



Flitwick Gardeners' Association

Issue 101

Autumn 2016

CONTENTS

Page 2	Flitwick Gardeners' Association
Page 3	Seed Box opening hours
Page 4	We need your support!
Page 5	Syd's Snippets
Page 6	Trading Update
Page 10	2016 Annual Show Report
Page 11	2017 Annual Show Photographic Classes
Page 12	2016 Autumn Show Schedule
Page 14	Potato ordering form

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

8 October	<i>Autumn Show</i>
24 November	<i>FGA Quiz (note date!!!)</i>

100th EDITION PRIZE DRAW

CONGRATULATIONS...

Derek Fairbanks-Laws – you are our lucky winner!
Please pop along to the Seed Box during normal opening hours
to collect your prizes.

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Flitwick Gardeners' Association

We are an association run by members, for members. Our aim is to promote gardening in Flitwick and the surrounding villages.

We have a members' shop, The Seed Box, where we try to stock useful items including seeds, tools and chemicals at very competitive prices. We also have a library and a small range of loan equipment.

We run shows, organise an annual quiz and run the occasional trip to visit a garden. We're always pleased to welcome new members and always looking for help in running the Association and activities. We'd love to hear your ideas, or offers to help out – volunteering is both rewarding and fulfilling so why not give it a go!

How to find us

The Seed Box is situated behind the old Flitwick Leisure Centre on Steppingley Road, MK45 1TH.

For security reasons there's currently a temporary fence around the old leisure centre in Flitwick. The entrance gate has been fitted with a padlock that works with an allotment key. Please be sure to close and lock the gate behind you every time you use it.

When The Seed Box is open for trading a committee member will remove the padlock and then secure the site on leaving. We ask everyone to be vigilant to ensure no unauthorised persons enter the site.

The fence is a temporary measure until Central Beds decide on a more permanent means of fully securing the site until it is sold.

In the meantime we will endeavour to keep you updated on the situation as soon as we hear of any proposals.

Seed Box Opening Hours

Friday	7.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. (Feb to Nov)
Saturday	2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. (Feb to Nov)

Telephone

Outside of these hours you can always leave a message for us on the answering machine on **01525 717289**.

Email addresses

General enquiries etc.	enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk
Magazine	newsletter@flitwickgardeners.co.uk
Show info and entries	fgashow@flitwickgardeners.co.uk

Website / Facebook address

Website	www.flitwickgardeners.co.uk
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Letters to the Editor

- Do you have an idea for the newsletter?
- Would you like to share your volunteering experience?
- Maybe you'd like to thank a member or swap some top tips...

Whatever you'd like to share or ask send your letter to the editor to newsletter@flitwickgardeners.co.uk for the opportunity to feature in the next newsletter.

Newbury Farm Plants

Fresh, nursery-grown plants in Silsoe

We are a small, friendly, business located on the family farm in Silsoe. We specialize in growing hardy perennials but also stock a wide range of hardy plants including climbers, bamboos, Acers and semi mature 'feature' plants and topiary. We stock compost and more besides - a little bit of everything that a good garden needs basically!

~ Hardy perennials ~
~ Seasonal bedding plants ~
~ Fruit trees, Herbs & vegetables ~
~ Shrubs, specimen plants and topiary ~
~ Climbers, bamboos, ferns
Compost and terracotta pots

**10 % discount offered on all garden plants
for Flitwick Gardeners Association members**

Please present your membership card at the till

How to find us:

From Flitwick head towards Clophill on the A507, take the right-hand turn signed Silsoe/Flitton – stay on this road, the nursery is approximately 1/2 mile on the left as you enter Silsoe just past the 30mph sign.

Open:

Tue to Sat 9am – 5pm

Sunday 10.30 – 4pm

(Nov/Dec/Jan close at 4pm.
Closed from Christmas and
throughout January)

For news, photos and special
offers follow us on Facebook -
[facebook.com/newburyfarmplants](https://www.facebook.com/newburyfarmplants)



Newbury Farm, Amptill Road, Silsoe, MK45 4HB.
Tel 01525 860048. www.newburyfarmplants.co.uk



We need your support to continue!

As a member's association we rely on the generosity of volunteers. It's a really rewarding and fun way to make new friends and learn new skills.

There's a whole host of exciting opportunities involved in the running of the Flitwick Gardeners Association and no offer is too large or too small; from helping out in The Seed Box to managing the accounts and a variety of light-touch jobs in between.

Maybe you'd like to organise an outing?

