



It's that time of Year

It's been a hot, dry summer and we still need to protect plants from the heat. Apply mulches around plants to reduce the amount of moisture escaping from the soil.

Consider applying temporary screens where plants are exposed to directly sunlight for long periods of the day.

If you are planting out new seedlings, these can get some protection from the sun if located where they benefit from shading from established nearby plants or bespoke screens.

August is the month of plenty and, just as there is a wide range of fruit and vegetables almost every day: peas, beans, carrots, beetroot, sweetcorn, tomatoes, peppers, courgettes, potatoes, onions, berries, and early hard fruit. It's a time of excess presenting opportunities for preserving produce: freeze beans and herbs, store squashes and convert other produce into jams, chutneys and pickles.

It's the time of year to make jam, and this newsletter includes a recipe for one of my personal favourites: blackcurrant jam. There are many other recipes and tips on preserving fruit and vegetables on the LAA web-site- see link below:

<https://longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk/and-cooking-them>

And, when you've used all you can from your crops, any plant waste can be added to your compost heap to rot down over the winter, so it may be time to construct (or reconstruct) your compost heaps/bins.

It's also the time when most of us go on holiday so there's often a need to make arrangements with fellow allotment holders to take care of watering and harvesting while we (or they!) are away. =

Finally, keep an eye out for emails about the latest Kings Seeds catalogue – this will be available soon and will contains excellent value seeds, onion sets, seed potatoes and more.



Jobs

August: Dry out onions/garlic, mulch the soil to retain moisture, pinch out growing beans (French and runners), prune summer fruiting raspberries, thin tree fruit and weed around the base of fruit trees.

September: Prune soft fruits, pick off any rotting fruit, plant out strawberry runners.

Plant

August: Carrots (the last of the year), spring cabbage, new strawberry plants.

September: Spinach, spring onions, spring cabbage, garlic, herbs and salad crops.

Harvest

August: early sweetcorn, beans, courgettes, plums and gages, potatoes.

September: Hard fruit, cabbages, beetroot, onions, maincrop potatoes, French and runner beans, sweet corn, tomatoes, chard, turnips.



Update from the Committee

Summer Barbecue – The 2025 Summer BBQ will take place On Sunday 7th September from 12:30 at our Digswell site. Please make try and come along to enjoy the food and drink and meet fellow plot-holders.

This year there are some exciting new food options for Members to try: seasoned chicken thighs (not spicy), Jerk chicken thighs (spicy) and Thai pork belly, in addition to the usual burgers and veggie-burgers. (Please note that you are welcome to order several items to make up your plate).

Tea/coffee/soft drinks will be provided but, as usual, please bring salad, fruit/dessert, cake, wine etc. to share with others, as well as crockery and cutlery for your own use.

The event continues to offer great value with costs remaining (for yet another year) at £6.00 per adult, £3 for a child, or £20.00 for a family of two adults and up to 4 children.

Seed Catalogue – Copies of the latest Kings Seed catalogues are now available in the shed at Broadwater and the kitchen at Digswell. Members can also view the catalogue online at the NAS website, Members of the Association will have received an email with login details and a password. Once logged in, go to the Kings Seeds page and view the catalogue by clicking on: "[CLICK HERE](#)" to view a flippable copy of the 2025/2026 member's catalogue".



Work Parties - The next work parties will take place from 09:30-12:00 on Saturday 6th September at our Digswell and Broadwater sites.

New Members – Since the last newsletter was issued, we have been joined by Gemma (B11) and Anotida (B12). Welcome to the Association and let's hope you have many enjoyable and productive years with us.



The LAA Shop

The LAA shop at Digswell will open once a month from 09.30 to 12.00 on the following Saturdays:

September 20th, October 25th

If you have suggestions regarding what else the shop might also stock, please let us know.



Winter Squash

The warm weather has provided perfect conditions for growing winter squashes. These attractive plants grow from mid-summer, the perfect time to fill gaps on the plot after early crops such as broad beans have been harvested. They can also be grown alongside sweetcorn, where their fast-growing broad foliage covers several square metres of ground, restricting weed growth by reducing the amount of light and heat reaching young weed growth.

Squash seedlings are sensitive to frost so should be grown from April under cover and planted out around May/June. They should be planted at least a meter apart in enriched soil – some growers create squash trenches (similar to bean trenches) in advance of planting out where underlying soil is prepared with organic matter including rotting vegetable waste.

They are a “thirsty” crop and require regular watering throughout summer – the soil around them should not be allowed to dry out and so they can be grown through holes in weed-proof membranes which help retain moisture in the soil. Once established, they spread vigorously so it can be difficult to establish the location of their roots for watering, so it can be helpful to mark this with a cane or similar.



