



Magazine issue 11
September 2026

Dear Fellow Allotmenters,

In many ways this month can be regarded as the start of the new gardening year. Now is a good time to take stock of the successes and failures of this year and make plans to ensure that next year will be the best ever. Also, if you are starting out from scratch you will have plenty of time to prepare the ground whilst planning your dream allotment.

If managed properly, an allotment can produce enough food to supplement a family's weekly shop, with fresh fruit and vegetables over the year. Allotment gardeners can choose to garden organically and avoid ingesting chemicals that are likely to be present on shop bought fruit and vegetables.

As many new plot-holders discover, growing vegetables requires acquiring new knowledge and skills and the satisfaction gained from eating their first home grown tomato or new potato makes them taste even more delicious!

Thanks for reading,

Gareth Richards (Treasurer)

Elizabeth Flats Allotments, Plot 14

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What to Grow

September is a great time to sow a variety of vegetables that thrive in cooler temperatures. These crops either mature quickly for autumn harvests or overwinter for an early spring start.

Spinach – Perfect for autumn sowing, thriving in cool soil. Fast-maturing varieties like 'Bloomsdale' will give quick yields.

Radishes – Rapid growth (25–35 days), making them an excellent late-season crop.

Collard Greens – Hardy and sweeter after a touch of frost; ideal for overwinter growing.

Kale – Sow now for continuous harvests through autumn and winter.

'Cavolo Nero' is a popular, cold-hardy choice.

Broad Beans – Sowing now allows strong root systems to establish before winter, giving earlier spring harvests.

Arugula (Rocket) – A fast-growing leafy green, perfect for quick cut-and-come-again pickings.

Pak Choi – Grows quickly in cool weather, providing crunchy leaves and stems in just a few weeks.

Mustard Greens & Land Cress – Great hardy salad options that can keep you harvesting even in the cold.

Spring Onions & Shallots – Sow hardy types now for an early start next year.

Fruit Tasks

Pick apples and pears – Harvest when the fruit parts easily from the branch. Store undamaged fruits in a cool, frost-free shed.

Harvest raspberries, strawberries, and late blueberries – Picking keeps plants producing until frosts.

Prune summer raspberries – Cut down fruited canes at the base and tie in new growth.

Complete summer pruning of apple and pear trees – Trim back side shoots to encourage fruiting spurs.

Protect fruit – Wasps are at their peak. Pick ripe fruits

promptly, clear windfalls and consider traps in trees. Remember wasps eat aphids and caterpillars.

Greenhouse and Polytunnels

Sow oriental veg and hardy greens- mizuno, pak choi, lamb's lettuce and winter spinach thrive now and provide fresh leaves into Spring.

Keep feeding tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers- weekly high potash feeds should support final harvests.

Remove lower tomato leaves- improves airflow and helps remaining fruit to ripen.

Store chillies by threading stalks on to strong cotton or wire and hanging in a warm airy place.

Clean before winter- wash glass , scrub benches and clear debris to reduce pests and diseases.

Deadhead and cut back – Dahlias, cosmos, rudbeckias, and marigolds will flower until frost with regular attention.

Plant spring bulbs – Get daffodils, crocus, and hyacinths in the ground. Hold tulips until November.

Divide congested perennials – Lift and split clumps of irises, hostas, and daylilies.

Plant late-flowering perennials – Sedums and asters provide nectar for pollinators well into autumn.

Leave sunflower seedheads – They provide food for birds.

Pest & Disease Watch

Wasps – Particularly troublesome around ripening fruit. Pick fruit as soon as it's ready and clear windfalls quickly. Hang wasp traps if needed, but remember they also eat aphids and caterpillars.

Cabbage white butterflies & caterpillars – Still active on brassicas. Check plants daily and remove eggs (yellow clusters on leaves) and caterpillars by hand. Netting

helps keep them at bay.

Whitefly in greenhouses – Clouds of tiny white insects can weaken tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers. Use sticky traps, good ventilation, and wash leaves with insecticidal soap if infestations build.

Slugs and snails – Autumn rains bring them back in force. Protect young seedlings with beer traps, copper barriers, or organic pellets. Check under pots and boards where they hide.

Leek moth and allium leaf miner – Both can attack leeks, onions, and garlic this month. Look for white mining trails or distorted leaves; cover with insect-proof mesh if you've had problems before.

Carrot fly – Late flights can still damage crops. Lift carrots promptly or use fleece/mesh to protect them.

Powdery mildew – Common on courgettes, marrows, and squashes as nights cool. Remove badly affected leaves and water plants at the base to reduce stress.

Blight on potatoes and tomatoes – Warm, wet spells can trigger outbreaks. Remove and dispose of infected foliage immediately (do not compost).

Planning Ahead

Collect seeds – Save from your best plants, dry, label, and store

Plan next year's crop rotation – Reduces soil-borne disease and balances nutrients.

Set up cloches or cold frames – Protect late sowings and extend the season.

Prepare sheds and tools – Waterproof, organise, and oil metal parts to prevent rust.

Think About Wildlife

Feed the birds – Set up feeders to attract natural pest-controllers.

Build habitats – Bug hotels, log piles, or a hedgehog house will encourage beneficial wildlife

Leave some seedheads – Teasels, sunflowers, and thistles provide food and shelter.