**Pop along to The Seed Box on a Saturday afternoon
and introduce yourself to the committee to find out more.**

Or you can email us at:

enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk

Syd's Snippets

Following the closure of the old Leisure Centre we have suffered a severe drop in our trading figures which we believe is down to some members thinking we have closed down.

We appreciate that the fencing and gates may deter members from visiting the Seed Box but we are still there on Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons.

Now a height restriction barrier is in place we can and will leave the gates open during trading hours and ensure all is secure on leaving.

To keep you updated on the current situation we understand demolition of the old building is due to commence late September and it will take approx. 4 weeks to complete the works. Some disruption is likely during this period and Central Beds Council will be liaising with the Town Council, ourselves and the contractor when appointed.

Plans are currently being made to maintain all services to our building to ensure we can keep trading whilst these works are carried out.

The flattened site is due to go out to tender later this year and once a developer is put in place we may have better idea if we are staying at the current location.

We will endeavour to keep you updated as and when we receive further details.

Syd Pye
FGA Chairman

TRADING REPORT September 2016

Well what a year so far! It started wonderful everything growing as expected. Then a very wet late spring so everything grew far too fast, but I had an excellent set of early crops and particularly the over wintered broad beans. The rain stopped and everything dried out so that the summer veg. was patchy, great squash family but very poor French beans, fantastic early peas and mangetout very poor main crop peas. But that's gardening for you!

Behind the old leisure centre all has been interesting. We first lost trading days in our peak period due to unwanted visitors on the car park of the, now empty, leisure centre. Then we had to keep the gates in the fence shut or manned during trading. Next they decided to cut off our power. In summary a disaster, and I'm hoping that things pick up from here.

One big boost for us is that Central Beds Council sold the library bus so we now have the compound to ourselves.

Coming into this year I said I wished to give up as Trading Secretary, well sorry I'm still here. But coming up to the end of the year I'm looking at stock items which have been in my storeroom for many years and decided that they have to go. The sort of offers I will be making over the rest of this year will be small tubs of items such as slug pellets in old packaging but very cheap. Going forward we will only be stocking a couple of the popular sizes of each item. I will also be concentrating on fewer suppliers so do not expect similar items from more than two suppliers. So the message overall is come and see what's on offer it will be on the rack on the side facing the water goods. One area has been trimmed almost by accident and the compost range will largely remain as it is subject to availability however as Sinclair (Arthur Bowers) were purchased by Westland there could be considerable re-badging and price variation, so we may be concentrating on Clover products for the whole compost range.

Where will this take the FGA, I hear you asking (metaphorically speaking). Well we will be concentrating on core items, less variety of similar items, less choice of pack sizes, more of less on the shelves. Hopefully this will reduce the task of the Trading Secretary (whoever that may be) to a
Autumn 2016

manageable size. As Part of this I am trying to step back and let designated individuals run individual areas:

- Dave Pateman, does an excellent job of telling me what I will order for the compost room!
- Justine Moran, is taking over food and fertilisers.
- Laurie Arnold, runs the seeds with virtually no involvement from myself.
- Syd Pye is taking full responsibility for pots and trays.
- Jim Godden (me), does the rest.

If you could take on an area or part of an area, visit the Seed Box once a month to keep an eye on shelf fill, etc. it would allow me to reduce my time and possibly stay on as trading Secretary. Areas that probably need owning are:

- Tools, in desperate need of a radical review as the FGA has far too much money tied up in this area.
- Sundries, preferably split up to make it manageable.
- Water Goods, I have a fairly good idea where I think it should go but...!
- Lawn goods, range fairly well rationalised I can probably keep this area.

SO WHATS THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE SEED BOX?

I have been to Spalding and got a range of autumn bulbs including red onion sets and garlic to be planted in the next month or so. I'm hoping to get some white onion sets by the end of the month. Bulbs for Christmas display need to be planted by the end of October, exactly when depends on what species, what variety and where you intend to grow them, but how about Paperwhites, tete-a-tete, hyacinths wonderful colour and scent (well from most of them) and all grow well in pots. So consider our bulb pots and bulb compost which are available at very reasonable prices. The potato order form for next year is included in this magazine. All pre-orders this year will get a free bag of a new variety Abbott, how many depends on the number of orders and the number of potatoes in one sack.

The 2017 selection of Mr Fothergills seeds is already on the hangers in the Seed Box, with the usual 25% discount applied at the till. There are also some autumn and winter green manures and Aqualdulce broad beans available as own pack silly prices, less than 50% that of named packet seeds.

