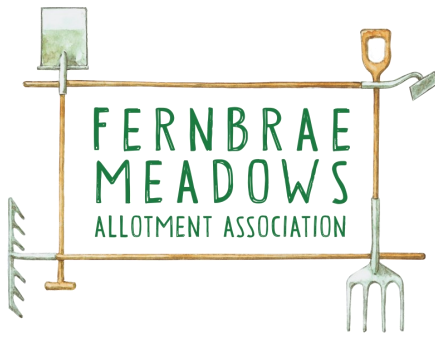


Spring 2024

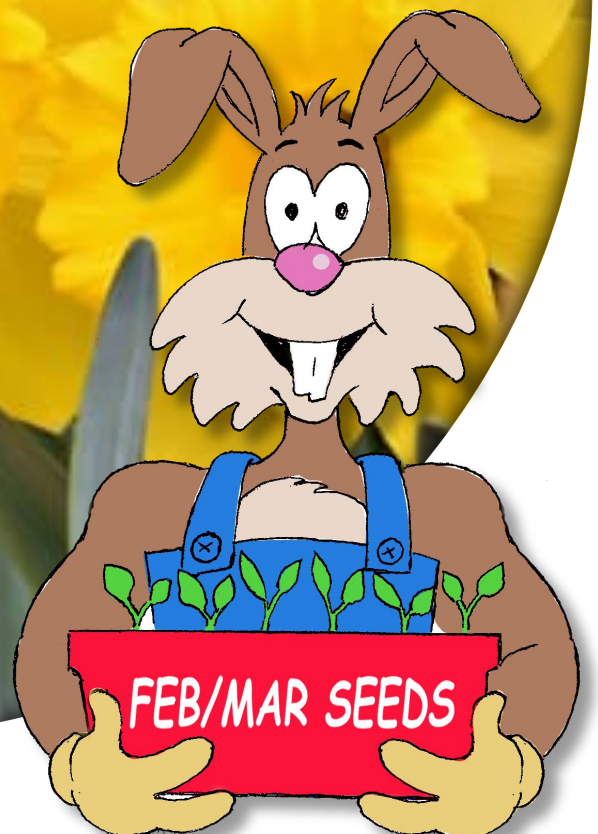


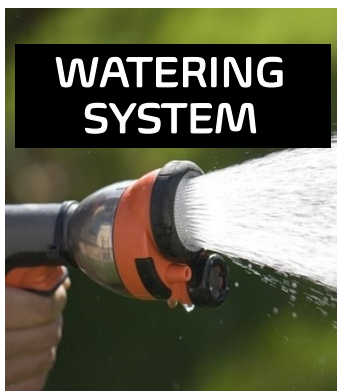
FEATURING...

News in Brief
Classified
Bug Hotels

February / March Seeds
Three Sisters Planting
Plot To Pot Recipes

Newsletter





The Association's **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** will be held, this year, at **West Kirk, The Village, East Kilbride, G74 4JW** at 7.00pm on **Tuesday, 12th March 2024**

An AGM Pack will be sent to all association members by email. If you are not an association member and would like to join, please contact secretary.fmaa@gmail.com for a registration pack to be sent to you.

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Allers Shop

Just to remind everyone as they plan for this year that Allers Allotments, 96 Barrie Road, East Kilbride, have in stock potatoes; onions and shallots.

They have the following varieties of **potatoes** available-

Early

Arran Pilot, Casablanca, Foremost, Lady Christl, Swift, Winston

2nd Early

Charlotte, Gemson, Kestrel, Nadine, Wilja

Main Crop

Cara, Carolus, Desiree, Orla, Picasso, Pink Fir Apple

So, plenty of choice and very good quality and price. The shop also stocks other items e.g. potato fertilizer.

Just to remind you also that if you are a member of our Association (only £5 to join) you can pay **£3 at Allers to become an Associate Member** there and use their fabulous shop.