Final Thoughts

September is a month of transition. As harvests continue, focus on clearing, storing, and sowing. Protect vulnerable crops, enrich the soil, and start making plans for next year. With thoughtful preparation now, your allotment will glide smoothly into autumn and be ready to burst back into life come spring.

Puzzle Corner

Flowers

H	B	S	I	M	I	K	H	Y	D	R	A	N	G	E	A	L	A
Z	G	T	R	H	W	E	S	K	L	L	H	R	O	S	E	J	P
B	L	U	E	B	E	L	L	H	L	P	J	E	M	T	B	L	E
M	A	L	V	A	H	O	I	F	I	Y	O	B	R	E	S	M	N
A	B	I	A	V	M	I	J	L	P	R	Z	P	S	Y	U	O	D
G	C	P	F	V	S	T	B	G	A	O	Q	S	P	H	N	P	A
N	G	W	R	E	A	E	M	I	N	V	V	U	D	Y	F	A	I
O	H	Y	U	R	O	N	B	Z	S	G	E	H	E	D	L	Z	S
L	U	Q	I	B	A	S	D	S	Y	C	C	N	K	M	O	L	Y
I	T	U	B	E	R	O	S	E	E	P	U	L	D	R	W	U	N
A	Z	M	L	N	L	I	L	Y	A	M	I	S	A	E	E	R	T
S	V	D	Q	A	K	J	I	R	N	A	A	F	Q	V	R	D	O
J	L	U	E	L	O	R	C	H	I	D	E	L	P	T	E	H	N
K	Y	O	P	T	I	B	C	H	B	S	R	V	L	G	U	A	H
R	S	E	T	P	U	D	A	F	F	O	D	I	L	O	S	L	T
N	A	R	D	U	V	P	A	N	I	L	L	A	H	Z	W	I	M
L	D	S	F	V	S	C	A	R	N	A	T	I	O	N	S	A	E

DAHLIA

HYDRANGEA

MAGNOLIA

MALLOW

ORCHID

LAVENDER

PANSY

TUBEROSE

LOTUS

BLUEBELL

VERBENA

TULIP

CARNATION

POPPY

ROSE

DAFFODIL

DAISY

LILY

SUNFLOWER

HIBISCUS



BASKETBALL

U	H	F	I	N	R	O	B	O	N	T	Y	X	C	A	S	E	J
X	N	Y	L	U	H	I	N	V	B	A	M	E	C	N	U	C	B
S	N	A	N	A	U	C	T	R	E	O	X	U	Y	P	B	Y	A
G	D	O	A	H	Y	A	H	Y	A	R	C	A	L	J	L	A	S
F	O	U	L	Y	N	U	T	E	S	C	O	R	E	U	U	O	K
T	M	R	S	U	E	X	P	S	I	O	U	T	Y	X	R	V	E
O	E	I	L	S	G	H	P	C	C	N	R	O	B	A	L	L	T
T	D	S	D	R	I	B	B	L	E	R	T	A	Q	V	N	S	B
B	H	S	H	O	B	A	U	U	B	E	C	H	I	A	S	I	A
A	V	O	N	T	Y	X	N	J	Y	A	R	T	H	E	H	C	L
L	O	T	O	R	B	O	M	P	H	S	L	E	S	P	O	A	L
U	J	A	B	P	E	C	P	Y	A	U	J	A	L	X	O	B	H
I	N	N	A	C	A	P	N	R	O	S	N	M	S	N	T	Y	Y
R	K	H	H	X	C	L	U	H	R	C	S	O	P	H	E	E	Y
I	I	N	D	U	N	K	O	U	T	F	L	V	E	B	A	R	X
C	E	A	M	V	I	N	I	D	R	E	B	O	U	N	D	A	L
D	C	H	A	R	T	R	E	U	X	U	J	A	B	U	A	N	E

