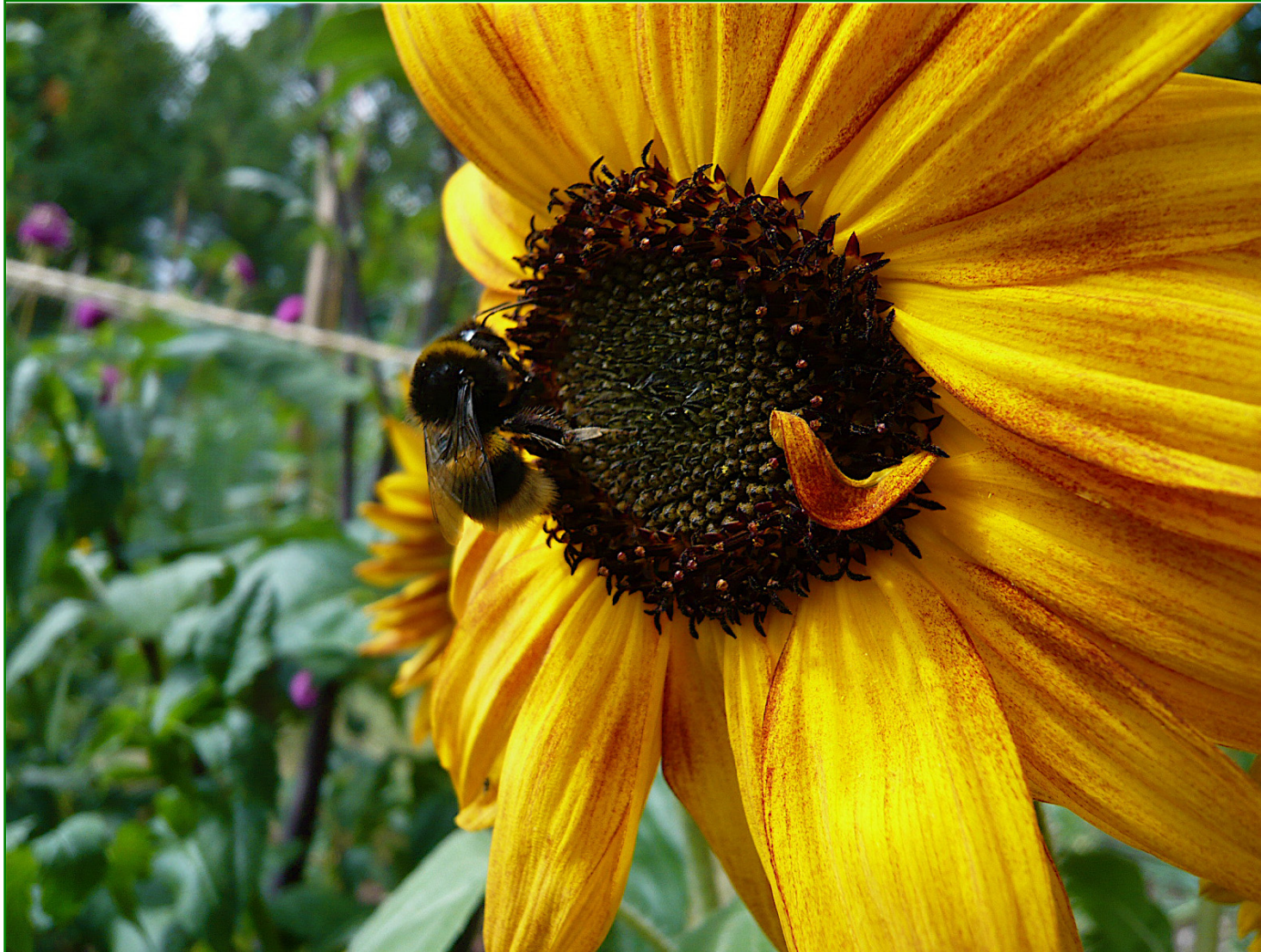


CALENDAR 2011



Matt Shapland's winning entry in the Photographic Competition



A winter's walk in the snow



Sunnyside Allotment Society



January 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1 New Year's Day	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 <i>Working Party</i>
10	11	12 <i>SAS Committee Meeting</i>	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Some **general principles** apply to growing fruit. Most trees, bushes & canes will crop over a long period so thorough soil preparation before planting will pay dividends. Perennial weeds need to be dug out; they will be difficult to remove once the fruit is established. Fruit will benefit from deeply dug, well-manured soil. Incorporate plenty of organic matter to help retain moisture. Firm in & water well after planting. Some trees may need staking. Most crops appreciate application of a general purpose fertiliser in the spring & thick mulch to retain moisture in dry spells. Pruning varies from crop to crop so specific details can be checked in books or on the internet. Dwarfing rootstock should be chosen for some fruit to prevent large trees shading your neighbour's plot. You may need to select pollinating partners for non self-fertile fruit. Some of the fruit we have included can be grown in large tubs which will restrict growth. Useful if space is limited but they can give smaller yields unless they are fed & watered regularly. We have mentioned some common pests & diseases but consult a good book for more detail. You may need to net your fruit but check netting regularly for any trapped birds.

Rhubarb is an easy crop to grow & one of the earliest to harvest. The crowns will go on producing for several years so it pays to prepare the ground well initially. Rhubarb prefers a sunny open site. Dig in lots of organic material before planting, anytime between November to March. Apply a general purpose fertiliser & mulch well every winter. Water well in a dry spring. Allow to get established before picking. Harvest between February & mid July. Pull stems from the base; don't cut them. Flower spikes will weaken the plant so cut them out. Crowns can be forced for an earlier crop by covering to exclude light. This will encourage delicate pink stems but will exhaust the crown. As the