Each plant can produce several male and female flowers resulting in multiple fruits on each plant. As these grow, they can take on a spectacular appearance – the fruits come in a variety of sizes, shapes and colours (shades of green, yellow, orange, grey/blue and variegated). Whilst many have smooth skins but there are varieties with complex surfaces and contours. They vary in size from Gem Squashes, which are barely more than an individual serving, to large varieties which can be used to make gallons of soups/stews or roasted to supplement several family meals.

Winter squash can be eaten when young but is more commonly harvested in late summer/early autumn (they are ripe when the leaves start to die back and can be left to harden outdoors if raised from the ground on upturned flowerpots, boards, straw or other means of support). Squash keeps well if it has been exposed to sunlight to toughen the skin, with short section of the stalk still attached when harvested. The picked squash fruit should be stored in a (vermin-free!) cool, well-ventilated space. (vermin-free! Not cold) dry place. Winter squash is well suited to large gardens or an allotment, as the plants have a spreading habit capable of space.





Crop Planner

key: sow
 plant
 harvest

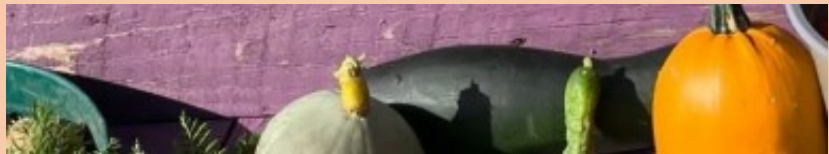
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Broad Bean	harvest	harvest	harvest		sow	sow	
Runner Bean	sow	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Pea	sow	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Potatoes	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Leek			harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest
Onion / Shallot		harvest	harvest	harvest			
Garlic	harvest	harvest	harvest		plant	plant	plant
Beetroot	sow	sow	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Carrot	sow	sow	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Swede / Turnip	sow			harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest
Courgette		harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Pumpkin / Winter Squash			harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	
Tomatoes		harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Chilli / Aubergine		harvest	harvest	harvest			
Chard/Leaf Beet	sow	sow	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	
Cabbage	sow	sow	sow	sow		harvest	harvest
Kale	sow				harvest	harvest	harvest
Black/Redcurrants	harvest	harvest	harvest		plant	plant	plant
Raspberries	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	plant	plant
Strawberries		harvest	harvest		plant		
Fruit Trees			harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	plant



Summer Recipes

Spicy Squash Chutney

Makes 6-8 jars.



- 1.5 kg (3lb) of squash/pumpkin flesh
- 450g (1lb) tomatoes (or tomatillos)
- 450g (1lb) onions
- 50g (2oz) sultanas/raisins
- 750g (1½lb) soft brown sugar
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 teaspoons of pickling spice
- 1 red c
- hilli (optional)
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 600ml (1 pint) cider vinegar

Roast the pickling spice with the salt for 15 minutes, then crush in a mortar and pestle.

Chop the pumpkin, tomatoes and onions, and cook in a pan with the vinegar sugar, raisins/sultanas, chopped garlic and chopped chilli. Bring to the boil and add the ground spices and salt. Simmer until the mixture thickens and then pot in sterilised jars. Allow to ferment for at least two weeks before use.

The squash chunks should retain some of their firmness and provide a 'nutty' texture. - perfect with a strong cheddar or to accompany a curry.

Squash and Chickpea Stew

What could be more hearty on a cold evening?!

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 onions, peeled and finely chopped
- 2-4 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 2 teaspoons of mixed roasted, ground spices (from turmeric, cinnamon, ginger, coriander/fennel/chilli seed according to your tastes)
- 400g tin of chickpeas
- 300g (12 oz.) of squash or pumpkin flesh
- 400-500g (1lb) chopped tinned tomatoes or juice/passata
- One large handful of freshly chopped parsley or coriander leaves
- One litre of vegetable or chicken stock.
- 50g (2oz.) of small pasta (orzo or broken spaghetti/vermicelli)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the onions and lightly sautee until golden. Add the garlic, celery and ground spices and cook for a few minutes until their flavour is absorbed in the oil.

Add the chickpeas and tomatoes and gently simmer for about 15 minutes. Meanwhile chop the squash/pumpkin into medium size cubes. Add to the pan with the stock and cook for 30 minutes. Add the pasta and approximately three quarters of the parsley/coriander and cook for a further 10 minutes or so until the pasta is cooked. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve immediately and sprinkle with the remaining parsley/coriander. Perfect with traditional crusty bread or a middle eastern flatbread.



Comments and Feedback



If you have any news, tips, features, recipes or photographs that you would like to submit for future issues of the Newsletter please send them to...

Newsletter Editor: email@longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk.

Visit the Longcroft Allotment Association website: www.longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk