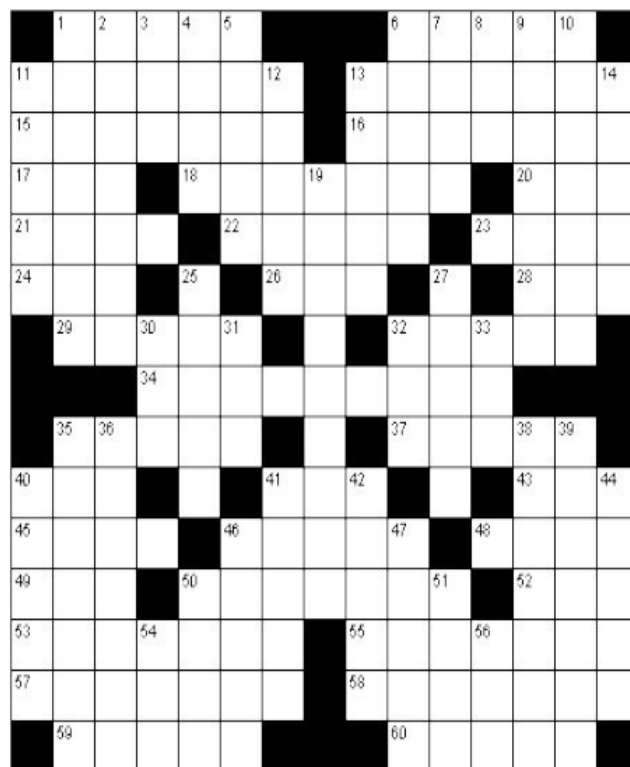
HOOP
COURT
BALL
SHOOT

SCORE
REBOUND
LAYUP
DUNK

DRIBBLE
PASS
FOUL
TEAM



Crossword no.1



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ACROSS

1. Pierces
6. Falsified
11. Pair
13. Illegitimate
15. Oxygenates
16. God of the sea (Roman mythology)
17. Chinese revolutionary
18. Bothers
20. Advice columnist ____ Landers
21. Sea eagle
22. Gardening tools
23. Mid-month days
24. Collection or series
26. So far
28. Mineral-bearing rock
29. Round wooden rod
32. Fortune tellers
34. Restate
35. Arab country in northeast Africa
37. Jaunty rhythms
40. Glass container
41. A measure equal to 16 feet
43. Gremlin
45. Fertilizer ingredient
46. Anagram of "Noted"
48. Whirlpool
49. Anger
50. Argumentative
52. Prefix indicating recent or new
53. Bastion
55. Give forth
57. Foes
58. Fails to fulfill a promise
59. Coarsely ground hulled corn
60. Stitched

DOWN

1. Uttered obscenities
2. A city in Ontario Canada
3. A king of Judah
4. The two of them
5. Smudge
6. Hurries away
7. Mountains in Europe
8. A set of tools
9. South American country
10. Main meals
11. Makes docile
12. An analytic literary composition
13. Cove
14. Taut or rigid
19. Body frames
25. Tearful
27. Abominable snowmen
30. Sardonic
31. Illuminated
32. Actor ____ Mineo
33. Snake-like fish
35. A piece of jewelry
36. One who welcomes
38. Adolescent
39. Precipitated as a mixture of rain and snow
40. Liquid from fruit
41. Boils
42. Dissuade
44. Flat masses of floating sea ice
46. Tall woody plants
47. 10 cent coins
50. Assemble or modify written material
51. Walking stick
54. French for "Friend"
56. Not old

Link to Brimsmore Garden Centre

We have a Gold Club discount deal with Brimsmore Garden Centre.

They offer all member's 25% discount on Spring bulbs for sale in October and then again a second deal for anything at the Centre that is not on special offer which can be used as many times as you want during January and February.

I have used it for compost in the past and the savings are quite good on your pocket. You can have the items delivered which is free within the Yeovil area or you can pick your items up at the Garden Centre.

Brimsmore Garden Centre website address :

<https://store.thegardensgroup.co.uk>

Email : brimsmore@thegardensgroup.co.uk

Telephone no. : 01935 411000

Address : Brimsmore Gardens
 Tintinhull Road
 Yeovil
 Somerset
 BA21 3NU

Where we meet

Johnson Park, Coronation Avenue, Yeovil. BA21 3DX

as well as

Brimsmore Gardens, Tintinhull Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 3NU

We generally meet twice a month. The last Thursday of the month is reserved for a committee meeting. We discuss all things related to the Association and deal with any matters arising.

We meet at 8pm on these nights in the lounge bar at Johnson Park Sports and Social Club. They have a car park

Minutes are recorded by our Secretary. The Chairman opens the meeting and directs us through the running order and as well as site supervisor's input there is a monthly Treasurer's report.

The other meeting night is a more social event and this takes place on the 1 Thursday of the month. We can invite a speaker, you can buy a drink at the bar and there is a raffle normally run by Phillip.

Three times a year on the Wednesday of the month we meet at Brimsmore Garden Centre for our social. We meet in the Apple Tree restaurant at 6.30pm. Some tea and biscuits are available for free. We try to have a guest speaker at these events or a talk on a garden topic and a raffle run by Phillip's wife.

These three events replace our said Thursday social meetings at Johnson Park.

Your annual membership card gives you the time and dates of meetings for the year ahead. Our membership night for renewals is every March and again a discount night is offered for any garden centre items which are not on special offer.