The shop opening hours are:-

Wednesday 11.00am - Noon

Saturday 11.30am -12.30pm

Any questions about any of this just ask...**Laura Fleming**

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Watering System

In 2019 when the site first opened there was only one source of water for the whole allotment site located at the front gate. This situation was far from ideal especially for the Plot-holders at the far end of the allotments. Some people had a walk of 270 metres to fill a watering can. It was obvious that this was a far from ideal situation and the committee, at that time, solved the problem by installing the watering system that is operational today. All the work was carried out by association members and was wholly funded by the association.

The water system is maintained by the association and many of you will realise that, at present, if a watering hose is connected to the front gate tap no-one can access this tap. The solution is to install a split-tap connection and this work will be carried out prior to the water system "going live" at some point in March.

The committee have received feedback from members about when trying to use the system they are unable to do so because the hose connectors are constantly disappearing. Rather than assuming that the tap connectors will be attached it seems more prudent to assume that they are not. Therefore, the policy moving forward is that plot-holders keep hose connectors on their plot to use when they require to access hoses. This will save any hassle or disappointment.

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Allotment Officers News

The Allotment Officers, Amanda and Gillian, have sent out an email to all plotheolders titled Allotment News at the end of January.

If you haven't received this email, please contact them to be included in the mailing list.

Classifieds



I have 6 brand new heavy duty mattock heads, (you can get shafts from Bills Tool store). They are great for heavy digging and breaking up heavy soils. The normal retail price is **£20 each**. I'm giving them away FREE, but donate a minimum of at **least £5** to the association.

I've always thought there is a lot of materials lying around in the site that is surplus to one plot but could and should be recycled and used by another. Each 'swap' could generate a couple of quid for the association

Donald Macleod (Plot 35)

Bug Ho-



Why build an insect hotel habitat?



Our allotment site is home to a wide range of living creatures, and it's good to know that very few critters cause significant damage to vegetables, fruit and flowers (although some of us might disagree strongly with that statement). There are many more creatures that help us control the pests and by providing the right habitats we can greatly increase

the number of beneficial insects on our plots and the allotment site as a whole. Some wild invertebrates such as bumblebees and solitary bees are declining in large numbers in the wider countryside so by providing homes, such as an insect/bug hotel we can contribute to their conservation

To find out more about building an insect hotel a full fact sheet is available for Association members from secretary.fmaa@gmail.com

Raised Beds

What is a raised garden bed?

A raised garden bed is precisely what the name suggests - a **method of growing plants higher than the ground**. Soil is enclosed in a freestanding box or frame, normally built with wood, but you can use large containers as another option. They allow gardeners to place soil above ground and plant their crops there.

The benefits of using a raised beds for growing vegetables are many. First, the higher the bed, the easier it is to reach your plants and the less strain it puts on your body.

Second, you'll have less weeds and less pests in your beds. The soil warms more quickly in the spring, and small raised beds are easier to cover with glass to make a cold frame, plastic to make a simple greenhouse, and even trellises for your plants to grow on.

The existing soil on the allotment site is very heavy clay and can be difficult to work with due to the amount of rainfall we experience in

the west of Scotland.

Because you are adding your own soil, you can make it extra rich with nutrients, which means you can plant more vegetables in a smaller space.

The soil will be looser, better draining, and more aerated than the typical Fernbrae Meadows Allotment soil, which should give your vegetables a growing advantage.

A comprehensive guide to raised bed growing is available to Association Members and contact [secretary.fmaa@gmail](mailto:secretary.fmaa@gmail.com) for a copy to be sent to you.