season progresses the stems tend to become stronger in flavour & texture. *Timperley Early* is a popular early variety with red stems, as is *Stockbridge Arrow* with pink stems. *Victoria* is a reliable maincrop variety, while you can pick *Glaskins Perpetual* into September. Stop harvesting other varieties in mid July to allow the leaves to develop fully to feed the crowns for next year. Rhubarb contains Vitamin A & potassium, & also some Vitamin C & Vitamin B9 (folate). Rhubarb can be frozen but is probably better cooked fresh in pies & crumbles. Baked rhubarb keeps its shape & texture. It makes good jams & chutneys. Ginger is a good complementary flavour.



Sunnyside under more snow





Sunnyside Allotment Society



February 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6 <i>Working Party</i>
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Raspberries do well at Sunnyside. Plant during the autumn, firming in & watering well. Cut the canes down to about 9 inches. Apply fertiliser in spring & add a layer of mulch, keeping it away from stems.

Summer raspberries fruit on canes produced the previous year. Prune all canes which have fruited directly after picking. Keep the strongest of the new shoots produced this year & tie in for fruiting next year.

Autumn raspberries fruit on canes produced this year so in late winter cut all canes to ground level. Weed, feed & mulch, & tie in canes as they grow. A simple support of posts & wire is suitable for both varieties. Raspberry beetle can be a serious pest; control with pyrethrum. Botrytis can be a problem in a humid year; good air-flow & prompt removal of mouldy fruit helps. Early, mid & late season varieties extend the season while autumn varieties crop from August.

As well as red fruit there are also yellow fruit (*All Gold*). Raspberries are rich in Vitamin C & high in fibre. They freeze well & make delicious desserts & jam.

Figs are not difficult to grow outside, but the fruit will only ripen in a warm sheltered position in a long hot summer. They are vigorous growers but if the roots are restricted they can be kept to a more manageable size, & they will begin to fruit earlier. So plant them in March in a large pot either free-standing or sunk into the ground, or line the planting hole with slabs or tiles. They do not need a rich soil.