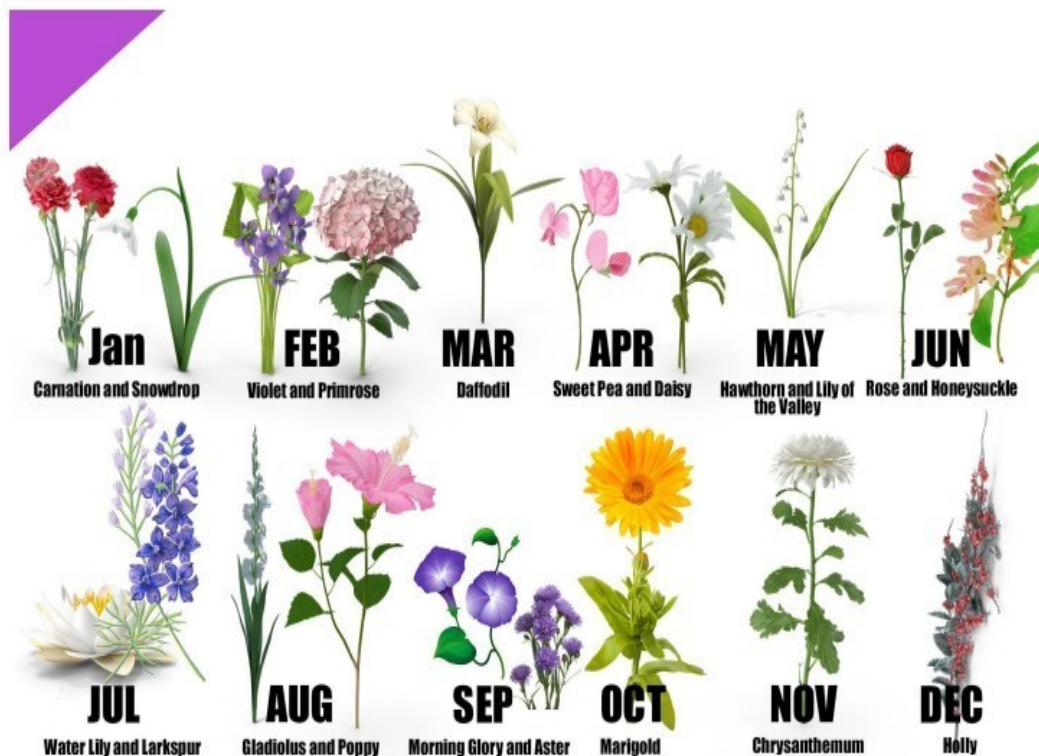
King Seeds - Top Tips for Seed Sowing

- Use seed sowing compost, not multi-purpose. Multi-purpose compost often contains too much feed which can damage or kill young seedlings before they grow.
- Water with fresh tap water. Avoid using saved rainwater for seeds and young seedlings, as pathogens can build up in water butts and containers which can affect germination. Rainwater is fine to use on established plants.
- Maintain the correct temperature. Ensure the seeds are kept at their ideal germination temperature.
- Monitor the water levels. Some composts may appear dry on the surface but are moist beneath. Certain seeds such as peas and beans tend to rot off if they are overwatered, yet if they are too dry, their seed coats may not break down properly, preventing germination.
- Water the drill directly when sowing outside during a dry spell. It is important when sowing seeds direct into the allotment soil when the soil is dry, to always water the seed drill first before sowing. Draw out the seed drill, then give a thorough watering so the base of the drill is really wet, then leave to drain for a few minutes before sowing the seed onto the wet soil. Once sown, the seed is then covered over with the dry soil, which traps the moisture below where the seeds need it to germinate. This is a far better method than constantly watering overhead with a rose on a can, which will evaporate with the sun or drying winds and put a hard cap over the soil, making it much harder for the seedlings to push through.

Solution

	S	T	A	B	S				F	A	K	E	D			
T	W	O	S	O	M	E			I	L	L	I	C	I	T	
A	E	R	A	T	E	S			N	E	P	T	U	N	E	
M	A	O		H	A	S	S	L	E	S			A	N	N	
E	R	N	E		R	A	K	E	S			I	D	E	S	
S	E	T		W		Y	E	T		Y			O	R	E	
		D	O	W	E	L		L		S	E	E	R	S		
					R	E	I	T	E	R	A	T	E			
		E	G	Y	P	T		T		L	I	L	T	S		
J	A	R		Y		R	O	D		S			E	L	F	
U	R	E	A		T	O	N	E	D			W	E	E	L	
I	R	E			E	R	I	S	T	I	C		N	E	O	
C	I	T	A	D	E	L			E	M	A	N	A	T	E	
E	N	E	M	I	E	S				R	E	N	E	G	E	S
		G	R	I	T	S					S	E	W	E	D	

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12 Birth Month Flowers

The 12 Birth Month Flowers are something I have just found and I thought I would introduce it as a little homage to those associated to the birth of a baby.

The Birth Flowers for September are the Morning Glory and Aster. Although most Allotmenters grow fruit and vegetables, some of you will grow flowers as well.



Morning Glory



Asters

Morning Glory

Morning glory, *Ipomoea tricolor*, is a frost tender annual climber that bears beautiful, exotic-looking, colourful flowers on fast-growing twining stems clothed with heart-shaped green leaves. Morning glories usually have to be grown from seed as ready-grown plants are rarely available. The name 'morning glory' comes from the plants' flowering habit – saucer-shaped blooms open early and just for a day, fading by mid-afternoon in hot weather. Many flowers are borne in succession, so this plant makes a lovely display for months, flowering through summer and into early autumn. The blooms are up to 8cm across and come in a range of varieties and colours of which the best-known is 'Heavenly Blue', which bears azure-blue, white-throated flowers, with purple, red, pale blue, and bi-coloured flowers also available.

Morning glory can grow up to several metres high or can be limited to the height of its support to around 1.5-2m.

How to grow morning glory

Sow morning glory seeds in early spring and grow on in a warm well-lit spot indoors or in a heated greenhouse.

Harden off young plants before planting in early summer with a suitable support on which to climb. Keep evenly moist, feed when in flower, and deadhead to encourage more blooms. Pull up and compost plants at the end of the season.