Personally I like to plant late and over wintering veg now such as:

- Winter hardy spring onions
- Mouli (radish)
- Chinese veg, ready in 6 weeks most years, but do keep watered if the weather is dry.
- Spring cabbage, almost a must
- Spring Cauliflower,
- Over wintered broad beans (Aqualdulce).
- Late salad crops, you probably have seed left so why not try planting some you've nothing to lose! Radishes and the quicker lettuces will probably crop.

It is also time to start thinking of next year and getting ground prepared so start clearing those crops which have finished, dig the ground, but consider your soil type before manuring or liming as winter rains may just wash it away before the spring. My preference is a three year crop rotation:

- year one manure the soil, I'm on Station Road allotments with light sandy soil so I dig this area mainly in the spring and manure as I dig. Planting is mainly potatoes, squashes, and flowers.
- year two apply general fertiliser, I start digging this as soon as space becomes vacant leave it over the winter, possibly with occasional hoeing, and then feed with a general fertiliser as I plant. Onions and pea and bean family
- Year three apply lime, counteracts the acidity of the manure and seems to dramatically reduce club root. Planting mainly brassicas, carrots and parsnips.

As for what goes on each plot there are several suggested crop rotations but my personal is as above, and then everything else goes where I have room. I always find that I run out of space and things flow fairly freely between the areas, perhaps I should get better at planning and only growing the amount of crops we need, if I knew in advance what would do well this year it would be so much easier.

Finally, last winter I purchased a tonne of rockdust and four of us shared it. It re-mineralises the soil and I've had excellent results and possibly my best cabbages and cauliflower ever! As a result, I am investigating purchasing this as a new product for FGA. I would be interested if anyone wanted a bulk lot or a substantial amount. I have some leaflets at the Seed Box please ask for one and see if I can get sufficient interest to purchase a pallet of 25kg sacks.

Ah well a little rain was welcome but I bet it now gets dry again and I have to return to the watering can!

Good Gardening and don't forget the Seed Box is still open Friday evenings 7.30-9.00 pm and Saturday afternoon 2 until 4, hope to see you soon.

Jim Godden
FGA Trading Secretary

2016 Annual Show Report

Wow what a show - I don't believe I've ever seen so many FGA members in one place at the same time. There were exhibits from 46 in the show, some members made cakes for sale as refreshments and there were a lot of people that helped throughout the day with getting lunches for people, selling refreshments, raffle tickets, helping the judges and setting up and clearing down the hall.

Without you all we wouldn't be able to run the show - so a huge thank you to all of you, especially if I didn't get chance to thank you on the day as my small brain was fairly addled by the end of the day.

The show itself had 319 exhibits, short by 5 of our all-time highest entry from 1998. The quality of the exhibits in all sections was very high and all the judges commented on this, although I'm not sure the gardeners who looked round really appreciated the sight of a mole made from pieces of a potato in the children's section.

I'd dearly love more people to enter the classes dedicated to members who have not got a first place in the main vegetable and flower classes of our show. If anyone has any ideas how to make this happen then please let me know.

Next year will be the 40th FGA Annual Show - let's fill the hall with even more exhibits from even more of our members and give the judges a really hard time!

Once again thanks to everyone who helped in whatever capacity - you made it a pleasure to organise the show.

Colin Stennett
Show Secretary

2017 Annual Show Photographic classes

103	Flitwick	104	Gardens
105	Ruby	106	Anniversary

The children's photographic classis 'Something / Someone Old'

Free while stocks last!

This year we are again giving away daffodil bulbs (with a pot, bulb fibre and a set of growing instructions) to under 16s who are the children or grandchildren of members for growing on through the Winter and early Spring to be exhibited at the Spring Show next year.

We are using the same variety as in the previous couple of years as they have proved to be very successful.

These bulbs are **FREE** so let's encourage the next generation of gardeners. To claim, please come to the Autumn show or collect from the Seed Box after the show – provided the rush is not too great and they have not all gone – and don't forget to bring them along to the Spring Show.

Colin Stennett
Show Secretary

AUTUMN SHOW SCHEDULE – Saturday 8th October 2016

FLITWICK VILLAGE HALL

SHOW RULES

The rules of the Annual show shall apply throughout the show, **with the exception of Rule 2.**

An Exhibitor may show up to 2 entries per class in the Autumn show.

Entries to be made at the show. Children may enter any class, and in classes 1 to 12 their entry will be judged as a children's class

Staging of exhibits between 12:30 pm and 2 pm.