Figs can be grown as a fan against a south-facing shed. This will allow you to protect the fruiting tips & emerging figs from frost. Prune a percentage of older wood in April. In July cut new growth back to 4/5 leaves to encourage embryo pea size fruitlets to form so they can overwinter & crop next summer. In November remove figs which have reached cherry size; they will not ripen. Ripe figs from the previous year can be picked in September. Water regularly and feed with dilute tomato fertiliser from April to September. *Brown Turkey* is the hardest outdoor variety but there are others to choose from.





Spring - people at work



Sunnyside Allotment Society



March 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6 <i>Working Party</i>
7	8 <i>Shrove Tuesday</i>	9 <i>SAS Committee Meeting Ash Wednesday</i>	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 <i>BST starts</i>
28	29	30	31			

Peaches, nectarines and apricots sound terribly exotic, but they can be grown outside at Sunnyside with a bit of care. They don't need to be grown in a glasshouse, they just need a warm sunny spot, which we can usually provide on our site. Bear in mind many of the old varieties still grown today were bred at Rivers' nursery on the other side of the county so you could say they are perfect for Hertfordshire. Modern breeding programmes have also provided some very robust varieties, & some suitable for growing in pots. You can grow **peaches, nectarines & apricots** as free-standing trees or as fans against a wall or fence. You can buy trees already trained, but you will need to continue the process. Fan-training allows more control over the vigour of the tree & the production of fruits, & it also allows you to protect the tree if required.

Peaches come in three types – white-, yellow- & red-fleshed. The white is supposed to be the best flavour. On A10 is a red-fleshed peach called *Sanguine de Savoy* which is smaller & later than the 'normal' yellow or white peach. It is more robust & produces more fruit than the white-fleshed *Peregrine* also on A10. **Nectarines** are just smooth-skinned peaches, & come in yellow- or white-fleshed versions. Some specialists say it is more tender than the peach & consequently needs more sheltered conditions, but others say if you are successful with peaches then give them a try.

Apricots are probably the most sensitive of the three, & it seems to be common to lose your crop due to frost in many years. There has been a recent breeding programme to produce apricots which are more robust in northern climes. This has produced the '-cot' suffixed fruits e.g. *Tomcot*, which do seem to be very reliable. Whether they taste as good as old varieties like *Moor Park* remains to be seen. There are three main problems with these gorgeous fruits. The first is that you can't prune them in the winter as this could allow in 'silver leaf', a fungal disease. The second is their early flowering which means a late frost can lose you your crop. The third is the dreaded peach leaf curl disease. Some varieties are more susceptible than others, & it varies from year to year. It is a fungus & it arrives on the tree via rain, so your fan-trained fruit can be protected. It can be treated via fungicide, or you can pick off affected leaves & hope the tree is able to shrug it off.



Early planting



Sunnyside Allotment Society



April 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3 Mothering Sunday
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Good Friday	23	24 Easter Sunday
25 Easter Monday	26	27	28	29	30	

Most dessert **cherries** are now grown on Colt rootstock which restricts growth to 15/20 ft; still quite big. But new dwarfing rootstock, Inmil (GM9) is being introduced which will produce 6/7 ft trees which will be easier to maintain where space is at a premium. Many varieties are self-fertile, but if you are not choosing one of these, you need to find a pollinating partner which flowers at the same time. Plant in autumn in well prepared ground in a reasonably sheltered spot. Firm in well and mulch. Water in dry periods during early years. Frosts can destroy flowers, & cold conditions can result in poor pollination due to lack of pollinating insects. Prune in June or July after picking. Prune sparingly to reduce size or to cut out diseased or crossing wood; paint wounds with Arbrex. To reduce the risk of silver leaf infection, never prune in winter.

Cherries can be grown successfully in large tubs but the roots need to be kept damp especially when fruit is forming & they need feeding. Yields will not be as great, but they are more manageable. Dessert cherries range from yellow to almost black. *Merton Glory* (not self fertile) is yellow/red while *Stella* (red & self fertile) & *Sunburst* (dark red & self fertile) are popular. Cherries are rich in riboflavin & contain some Vitamin A & potassium. Your cherries may not make it as far as the kitchen, but a simple cherry compote is delicious, as is cherry pie. Culinary (**Morello**) cherries are acid & used for bottling & jam. They are self-fertile & compact. They will tolerate some shade. The best known variety is *Morello*.

Cherry Clafouti

Enough cherries to cover the base of a shallow, oven-proof dish
 1 pint of milk
 6oz plain flour
 4oz sugar (reserve some of this to sprinkle on top)
 4 eggs
 Vanilla essence (optional)

Lightly grease the dish and cover the base with a layer of cherries. Put the flour and sugar into a bowl. Make a well in the flour mixture & add the eggs & begin to mix in the flour. As the mixture thickens, gradually add the milk. Pour this batter over the cherries. Bake in a moderate oven, 375°F, 190°C or gas mark 5 for about 45 minutes to an hour. When cooked the top should be golden brown and the edges rise slightly.



Planting communal Bramley apple tree





Sunnyside Allotment Society



May 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1
2 May Day	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 SAS Committee Meeting	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 Whitsun Bank Holiday	31					

Gooseberries are hardy & will tolerate a certain amount of neglect. But they flower early so need to be sheltered from frost, & they prefer an open, sunny site. Plant between October & February in well-manured soil, giving about 4-5 feet between bushes. Closer spacing will reduce airflow round the plants & could encourage mildew.

Gooseberries have shallow roots so water in well and apply a general purpose fertiliser & good mulch each spring. This is partly to retain moisture in the summer but also to keep the weeds down. Water well when the fruits start to swell if it is dry. After planting, cut back main branches by about ½ to allow a good root system to establish. Then in the next autumn, cut back all the shoots which have formed that year, again by about ½. Fruit is borne on 1 year old and older wood so cutting back side shoots regularly encourages fruiting spurs. Also prune any branches growing close to the ground or crossing to make picking easier.

Most gooseberries are grown as bushes, but they can be grown as cordons or ½ standards which makes picking easier & with prickly varieties, less painful! The culinary varieties such as *Careless*, are best picked green before they are fully ripe; they give a better flavour in pies & fools & they contain more pectin for jam making. The dessert varieties should be left to ripen on the bush. *Whinham's Industry* & *Pax* will gradually become deep red, while *Invicta* and *Leveller* will turn pale or yellowy green. Gooseberries contain Vitamin C, folic acid & potassium. They freeze very well. They are good in pies & the traditional fool. Elderflower cordial enhances the flavour. Both red & green gooseberries cooked with a little sugar are good with mackerel.

Jostaberries are a gooseberry/blackcurrant cross. When picked green they taste of gooseberries; when ripe they are black & sweet with a flavour like blackcurrants. They do well in most soils & are vigorous but untidy growers. Prune back quite hard to an outward facing bud in autumn. The berries are large & easy to pick, the bush is not prickly & it is not susceptible to mildew. Fruit can be frozen, & makes good pies/jam.





Abundance



Sunnyside Allotment Society



June 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 <i>SAS Family Picnic</i>	26
27	28	29	30			

There is nothing like home-grown **strawberries** straight from your own plot. Choose early, mid & later fruiting varieties to extend the harvest. Well-manured fertile soil in a sunny spot is needed. Remove perennial weeds. Plant runners in late summer & remove some flowers in the first year. Water well in dry periods, taking do not splash the fruit. Apply high potash liquid feed once the fruits form. Straw laid under plants in May reduces weed growth. It keeps fruit clean & off the ground where it may rot but it does harbour slugs & woodlice. Planting through black plastic doesn't look so nice but is effective. Cover plants with netting or the birds will get the lot!

After fruiting cut off dead leaves & runners from plants you are keeping, to expose the crowns to the sun. Plantlets on runners from other plants can be potted into small pots. Peg down the runners, water well & leave to root. Sever the runner when rooted, grow the plant on & plant out in October. You can either replace a few plants like this annually or replace the whole lot after about 4 years. Varieties are down to personal taste but *Cambridge Favourite* is popular. Strawberries are adaptable & will also grow in pots, growbags or hanging baskets. You can even create a strawberry table. It may be easier to manage these but they do need a lot more watering/feeding. Strawberries are high in Vitamin C. If your fruit makes it to the kitchen, strawberry shortcake is delicious. Strawberry jam is a treat if you have a glut but extra pectin is needed for a good set.