Morning glory needs plenty of sun and a sheltered site in order to grow well. It makes an excellent container plant either outside in the garden or indoors in a conservatory or porch. Grow this versatile climber on a range of supports – either free-standing obelisk-type supports, a trellis or next to an established shrub or conifer so the morning glory scrambles through it.

Sow seed in early to mid-spring as morning glory needs a long growing season. Before sowing, soak seed overnight in tepid water to soften the hard seed coat. Sow seed 1cm deep in pots of moist seed compost and place in a warm spot – ideally a propagator – to germinate. Once the seedlings appear, move to a warm well-lit windowsill or greenhouse, out of draughts, to grow on, supported individually by thin canes as the young plants soon start to climb. Transplant into individual small pots and continue growing indoors until late May or early June. Before planting out, harden off (acclimatise gradually to the outside) over a period of two weeks.

Plant three to five morning glory plants spaced evenly around a large pot, ideally a minimum of 30-40cm wide and deep. Part-fill the pot with a good, peat-free multi-purpose potting compost, then gently remove each plant from its pot by turning it upside down with fingers spread across the surface of the compost, so as to keep the root ball as intact as possible. Place the young morning plants in the large pot, fill the gaps between the root balls with compost and firm gently. Water in to settle the compost around the roots and top up if it settles to leave any gaps. If using a free-standing support, put this over the plants.

Gently remove the individual canes and wind the stems onto their support.

Water as required to keep the compost evenly moist but take care not to overwater.

Check once or twice a week to ensure the stems continue to twine up their supports. Occasionally they may need a little training to grow in the right direction.

Start feeding every 10-14 days with a liquid fertiliser high in [potash](#) once the first flowers appear.

Removing faded and dead flower heads to encourage more blooms.

Growing morning glory: problem solving

Yellowing or white-tinged young leaves indicate cold conditions, especially when plants are small. Ensure their growing environment is warm, free from cold draughts, and if growing on a window sill, bring plants into the room at night when drawing the curtain,

Aphids often attack the young leaves and shoots. Inspect plants regularly and then gently hand-squash small infestations to prevent numbers getting out of control.

Varieties of morning glory to grow

- *Ipomoea purpurea* 'Grandpa Ott' - an heirloom

variety hailing from Bavaria. Its flowers are an intense violet-blue, with a pinkish throat and star-shaped veining

- *Ipomoea purpurea* 'Star Of Yalta' - bears deep purple

flowers with rich red veins forming a star shape from the centre to the petal tips

- *Ipomoea tricolor* 'Heavenly Blue' - bears large sky-

blue trumpets with clear white and yellow throats

Advice on buying morning glory

- Morning glory is usually only available to buy from seed and is rarely available as ready-grown plants.

Asters

Asters are in the daisy family, and most of the varieties grown in the UK are perennial, meaning they come back every year. They generally flower in late summer and autumn, which gives them their common name Michaelmas daisy. Asters are ideal for growing in mixed borders, with grasses and other prairie-type perennials. In botanical terms there are two main types of aster – North American and European. Most North American species come under the name of Symphyotrichum or *Eurybia*, but many people still refer to them as asters.

Asters are a great transition plant, bridging the seasons from summer to autumn. Their bright, daisy-like aster flowers make a colourful splash and provide a rich

source of nectar and pollen for late-flying insects. Many varieties also make good cut flowers.

Grow asters in dappled or partial shade, in any type of soil, although slightly moist soil (that never dries out) is preferable for species prone to developing powdery mildew. Asters can also be grown successfully in containers, again, preferably where the soil remains slightly moist, or choose European asters, which have greater resistance to powdery mildew.

When to plant asters

Asters in containers are best planted from March to early May. They can be planted in the summer, but will need far more watering than those planted earlier in the year. Asters are also available to buy in the winter as bare-root plants. These tend to be cheaper and they should be

planted as soon as possible, provided the ground isn't frozen or waterlogged.

How to plant asters

Asters are easy to plant. Plant them as you would any perennial, ensuring they have plenty of space to grow and keeping them well watered as they establish. Some asters work well as ground cover, while other varieties can grow up to 2m tall. Most asters don't need staking, but some of the tall varieties may need staking in windy areas.

Deadhead aster flowers to keep them looking good and to encourage more blooms to form. Cut aster plants back hard after flowering in late autumn. In midsummer, pinch out the top shoots to encourage flowers.

Asters in pots will need regular watering, but plants in the ground should only need watering in prolonged dry periods. They respond best to a good watering when the soil is dry, rather than frequent light watering. Asters do not grow well in damp and waterlogged soils. Asters don't generally need feeding, but adding an organic mulch in spring is beneficial.

Overwintering asters is straightforward provided the ground doesn't become waterlogged in winter. Many of the asters grown in the UK are hardy down to -20°C, but the combination of wet soil conditions and cold winter temperature can kill them. Asters in containers should be brought into a frost-free place overwinter.

How to propagate asters

Increase your stock of asters by taking softwood cuttings between April and August (bear in mind that the process

from taking cuttings to having flowering plants can take over two years).

Remove non-flowering shoots, cutting them down to a few centimetres in length, and then remove the lower leaves. Push each cutting into a pot of moist but gritty compost. Cover with a clear polythene bag or pop the pot in a propagator. Check the compost regularly and ensure it doesn't dry out, so the cuttings have the best chance of taking root. Pot the cuttings into individual containers at the first signs of growth (after about six to eight weeks). Plant the young plants out in spring and they will flower the following year.