February / March Seed Growing



Three Sisters Planting Method



At our location, on average frost free starts 31st May and ends Mid-October

On seed packets dates are only indicative and you should take into consideration our local climate variances

Sow seeds indoors in February

Broad Beans
Brussels Sprouts
Globe Artichokes
Kohl Rabi
Leeks
Lettuces
Onions
Peas
Radishes
Rhubarb
Salad Leaves
Spinach
Sprouting Broccoli
Tomatoes

Fruit to plant outdoors in March

Apple & Pear Trees
Blackberries
Cranberries
Gooseberries & Currants
Grape Vines
Raspberries
Strawberries

*Thanks to Colin Smith (plot 12A)
for compiling seed information.*

Seeds to sow in March

Vegetable seeds to sow Outdoors Undercover

Beetroot
Carrots
Cucumbers
Lettuces
Oriental |Leaves
Radishes (Summer)
Rocket
Salad Leaves
Summer Purslane
Turnips

Vegetables to plant outdoors in March

Asparagus
Broad Beans
Cauliflowers (early summer)
Chinese Artichokes
Garlic
Jerusalem Artichokes
Onion Sets
Peas
Potatoes
Rhubarb Sets
Shallot Sets
Spinach

What is the Three Sisters Planting Method?

The Three Sister's Planting System is an ancient companion planting style originating from native Americans and perfected over centuries.

As most of the plots on the allotment site are on the small side this planting method has the potential for you to grow a lot of produce from a relatively small area.

This planting system is where all the plants in one area contribute to the growth and success of the other plants. The three plants consist of



Plot to Pot Recipes



sweetcorn, beans and courgette/squash.

Sweetcorn because it grows tall and strong so is used by the beans to climb. Beans put nitrogen back into the soil and courgettes provide shade and cover to the soil (to prevent weeds from establishing) as well as keeping the soil moist.

To find out more about this ingenious system a full fact sheet is available for Association members from secretary.fmaa@gmail.com

Minestrone soup

WHOLESOME, HEARTY & FLEXIBLE

This tasty, nutritious minestrone soup is brilliant at embracing what you've got in your fridge. It's super-easy to tweak according to the vegetables you have in the house – embrace the seasons but also use the best of your freezer and store cupboard, let it flex for you.

Ingredients

1 clove of garlic
2-3 onions
olive oil
2 fresh or dried bay leaves
2- 3 carrots
2 sticks of celery
2 large handfuls of seasonal greens, such as savoy cabbage, sweetheart cabbage, curly kale
1 vegetable stock cube or you can use stock made from a boiled bacon joint or ham hough
Leftover meat from bacon joint or hough
1 or 2 400g tin of plum tomatoes
2 tbsp tomato purée
2 tsp dried Italian herbs
2 x 400g tins of beans, such as cannellini or butter
100 g dried pasta
Additional
Parmesan cheese, Grana Padano or vegetarian alternative, to serve
extra virgin olive oil
crusty bread, to serve

Method

Peel and finely chop the garlic and onion. Put a soup pot style pan on a medium-high heat with 1 tablespoon of olive oil.

Add onions and cook until translucent then add the garlic, bay leaves, carrots and celery (Avoid burning as this will make soup taste bitter) .

Trim and chop the carrots and celery into rough 1 cm dice, adding to the pan as you go. Remove and finely chop any tough stalks from your greens and add to the pan. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring regularly, or until softened.

Crumble in the stock cube or homemade ham stock, pour in the tinned tomatoes, breaking them up with your spoon, tomato puree and Italian herbs then add water to cover. Pour in the beans, juice and all, then add a pinch of sea salt and black pepper.

Shred your greens and sprinkle into the pan, top up with 600ml of boiling kettle water, then add the pasta. Cover and leave to simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the pasta is just cooked and the soup has thickened to your liking.

Season the soup to perfection, then serve it with a grating of cheese of choice (a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil is optional).

Tips

BUDGET-FRIENDLY MEAL PLAN TIPS:

- This recipe serves 8, so you'll have plenty left over for lunches. To serve, reheat in a pan, stirring often until piping hot through.
- Don't waste any of your greens – remove those tougher stalks, finely chop and add them to the base of your soup with the onion, carrot and celery.
- This soup is great for using up odds and ends from your dried pasta packets. Pile whatever you've got in a clean tea towel, then give it a good bash so it's all about the same size.

