



## May Newsletter

In the middle of May comes the tail of winter.  
Beware of the "Ice Saints"

We aim to publish Newsletter four times each year with a special separate Newsletter covering the Annual Produce and Flower Show. We welcome newsworthy features, comments, articles, recipes etc these should be forwarded to the Secretary [nlhssecretary@gmail.com](mailto:nlhssecretary@gmail.com) or the Chairman [mal.nlhschair@gmail.com](mailto:mal.nlhschair@gmail.com)

### Stop Press:

Long Leys Allotments. The Long Leys Residents Association have submitted a Community Right to Build on ten allotment plots. If approved then the Council need to decide whether or not to apply for disposal. Long Leys allotments are statute allotment and any application for disposal needs to be agreed by the Secretary of State. We have submitted a paper to the Council opposing the disposal of these plots which has been supported by the National Allotment Society.

The use of slug pellets containing Metaldehyde are banned from use as of the 1<sup>st</sup> April. However, Sluggo whose active ingredient is ferric phosphate an iron compound which also occurs in nature is a methaldehyde-free formulation, gentle to bees, hedgehogs, pets and the environment. Sluggo is available from the Store.

### Society News:

The Society held our AGM on 6<sup>th</sup> April which was well attended. The Committee were re-elected on block and the all officers remain in post: Chair Mal Reynolds, Dep Chair/Treasurer Dave Seal, Secretary Ingrid Seal. Following the AGM there was a buffet and a talk by Mick Poultney on composting and his no dig method related to raised beds. Throughout the talk Mick emphasised the chopping of green vegetation into smaller pieces that compost quicker, the inclusion of shredded paper and the covering of the compost with carpets to encourage worms. Please note under one's tenancy agreement the use of carpets on allotments is not allowed. Corrugated cardboard is an excellent substitute which encourages worms and is useful as a balancing compost ingredient.



It is always worthwhile making ones own compost incorporating plenty of manure as a good way of dealing with green waste, leaves and shredded paper/newspapers etc. However, one should be careful not to include grass cuttings after an application of lawn weed and feed as the weedkiller used in grass fertiliser may well remain active. One should be careful when using compost made from green bin waste as to its contents.

## **Society Events**

Our next social event is the Summer Solstice Evening and buffet to be held at the Store garden on the 24<sup>th</sup> June starting at 1900hrs. Booking for the buffet is required.

Plants will be sold from the Store as and when ready for sale. Members spare plants are welcome - thank you.

Keep your eyes open for emails and on the web-site for further details on both the above events.

The Annual Flower and produce show is only some 20 weeks away, doesn't time fly! Make sure you have the 10<sup>th</sup> September marked in your diary. Our vegetable judge Peter Booker is giving a talk on 27<sup>th</sup> July on the preparation of vegetables for show. As condition, uniformity and appearance feature in the point system when vegetables are being judged this talk could well put your exhibits in the cards.

## **On the third day comes a frost - a killing frost!**

If planting out just be aware that the average date for the last frost in the Lincoln area is between 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May. However, don't be complacent and let the 'Ice Saints' catch you out. There are three Saints whose names are associated with a cold snap in May, St Pancras( as of railway station fame), St Servatius and St Mamertus. Their chilly collective names come from the traditional belief that their saint days, 11, 12 and 13 May, bring cold weather and the last frost of the year. So keep an eye on the weather forecast and be ready to wrap up your tender plants.

## **Understanding NPK**

The three most essential elements that plants need to grow are Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium (N, P, and K). These are collectively known as the 'Gold Tripod.' Other essential elements are most often found in sufficient quantities in the soil but soil is seldom found to contain N, P and K in sufficient quantities. Should any one of these three elements be missing it will adversely affect plant growth. These three elements help plants grow in different ways and an understanding of this will help when choosing the correct fertiliser for the development of a plant.

N,P and K are the three elements that form the basis of most fertiliser mixtures and are found in composts. An equally balanced fertiliser may contain 7% Nitrogen, 7% Phosphorous and 7% Potassium( sometimes described as Potash). This would be



## *Stop Press*

### **Summer Solstice Evening and Buffet 24<sup>th</sup> June**

**The Store Garden from 7pm**

**Booking for the buffet required**

labelled 7:7:7 Growmore is such a balanced fertiliser and most useful as a top dressing; however, the advantage of applying a liquid fertiliser is that the nutrients are immediately available to the plant.