Blueberries are the original 'superfruits' with their high levels of vitamin C & antioxidants. They are easy to grow but they must be grown in large pots of ericaceous (lime free) compost, & they need to be watered with rainwater. (The allotment soil is too alkaline to grow them well & our tap water is too hard.) They need a sheltered spot but do well in sun or partial shade. They are self-fertile.

Top the compost up every spring & apply blood, fish & bone fertiliser. Site the pots near a water butt for daily watering. The compost needs to be kept moist in summer. After 2 years, prune by cutting out one third of the old wood. Pick once the fruit has been blue for about a week; the berries will come away easily when ripe. For a summer breakfast, layer blueberries, crème fraiche and muesli in a sundae dish or what about blueberry muffins?



Patterns



Sunnyside Allotment Society



July 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 <i>SAS Committee Meeting</i>	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Currants are not fussy where they grow but they do like a free-draining, moisture-retentive soil. Dig in lots of manure before planting. The ideal time to plant is in autumn while the soil is still warm so that the plants get off to a good start before winter. **Blackcurrants** prefer a sunny site but **red** and **white currants** are happy in partial shade. Feed with sulphate of potash each spring and apply a thick mulch to retain moisture during fruit production. Water well in very dry periods especially when newly planted. Currants are usually grown as bushes, but can be trained as cordons or half standards for ease of maintenance and if space is limited.

Blackcurrants should be cut down to 1-2 inches above the ground after planting. After 3 years, prune in autumn cutting out about a quarter of fruited growth. Repeat every year. It is important to cut down to ground level to encourage new growth from the stool. Alternatively, it can be easier to cut out quarter of the fruiting wood at harvest time then you can sit comfortably at a table to pick off the berries! In this way no wood will be more than 4 years old.

Red and **white currants** fruit on wood made the previous season so shorten leaders by about half in November when the bush is dormant, and reduce side shoots to about 2 inches. Currants are reasonably trouble free but watch out for big bud mite in spring.

Red and **white currants** are produced in strings so are quite easy to pick. **Blackcurrants** hang singly or in small bunches so are more fiddly to pick.

There are several varieties of **blackcurrant** to choose from. The modern *Ben* varieties tend to flower later so are less susceptible to frosts and their berries all ripen at about the same time. The new variety *Ebony* has been bred for the size and sweetness of its berries, but whether the flavour of the fruit is as intense is another matter. There are early, mid and late maturing **redcurrants**, *Rovada* being about the latest and the berries keep well on the bush. *Blanka* is a popular **whitecurrant** and there is now a new **rose currant**, *Gloire de Sablon* which is apparently fragrant and sweet.

Currants are full of Vitamin C and antioxidants. They make good jam, jelly or puree. They also freeze well.



Preparing for Open Day



Sunnyside Allotment Society



August 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
Bank Holiday						

Plums, greengages & damsons flower early so to reduce frost damage to the blossom, they need a sheltered site. Many are sold on St Julian A rootstock but this can produce a 15/20 ft tree which is too big for the allotment. Trees are now being grafted onto dwarfing rootstock Pixy which results in 8/10 ft trees; these can also be grown as a fan. The advantage of these smaller trees is that you can use fleece to protect the blossom from frost, and keep the birds off the ripening fruit. They are not fussy about soil but dig in lots of well-rotted manure before planting in the autumn. Apply general purpose fertiliser in spring followed by thick mulch, keeping it away from the trunk.

Plums do not need much pruning; cut out dead or diseased wood. Never prune in winter to avoid silver leaf infection. Prune in April to June when the sap is rising. The plum moth (related to the codling moth) lays eggs on the fruit & the grubs eat their way in. To reduce this hang pheromone traps in plum trees in June/July. This will trap males & so reduce the number of mated females.