Asters can also be propagated by division. Usually after around three years, the clumps are large enough to divide. Simply dig up and halve or quarter the clump with a sharp spade. Replant the clumps immediately into their new positions and water well.

Pests and diseases

Mildew is a common problem among many aster varieties, particularly the North American varieties. Keep plants well-watered and don't let the soil dry out, but also look for varieties that are more mildew-resistant.

European asters, including *Aster amellus*, *Aster pyrenaeus* and *Aster x frikartii* are all mildew resistant, as are *Eurybia x herveyi*, the Japanese aster, *Kalimeris incisa*, and *Symphyotrichum* 'Little Carlow'.

Advice on buying asters

- Choose your aster flowers carefully – if you have drier soils then opt for European or certified mildew-resistant varieties
- Always check plants for signs of damage or disease before buying or planting

- Asters are available to buy from garden centres and nurseries but you'll find a wider selection from specialist nurseries and online

Outreach Project Update

The 4th Library visit is over with and we are currently on to our 5th visit there. We have a couple of more display visits to go and then I will start planning next years.

I am supporting The SoH charity myself with a donation. Although the committee could not help financially, our support will be in the form of advertising their work through our website.

The Annual Show has come and gone. It was a success and a great thank you to everyone involved on the day, especially the show entrants who had a difficult time this year with the above average temperatures.

I have secured the keep me forever trophies and category winning medals. This year the trophy presentation is part of our AGM on the 1st October.

Everyone is entitled to attend, especially our trophy winners. So hopefully I will see many of you there!

Spotlight on Fruit and Vegetables

On these next few pages I will be spotlighting fruit and vegetables and with this in mind I have chosen a vegetable. For this magazine issue, I have picked the Leeks and something earlier in the season Broad Beans.

Just to re-iterate all my work is taken off gardening websites and allotments magazines. I have only had an allotment for three years so bringing knowledge to the readers is wholly an exercise in already published work.

I have used a lot of the Gardener's World website and the RHS website and NAS magazines to bring all of their printed wisdom onto these pages.

The more experienced of you will probably already know the words written or will know their meaning in practice.

So let's start the ball rolling with the Leek.

Leeks

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sow			S	S								
Plant				P	P	P						
Harvest	H							H	H	H	H	H

Leeks are a delicious [vegetable](#) with a long season and will provide food from August through the winter. The long, blanched stems, also known as shanks, can be eaten young and tender, or allowed to mature. Leeks are great in soups, steamed or stir-fried.

How to grow leeks

Sow seed in pots or modules of peat-free seed or multi-purpose compost in spring. Keep pots moist and plant out in summer, either individually, using a dibber, or in small clumps. Harvest leeks from autumn. Some varieties are hardy and can be harvested right through to spring.

Growing leeks from seed

You can sow leek seeds directly into well prepared soil and thin them later. However, the more reliable method is to sow into pots and transplant seedlings when they are about 20cm high. It's also possible to buy seedling leeks from nurseries or by mail order.

Planting out leeks

Leeks need a sunny, sheltered site with well-drained, well prepared soil with plenty of added manure or fertiliser. To plant the traditional way, make a hole with a dibber, 20cm deep, drop a seedling in and water in. This method, called 'puddling in' will produce large single leeks with well-blanched stems. But you can also plant in small clumps.

Tending leeks

Keep plants well watered, especially during dry spells and keep weed-free with regular hoeing or with a thick mulch – this will also help retain moisture.

Harvesting leeks

Depending on which variety you're growing, your leeks will be ready for picking from summer onwards. Use a fork to lift leeks singly or in clumps without disturbing neighbouring plants. Leeks can be left in the ground until you are ready to use them. Once harvested, they will store in the fridge or a cool larder for a couple of weeks.

Preparation and uses

Leeks are a classic soup ingredient but they are also a delicious accompaniment to winter dishes such as roasts, stews and pies. To prepare leeks, they will need a thorough cleaning to remove the soil, and the outer leaves can be discarded.

Looking for inspiration on how to use your leeks? Our friends at olive have curated a delicious collection of [leek recipes](#), including a comforting chicken and leek pie.

Growing leeks: problem solving

Leeks are prone to leek rust and to onion family diseases such as allium moth and allium leaf miner. These last two can weaken the plant and allow more damage from fungal and bacterial infections to take hold.

Leek varieties to try

Leek 'Musselburgh' – a reliable mid-season leek, with good flavour and texture. A good cropper, it is also very hardy and has good resistance to rust

- Leek 'Pandora' – an early variety, with long regular stems, this can be harvested from September to January.
- Leek 'Lyon prizetaker' – a heritage revival, with large thick stems that will last through the winter.
- Leek 'Toledo' – a reliable leek with long stems and dark leaves, that can be harvested from late November-late February. It has been awarded the prestigious RHS Award of Garden Merit.
- Leek 'Sprintan F1' – a very early cropping leek, ready to harvest from late August through to November, with good resistance to leek rust.