EASY SWAPS:

- When it comes to herbs, use what you've got. Rosemary or thyme leaves would be delicious here, or even a sprinkling of dried mixed herbs.
- Add other chopped veg when you're frying the onions, if you've got it, like leek, courgette, green beans or potato.
- This is lovely finished with a sprinkling of grated Parmesan cheese, but you could use Cheddar. A sprinkling of fresh baby basil leaves will always be beautiful, if you've got them,
- Out of pasta? No problem, use rice instead or even hunks of bread, which will soak up all that lovely flavour.

If you are going to make a large batch to freeze omit the pasta and add to soup when thawed (This will avoid the pasta becoming too overcooked).

BEST Portobello Mushroom Burger!

An easy balsamic marinade adds incredible flavour. Stuffed with cheese, rich, and savoury. Even meat lovers cannot resist!

PREP: 5minutes mins **COOK:** 10minutes mins **TOTAL:** 45minutes mins
SERVINGS: 2 burgers

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic *minced*
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 4 portobello mushroom caps cleaned with underside stems and gills removed. *Portobellos mushrooms can be expensive try using a large flat mushroom as an alternative.*

Portobello Mushroom Burger



4 thin slices cheese of your choice

For serving:

Wholewheat, brioche hamburger buns or a Morton's Roll

Sliced red onions (Optional)

Pesto (Optional)

Sliced tomato (Optional)

Arugula, rocket or lettuce (Optional)

Cucumber (Optional)

Instructions

In a large zip-top bag, combine the soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, oil, garlic, Italian seasoning, and black pepper. Add the mushroom caps and seal the bag, removing as much air as possible. Gently swish the marinade around the mushrooms, then place the bag in a shallow dish. Allow the mushrooms to sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes while you prepare any desired toppings or refrigerate for up to 1 hour. Turn the bag once or twice while the mushrooms sit so that they are coated evenly.

Heat grill pan to medium heat. Once hot, brush the grate lightly with oil to prevent sticking, or lightly spray the grill pan with nonstick spray.

Remove the mushrooms from the marinade, shaking off any excess. Reserve the marinade in the bag for basting. Grill the mushrooms on both sides until tender, about 10 minutes total, brushing them with the marinade several times throughout.

When the mushrooms are in their final minute of cooking, turn two of them so that their undersides (the ones that previously had the gills and stem) are facing up. Top each with one slice of cheese, then stack a second mushroom on top, gill-side down, so that the cheese is in the middle. Place a second slice of cheese on top. Reduce the heat to low and cook just until the cheese is melted.

During the last few minutes of cooking, if desired, toast the buns.

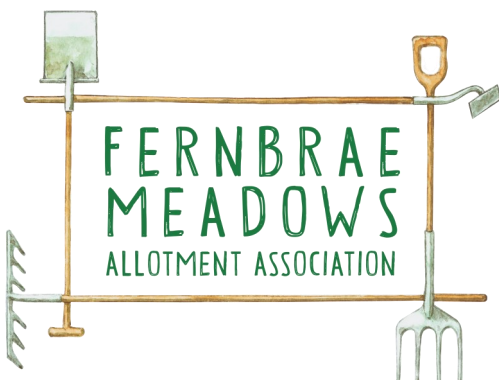
Assemble stack with mushrooms and any accompaniments you fancy such as onion, and tomato. Add the top bun. Enjoy immediately.

Notes

TO STORE: Refrigerate the portobello mushroom stacks in an airtight storage container for up to 4 days.

TO REHEAT: Rewarm the portobello mushroom stacks in a baking dish in the oven at 350°F or in the microwave. Assemble burgers as desired.

TO FREEZE: Freeze portobello mushroom stacks in an airtight freezer-safe storage container for up to 2 months. Let thaw overnight in the refrigerator before reheating.



Email us at: secretary.fmaa@gmail.com

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