#### **Nitrogen the N in NPK**

Nitrogen is used by plants to produce leafy growth and essentially plants that produce a lot of leaves such as cabbages need nitrogen the most. Discolouration or a yellowing of leaves and stunted growth is an indication of a shortage of nitrogen. As nitrogen is washed out of the soil by rain it is best to apply nitrogen at stages throughout the growth period.

#### **Phosphorous in NPK**

Phosphorous is essential for seed germination and root growth. Root vegetables such as carrots, parsnips etc need a plentiful supply of phosphorous to develop well. A shortage of phosphorous is evident from a low yields, stunted growth and a possible purple tinge to leaves. Phosphorous remains in the soil for up to three years and the application of a balanced fertiliser should be sufficient however a top dressing during growth may be helpful.

#### **Potassium in NPK**

Potassium promotes flower and fruit production and is vital for maintaining growth and assisting plants resist disease. Potassium increases the build up of starches and sugars which are vital for vegetables and fruit to crop well. It is also naturally found in wood ash which when spread around fruit bushes aides growth and fruit production. A shortage of potassium is evident in poor cropping, a lack of disease tolerance and leaf scorching. Similar to 'P' Potassium remains in the soil for up to three years but is applied as a liquid feed especially for tomatoes which value from a high potash feed when cropping.



The value of seaweed extract.

Seaweed contains high levels of plant growth stimulants and when combined with a balanced NPK fertiliser produces stronger and healthier plants. Maxicrop(5:5:5) used both as a foliar feed and root drench, and Bloom and Magic compost meet these criteria.

## News from the Hive



The bees have managed through the winter and are now enjoying the warm April weather. In winter, they don't hibernate but huddle together eating the honey stored from last year. They will need about 40lbs to see them through to Spring with nothing available until early flowers appear. By flexing flight muscles in the cluster, they can generate a temperature of 25°C in the hive whilst it is freezing outside.

The number of bees in the hive has been steadily increasing since February and with April's warm weather, have begun to store honey. An extra honey box called a super was added to the top of the hive in the first week of April and now 3 weeks into April with it almost full, a second one has been added. If the warm weather continues, we could have honey very soon. The picture

shows a bee working apple blossom for pollen...look for the pollen basket on this back legs...and for the nectar.

Nectar is often as much as 95% water and so back in the hive the bees have to evaporate much of the water before its thick enough to be called honey. They need to change the sucrose to glucose by using enzymes in the honey crop. If you have dandelions near the apple trees they will go for that since it's a better source of nectar.....so if you want a better pollination of your apples, cut the dandelions.

The next step in their life cycle is swarming so I'll be on the look out from now on and hopefully try to be one step ahead of the bees! More on that next time.

Best wishes

Queenie

## Bakewell tart:

During my teens our family lived in a small village close to Bakewell and one of our favourite desserts was mother's version of Bakewell tart. The origins of Bakewell tart are disputed between the Rutland Hotel and Ye Old Bakewell Tart shop which is well worth a visit. Their 'original version' is delicious!



Mum's Bakewell tart Ingredients:  Pastry case 4oz butter or marg 4oz sugar 4oz ground almonds Raspberry Jam Vanilla essence optional 3 eggs	Recipe:  Slowly melt the butter and sugar together. Cool slightly and stir in the 3 beaten eggs with the vanilla essence. Spread the raspberry jam on the base of the pastry case. Pour the batter into the pastry case and bake at fan 160 for 30 minutes or until firm.
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## Society Contact Details

If you wish to contact the Society try one of the following:

Mal Reynolds:  
[mal.nlhschair@gmail.com](mailto:mal.nlhschair@gmail.com)

Ingrid Seal: [nlhssecretary@gmail.com](mailto:nlhssecretary@gmail.com)

## Key Dates for 2022

**Summer Solstice**  
**Evening** - 24th June 1900hrs  
**Annual Show** - 10<sup>th</sup> September

**Store Opens** - 29th January

**Store Closes** - 12th November