Broad bean

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sowing	S	S	S	S						S	S	
Plant			P	P								
Harvest					H	H	H	H				

Jobs to do each month:

- **March or April:** sow seeds indoors or outdoors
- **May:** plant out plants sown indoors
- **May to August:** harvest pods
- **October and November:** sow hardy varieties suitable for autumn sowing

Home-grown broad beans (*Vicia faba*) are delicious and wonderfully tender, and one of the first crops of the year. They're easy to grow from seed, yielding green pods of green or white beans that can be used in salads, stews and soups. They don't take up too much space and can be grown in the ground, in raised beds and in large pots. You can also buy young plants in early spring.

How to grow broad beans

Sow [broad beans](#) outside in spring or autumn, 20cm apart, in rows 60cm apart. If you live in a cold area, have heavy soil or a problem with mice, sow seeds under cover first, and plant the young plants out six weeks later. Pinch out the tips of plants to prevent blackfly, and stake taller varieties to stop them collapsing under the weight of the beans. Harvest when the pods are just 6cm long, for the most tender beans.

How to sow broad bean seeds

Broad bean seeds are large, so they're very easy to sow. Hardy varieties, such as 'Aquadulce Claudia', can be sown in autumn (October or November) for an early crop the following May. Spring sowing is generally more reliable, especially in heavy clay soil, which can lead to the seed rotting before germinating. Sow in March or April for harvesting in summer.

How to sow broad beans outdoors

1. Before sowing, fork plenty of compost or manure into the planting area, then rake the surface to a fine, crumbly texture
2. Mark out 5cm deep drills, with about 20cm between each, or sow as double rows 60cm apart
3. Sow the seeds, 5cm deep
4. Cover the seeds with soil, firm it down and water in well
5. In case of cold weather, cover with horticultural fleece or cloches

Sowing broad beans indoors

If you live in a cold area, have heavy or waterlogged soil, or have a problem with mice (which eat the seeds), then it's a good idea to sow broad beans in deep pots or modules indoors.

1. Fill small pots or modules with peat-free multipurpose compost
2. Place one seed in each pot or module, 5cm deep
3. Place in a cool, frost-free place, such as a cold frame or unheated greenhouse, and they should germinate within three weeks
4. Plant out after six weeks, when the roots have filled their pot

How to plant out broad bean plants

If you started off your broad beans in pots, they will be ready to plant out once the roots have filled their pots. Plant around 20cm apart and water in well.

How to care for broad bean plant

Cover the newly sown area with netting to protect the seeds from birds and squirrels. Seedlings should appear in a few weeks, depending on the weather and soil conditions.

Water regularly once you see flowers appear, and hoe between the rows to keep weeds down.

Pinching out the growing tips as soon as the flowers appear will help to prevent attacks of blackfly.

Taller varieties of broad bean need supporting with canes and string – place strong supports at the end of each row, and then wrap rows of string around them, 30cm apart, to support the plants. Be sure to put in the supports in while the plants are still small.

How to harvest broad beans

If you want to eat broad beans in their pods, harvest them really young (when they're about 6cm long) before they have the chance to become tough or bitter. To eat them shelled, wait a little longer, until you can clearly see that the pods are bulging with beans.

After harvesting, leave the plants in the ground for as long as possible. Like other legumes, broad beans have nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the nodules on their root system, which boost nitrogen levels in the soil. The crops you grow in this area in the following year will reap the benefits.

How to store broad beans

Cook broad beans fresh, or prepare them for freezing by blanching in boiling water for three minutes then plunging into a bowl of cold water to stop the cooking process.

Preparing and using broad beans

The fresh pods can be eaten whole like mangetouts when young, or the beans can be left to mature inside the pods.

Growing broad beans: problem solving

Blackfly / black bean aphid

Blackfly multiply into dense colonies on the soft, young shoot tips in spring, and can stunt growth. Pinch out the tender shoot tips once the first flowers appear – this should reduce the problem considerably.

- [Advice on dealing with aphids](#)

Pea and bean weevil

Pea and bean weevils are a nuisance but rarely a major problem on the veg patch. The larvae live in the soil and feed on the root nodules. Then when the adults emerge in June and July, they climb up the plants and eat the edges of the leaves. Thankfully, these 4mm-long, brown, snout-nosed beetles rarely cause severe damage. The plants easily survive, unless they are small and seriously infested. Pick off any beetles that you see.

- [Deal with pea and bean weevil](#)

Broad bean chocolate spot

This fungal disease causes reddish-brown spots all over the plant. It is particularly common on plants sown in autumn, in damp, humid weather, or in plants that are crowded close together. It can cause loss of flowers (and therefore beans) and can cause the whole plant to collapse. There is no chemical control available so try to maximise air flow around plants, remove any weeds, and bin or burn any infected material – do not add to the compost heap. Do not save or store seed from infected plants.