Many plums are self-fertile but all will crop better with cross-pollination; you may have to wait several years for a crop. Reduce the number of fruit if you have a heavy crop as overcrowding can lead to biennial bearing.

The choice of plum is subjective but find out what grows well locally. Broadway Orchard in Bourne End grows *Czar* (culinary), *Opal* (dessert) & *Victoria* (dual purpose). *Rivers Early Prolific* can be a good cropper & is a small tree. **Greengages** are deliciously sweet & juicy but they can be slow to bear fruit. *Cambridge Gage* has replaced the original greengage & is more reliable. **Damsons** are sharp but are good for cooking, jam & wine making. *Merryweather* is a good choice. Plums contain lots of Vitamin A & potassium. They can be frozen for use in pies & jam later.

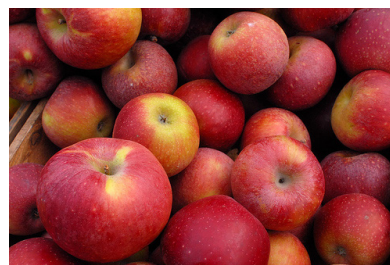




Muck and magic!



Sunnyside Allotment Society



September 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 <i>SAS Committee Meeting</i>	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Apples prefer a sunny aspect with well-drained loamy soil but check that the tree will not shade your neighbour's plot. Ideally plant in November. Enrich soil with well-rotted manure. Dig a wide enough hole to spread the roots. The graft union should be above soil level. Back fill with $\frac{3}{4}$ compost/manure to $\frac{1}{4}$ soil plus bone meal. Choose $\frac{2}{3}$ year old tree which has been partly trained if you have no experience of pruning. Rootstock controls size & vigour. M9 will result in an 8/10ft tree while M26 results in a 10/12ft tree. These dwarfing rootstocks fruit earlier.

Consider tree types according to your available space ie bush; standard, cordon or step-over. Most trees need a pollinator partner nearby; gardening books list the groups. Most pruning is done in winter when the tree is dormant, to shape & restrict growth. Light summer pruning can be done to reduce new growth & to encourage fruiting spurs. Trees tend to shed some apples ('June drop') but you may need to remove more to prevent branches breaking & to allow fruit to achieve maximum size. Use a winter oil spray or grease bands in winter to reduce the number of pests. Choose a 'spur bearer' to avoid pruning fruiting tips by mistake.

Apples contain a lot of Vitamin C & valuable antioxidants. There are many different varieties to choose from, both culinary or dessert & apple events are held in October where you can taste (eg Tring Apple Festival). *Lane's Prince Albert* is our local apple, grown on a nursery where Woods now stands. *Bramleys Seedling* celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2010 & we have planted one on SS Old for communal use.

Pears flower earlier than apples so need a more sheltered position to prevent the blossom being damaged by frost; they also hate cold east winds. The fruit needs more warmth & sun to allow sugars to develop. Trees are long-lived & too big for an allotment so grow a cordon or espalier on Quince C rootstock to restrict vigour. They are more long lived than apples but less able to tolerate drought. It is tricky to store pears for very long but sweet pickled pears will keep. Pears are rich in potassium & fibre. Poached pears with a chocolate sauce is delicious.





Autumn



Sunnyside Allotment Society



October 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						BST ends

Quinces and Medlars are both very attractive trees and you could easily keep them just for their looks, considering their fruit an added bonus. The quince has beautiful scented pink blossom late in spring, associated with bright green foliage, while its golden fruits in autumn glow in the sun. The **medlar's** flowers are like small white dog roses, and later in the year its foliage turns a beautiful russet, associating well with the greenish-brown fruits. It often takes on a weeping habit.

They are both quite out of fashion now, but were very popular in times past. We tend to eat fruit raw nowadays, which was not done so much until modern times, and these two fruits don't lend themselves to plucking from the tree & eating straight away. **Medlars** can be cooked, or the fruits eaten when over-ripe – called bletted.

