long range forecasts suggest that temperatures will remain in the mid-teens and with changes in climate patterns will the wet-dry-wet periods we have been experiencing continue. We are past the equinox and as autumn arrives can we expect the first frosts; on average the first frost in our area is around the third week in November but will this be pushed into December. Notwithstanding, it is now time to prepare one’s plot for winter and the new season. The nights are drawing in and the clocks go back at the end of the month leaving us less time in the evening to get all the jobs completed.

Time to select our seeds, potatoes, onions and shallots and peas and beans for next year. Kings Seeds catalogues along with the potato, beans and pea order forms are available at from the Store.

Seed orders to be returned to the Store by 8th October

When selecting your seeds it is worth thinking about next year’s show and those seeds which do well at exhibition have a red rosette along side the description e.g Tomatoes page 62 Maisey. This variety of tomato appeared on the bench at our show and also Harrogate; alternatively, page 63 Red Dragon I have grown this excellent tomato and won at our show for the last two years.

For those interested in growing long carrots as seen at the Show should consider purchasing James Scarlet Intermediate carrots on page 13 - they are only £1.10 and worth a try. I am going to write an article on growing long carrots in drainpipes and attempt to do so for a bit of fun, so please join in and see if we can grow some interesting carrots. As far as onions are concerned for really large/heavy onions one needs specialist seed but Globo(page 38) is an excellent choice for a decent sized and tasty onion.

The Annual Produce and Flower Show was once again a great success with some outstanding exhibits. The Show Hall was full with a similar number of exhibits as last year. Each individual section was well supported with the majority of exhibits(200) in Sections 1/2 Vegetables and Fruit. Classes one to three were particularly good with six exhibits in Class 3. Section 3 -Flowers was well supported with an increase in numbers of the dahlia exhibits, a change from last year with the inclusion of more dahlia classes. The introduction of the palette of flowers was a success and well supported. Once again the children class is provided us with a gathering of monsters and an army of gingerbread men. Our thanks to all who exhibited but it is worth noting that of the 31 exhibitors, four of them accounted 48% of the exhibits. For details of the awards follow this link: <https://www.northlincolnhorticulturalsociety.co.uk/annual-show>

There will be tweaks to the schedule for next year's show which I expect to be uploaded on the website in the next couple of months, so keep checking so as to plan your exhibits for next year's show.

Once again my wife and I visited the Harrogate Autumn Flower Show which was a real treat and given more credence with the excellent talk we had from Nick Smith, the Harrogate Show director in July. The show benches were teaming with vegetables and flowers with excellent displays from the many of the National Societies, both vegetable and flowers, along with stalls from many of the north's nurseries. The exhibits of giant vegetables continues to be interesting with the largest/heaviest onion beating the world record and weighing in at around 19lbs 8oz. In the Flower Hall the dahlias took centre stage well but there were some excellent chrysanthemums with one of our members winning the five vases of sprays along with the best vase of sprays in the Show. For further see our Facebook page. I particularly enjoyed looking at the vegetables and flowers noting the varieties that were popular on the benches and those I would need to source in order to grow this coming year many of which are available in the Kings Seed Catalogue.

Newby Hall and gardens were open and we both enjoyed wandering around the Hall and down the herbaceous border, one of the longest in the country.

October is a busy month for me as I prepare my chrysanthemums for the two National Chrysanthemum Shows I have targeted in November. The polytunnels are just about ready for housing the plants once the calyx has split and they are starting to show colour. Then the job of getting the flowers in the right condition for the shows begins. Also, October is traditionally when I start to sow my sweetpeas. I purchased six packs of Spencer type sweetpeas from Matthewman's sweetpeas whilst at the Harrogate Flower Show. These will be sown in root trainers in Clover compost, stopped at the two leaf stage and kept in the cold polytunnel/cold frame; but beware take precautions to prevent mice eating the seeds.

Most of your crops apart from those for overwinter should be being harvested now. Tomatoes will finally succumb to the cold even those under glass or in the poly-tunnel. Unripe tomatoes can be ripened on one's window sill, place a ripe banana with them which will aid ripening, this is due to the bananas giving off minute amounts of ethylene gas.

Now is the time to consider planting broad beans, garlic and onion sets. There are presently some excellent garlic bulbs at the Store ready to be either planted direct into the ground or in pots for planting out later. Garlic is an excellent companion plant acting as a deterrent for many species of aphid. Aquadulce broad beans are the variety to plant this month and they will give you a good crop of early beans before the dreaded black-fly become a problem. I will be sowing mine shortly for an early crop next year even though those sown last year were frosted January. I will make a second spring sowing, in pots, of a variety called Crimson Flowered; an excellent bean in short pods with as you might guess an attractive crimson flower. Shallots can be planted outside in prepared beds late this month or next. Early planting ensures that the shallots are growing strongly in late spring to ensure that the lengthening days trigger the formation of bulbs. Similarly, overwintering onion sets (Japanese types) planted in the autumn will be ready to harvest next June/July. These onions are what is classed as intermediate day length and hardy which is why they grow over winter and are usually bolt resistant. They start to bulb up when the day length is 12 hours (at the end of March) whereas the normal onions do not bulb up until the day length of 16 hours which is usually in June.

Those of us that plan to plant Japanese type onions from sets for over winter should read our special written article entitled 'Growing Onions from sets'.

Link: <https://www.northlincolnhorticulturalsociety.co.uk/articles>

Shallots, beans, onions and garlic are available form the Store.

October Tips:

Remove all the dead leaves from the Rhubarb, clear the bed up and make it tidy, then fork over the soil round the crowns and apply manure. You have then finished with the bed until you want to start forcing in the spring.

With brassicas, remove any yellow leaves as these are of no use to the plant and will encourage diseases to develop and attracts slugs. With Brussels sprouts, earth up a couple of inches and tread the soil firmly so winter storms don't cause windrock which damages the roots. In expose sites it's worth staking the sprouts. If they get shaken by strong winds, apply high nitrogen liquid feed fortnightly to compensate for any root damage.