Judging to be between 2 pm and 3 pm.

Public admitted 3 pm – FREE

SCHEDULE

CLASS

HEAVIEST AND LONGEST

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Heaviest Marrow |
| 2 | Heaviest Onion |
| 3 | Heaviest Beetroot |
| 4 | Heaviest Carrot |
| 5 | Heaviest Cabbage |
| 6 | Heaviest Potato |
| 7 | Heaviest Tomato |
| 8 | Longest Runner Bean |
| 9 | Largest Sunflower Head |
| 10 | Heaviest Parsnip |
| 11 | Smallest Ripe Tomato |
| 12 | Freak Vegetable |
| 12a | Heaviest Crop of potatoes from 1 tuber supplied by the FGA |

The Jonathan Wilde Cup - Heaviest Parsnip

VEGETABLES

- | | |
|----|--|
| 13 | Five Potatoes - White - One variety |
| 14 | Five Potatoes - Other than white - One variety |
| 15 | One Cauliflower |
| 16 | Three Carrots |
| 17 | Two Leeks |
| 18 | Two Parsnips |
| 19 | Five Tomatoes |
| 20 | Any other Vegetable – 2 or more items |

NSALG Trophy – Most points in Vegetable classes

FLOWERS

- 21 Three stems of Spray Chrysanthemums
- 22 Three Dahlias - Cactus or Semi-cactus
- 23 Three Dahlias - Decorative
- 24 Three Dahlias - Ball
- 25 Three Dahlias - Pompon
- 26 One Dahlia - any variety
- 27 Three Roses – any variety
- 28 One Pot Plant - Flower
- 29 One Pot Plant - Foliage
- 30 One Pot of Alpine
- 31 One Vase of Flowering Shrub
- 32 One Vase of one distinct kind of flower
- 33 One Vase of Mixed Flowers

Cliff White Trophy – Best exhibit in Flower classes

FRUIT

- 34 Four Dessert Apples
- 35 Four Cooking Apples
- 36 Four Pears
- 37 Nine individual Soft fruit - of any one kind
- 38 A Bunch of Grapes
- 39 Any other fruit, including nuts, not mentioned above

PUMPKINS

- 40 Heaviest Pumpkin
- 41 Decorated / Carved Pumpkin - children

Flitwick Gardeners' Association
 Telephone - 01525 - 717289 (24 hour answerphone)
Pre Season Potato and Onion Sets Order Form - 2017

Name Address

Telephone F.G.A. Membership Number

Please reserve the following packs of Seed Potatoes and Onion sets for me when they are delivered
Orders handed in by the end of Dec 2016 will be telephoned to advise when they are ready for collection.

Number of Packs 3kg 10 seed	Variety	"First Earlies" 3 Kg (10)	Total Cost
.....	Duke of York (RED)	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Epicure	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Foremost	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Pentland Javelin	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Maris Bard	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Rocket (EARLY)	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Swift (VERY EARLY)	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Winston	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....

"Second Earlies" (3 Kg)

.....	Charlotte	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Kestrel	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Marfona	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Wilja	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....

"Main Crop" (3 Kg)

.....	Cara	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Desiree	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Estima	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	King Edward	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Majestic	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Maris Piper	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Pentland Crown	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Picasso	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Sarpo Mira	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....
.....	Vales Sovereign	£ 3.45 (£1.50)	.....

Specials varieties

.....	Anya (Salad)	£ 2.35	.....
.....	International Kidney	£ 2.35	.....
.....	Golden Wonder	£ 2.35	.....
.....	Osprey	£ 2.35	.....
.....	Pink Fir Apple (Salad)	£ 2.35	.....

"Onion Sets and Shallots"

.....	Golden Gourmet Shallots (0.5 Kg)	£ 1.60	.....
.....	Red Sun Shallots (0.5 Kg)	£ 1.60	.....
.....	Red Baron Onion Sets (0.5 Kg)	£ 1.60	.....
.....	Snowball (white) Onion Sets (0.5 Kg)	£ 1.60	.....
.....	Sturon Onion Sets (0.5 Kg)	£ 1.00	.....
.....	Stuttgarter Onion Sets (0.5 Kg)	£ 1.00	.....

Total Due £.....

.....
 + **Total number of packs**
 spud sets

Less Deposit Paid £.....
 (Minimum Deposit 50p per pack)

BALANCE DUE £.....

For F.G.A. use Telephoned