Advice on buying broad beans

- Broad bean seeds are widely available in garden centres and online
- If you want to sow in autumn, check that you are buying a variety that is suitable for autumn sowing
- Also check the height and spread – some dwarf varieties are suitable for growing in pots
- You may find young broad bean plants on sale at the garden centre or online in early spring

Broad bean varieties to grow

Broad bean 'Aquadulce Claudia' – very hardy, so the best variety for autumn sowing. Long, slender pods and white beans

Height x Spread: 1m x 45cm

Broad bean 'Crimson Flowered' – a heritage variety with very attractive crimson flowers, followed by short, upright pods. Can be grown in the ground or in a container

H x S: 90cm x 45cm

Broad bean 'Bunyard's Exhibition' – sweet and subtly flavoured, with a delicate texture

H x S: 1.2m x 45cm

Broad bean 'Masterpiece Green Longpod' – sweet, nutty flavour and high yield

H x S: 90cm x 45cm

Broad bean 'Stereo' – beans have tender skins and are good as a mangetout-type crop if picked young

H x S: 1.2m x 45cm

Broad bean 'The Sutton' – dwarf variety, so a good option if you're short on space or growing in pots

H x S: 30cm x 30cm

Broad bean 'Witkiem Manita' – an early cropper, producing large, well-filled pods

H x S: 1m x 45cm

How to Contact the Editor

If you have comments or you know I have given wrong advice then please contact me by email at

gareth.richards@yeovil-allotments-association.co.uk

If you have something to contribute or have a say on allotment life, then please use my email to send your contributions.

I am going to process the magazine issue once a month, so if there are comments you would like to make they can be answered in future editions.

I would like to add that most of the articles are taken off the web and some well known gardening and allotments magazines have been read in the making of our magazine content.

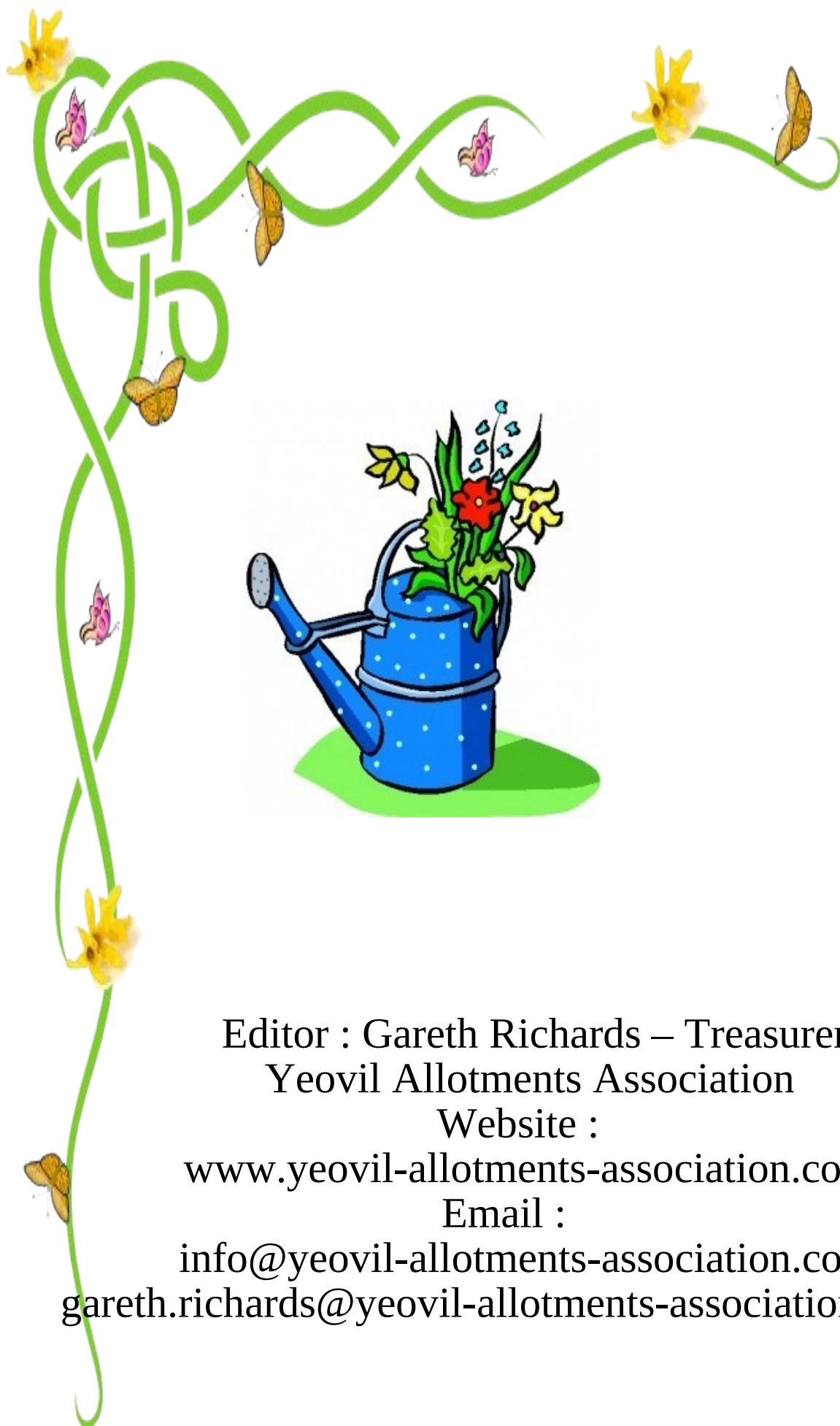
We also have our own website at :

www.yeovil-allotments-association.co.uk

where you can find this magazine as well as a catalogue

Happy Allotmenting and best wishes,

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