

Leominster Allotment Association Newsletter – January 2021

Dear plot holders,

Firstly, L.A.A. Would like to send you their best wishes for 2021.

Because of the current Covid situation the proposed January committee meeting was cancelled.

Consequently, any updates and information will be included in this newsletter.

- **Vacant plots-** There are 6 vacant plots.
- **Number of people on waiting list for plot.** 24 people are on the waiting list.
- **Former recycling area** -The Council intend to get a quote to scrape the former recycling area and remove the bulk into a skip so that this area can provide more plots.
- **When can the compost loo be reopened?**
As there is no facility to clean this and hand gel should not be kept in the toilet as it is flammable, it is difficult to put a time on this at the moment.
- **The progress in researching the possibility of a toilet for the disabled?**
A suggestion regarding a type that doesn't require connecting to mains was looked at and the Projects and Grants Officer will be asked to investigate funding.
- **New Notice board for Allotment site.** A larger board that will be more fit for purpose will be installed. There have been a couple of suggestions for where this could be situated, including by the main gate because all use this for access. However, the preferred option is on the Community Shed as there is plenty of room to safely read the notice board and it is felt that a Community Area is the appropriate place for sharing community news.
- **Appointment of a new Environmental Services Officer.** The person who holds this post helps manage the Allotment site for the Town Council. This vacancy will be advertised in January 2021 and it is hoped that the successful applicant will be able to commence employment in March 2021 (Allowing for the fact that they may have to give notice to their current employee.)
- **Kings Seed Catalogue orders.** A big thank you to John Braithwaite for organising this. Also, a thank you to Jane Lacey for her assistance. The orders should arrive by the end of January and details of how they can be safely distributed will be given via FB, the Allotment website and a notice on the Allotment notice board.

See message below from Kings

Dear NAS Members and Seed buyers,

We are writing to assure you that we are doing everything we possibly can to ensure all members receive their Kings Seeds orders as soon as physically possible. The number of orders that we have received this season is unprecedented – double the usual rate. We therefore have double the orders but, to comply with social distancing rules and to keep our staff safe, we only have half the number of staff. We have been unable to take on extra staff, something we would have done under normal circumstances.

All our staff are wearing protective masks and visors whilst picking orders, which means they need to have extra breaks so they can remove their masks for short periods.

*We are just grateful we have not been told to close as many industries have and do understand your frustration, but I can honestly say we are working 7 days a week and very long hours. **In order to concentrate on existing orders, we are not presently accepting new orders via the website or telephone, we will review this in 2 weeks' time.***

Kings employees' safety is our priority and if it were possible to keep them all safe but take on extra staff I certainly would.

*Tracy Palmer, Managing Director
Kings Seeds*

- **Partnership with Leominster in Bloom** – Many people will have appreciated all the effort that L.I.B volunteers have put into creating lovely floral displays to enhance our town. L.I.B is supporting The Meeting Place and Echo Priory to plant the Priory Car Park with a variety of vegetables and flowers. If any plot holders have spare seedlings or plants, they could donate for this cause than I am sure they would be much appreciated. In order to do this please contact 01568 612047 or 07803350631

Leominster Allotments Community Garden Apple Trees.

Did you know that in 2017 a variety of heritage apple trees with M26 dwarf rootstock were planted in the Community Garden? Below is some information about these varieties.

- ❖ **Pitmaston Pineapple (Dessert apple) Tree nearest to the Community Greenhouse**
There are conflicting stories surrounding the origins of this old English russet apple. One version is that it was raised around 1785 by Mr White, who was steward to Lord Foley of Stoke Edith, Herefordshire. It is thought to have come from a seed of Golden Pippin. Another story is that it was raised by John Williams of Pitmaston in 1825. It is resistant to scab and has small golden apples, produced prolifically and packed with flavours of pineapple and honey. The tree is moderately vigorous, with a good bushy habit and pretty blossom. Its season runs from mid-October to December and it tends to crop every other year, as is the case with many apple trees.
- ❖ **Early Victoria (Cooking apple-1899)**
The Early Victoria (also known as Emneth Early) produces an early season cooking apple. It originated from Cambridgeshire in the late 19th century. It is good for cordons & espaliers. It crops in August and the apples will store until the end of September. It bakes to a fluffy puree and has a mildly sweet flavour. It was often grown to be used for jam making.
- ❖ **Crimson Queening (Dessert apple- 1831)**
This apple was first recorded in **1831** but is thought to be much older. This is a Herefordshire variety that is also known in this area as "Quoining." It has been given this name because the apples are medium sized, a long-conical shape and very irregular with prominent ribs or angles. (In the building trade an angle is known as a quoin, hence the name). The apple has a crimson flush and bright red stripes over a pale greenish yellow skin. Generally, it is smooth skinned but with some russet patches. The apples should be harvested in early September and they will keep for a month.
- ❖ **Caroline (Dual purpose apple – 1800's)**
This apple can be used as a sharp/bittersweet cider apple when it hasn't ripened or as a dessert apple when ripe. Dating from before 1822, this apple is said to have originated in the garden of the second Lord Suffield of Blickling and Gunton Hall, Norfolk and was named after his wife, Caroline, Lady Suffield. The apples ripen in October to November. They are very sweet, firm and juicy, medium sized, with pink to red stripes.
- ❖ **Golden Noble (Cooking apple - 1820)**
This variety was discovered in an old orchard on a country estate in Norfolk in 1820. The apple is medium sized and golden yellow when ripe. The apples are long lasting and can be picked from September to January (Some people use it as a dessert apple as it is relatively sweet and juicy.) It is ideal for apple sauce or puree because of its taste and texture when cooked.

Thanks to John Braithwaite for providing information about these different varieties. Hopefully, the trees will be covered with blossom this spring.

Proposed meetings and Future events subject to Covid 19 situation

March – Weds 3rd

May – Weds 5th A.G.M.

July – Weds 7th

September – Weds 8th

Friday October 8th Harvest Supper

November - Weds 3rd

No doubt we are all looking forward to happier times ahead with the arrival of Spring, the start of a new growing season, and being lucky enough to continue enjoying our Allotment site.

From LAA Committee