Quinces are hard even when ripe and need to be cooked in some way. They make fantastic jelly and are the basis of a thick paste called membrillo which is eaten with cheese.

Quinces smell delicious and when cooked they turn a delicate pink. They can share crumble and pie with apples or pears or can be poached.

The trees are grown on their own roots, but they do not reach an enormous size. Both **quince** and **medlar** hail from warmer climes than the UK originally, so may not thrive outdoors in the north of the UK, but would do very well at Sunnyside. The **quince** tree on A10 has produced a huge crop every year. Its late flowering means it misses the frosts and it is self-fertile (as is the **medlar**).

They only require minimal pruning in the winter to remove any dead or badly placed branches. Various nurseries sell them, mostly as bare-root plants but you will occasionally find them in containers. You will usually be offered **medlar Nottingham** or **quince Meeches Prolific** or **Vranja** which are all popular varieties but there are many more varieties. Have a look at the Keepers Nursery catalogue to see a much larger range.

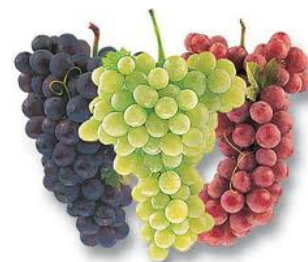




Fencing project on Sunnyside New



Sunnyside Allotment Society



November 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 <i>SAS Committee Meeting</i>	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 <i>SAS AGM</i>	27
28	29	30				

Several tenants at Sunnyside already grow grapes and melons. But they do need a very sheltered site & long hot summers.

Grapevines should be planted in March. Dig the soil deeply. It doesn't need to be very fertile; this can lead to excess foliage & lack of fruit. The vines need support against a warm shed or on vertical cordons. Train the main stem up a post, with short fruiting spurs trained horizontally to either side. Prune in winter. Vines fruit on current season's growth, so cut back last season's fruited growth. For summer pruning check gardening books or internet. Fruit should be produced after 3 years. No need for annual feed but give high potash feed when grapes form. As bunches ripen, remove leaves to allow exposure to sun & to increase airflow. Let bunches hang on vine to allow sugars to form. Try variety *Siegerrebe*. Grapes contain antioxidants & Vitamin C.

Kiwi fruit are a challenge. The fruit grow on vines & they need a long hot ripening period. They are sensitive to frosts. They are vigorous & need space and support. Dig in lots of well-rotted manure to provide fertile well drained soil. Add more muck each spring. Self-fertile variety *Jenny* requires less space but produces smaller fruit. Female plant *Hayward* is most reliable but needs a male pollinator eg *Tomuri*. For best pollination, dig large planting hole & plant them together. Prune in winter rather as for vines. Fruits should ripen by October.

Melon seeds should be sown indoors in April & brought on at 18/20 degrees. They can be planted out into a cold frame or greenhouse in June. Prepare the soil in spring & cover with black plastic to allow it to warm up. Pinch out growing tips to encourage side shoots which will bear flowers. Hand pollinate flowers. Allow 3-4 fruit per plant. Keep moist & give high potash feed. Support fruit on wood or in nets. Cantaloupe melons do best in cool conditions & *Sweetheart* is a good variety to try.





Christmas drinks in the snow



Sunnyside Allotment Society



December 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Boxing Day	Christmas Day Holiday				Christmas Eve New Year's Eve	Xmas Drinks Christmas Day

Blackberries are very easy to grow. They can be planted on a north facing site & will tolerate partial shade but they do need space. Modern varieties are more compact. If planting them along the edge of your allotment, set them well back from the path to avoid being attacked by fruiting spurs as you pass! Plant in well manured ground in November having dug out perennial weeds. Growth is vigorous so a frame of stout posts and wires is required.

Blackberries fruit on one-year old canes so those that grew last year will bear fruit this year. This year's fruiting growth should be pruned out in winter. The new canes which have grown this year should be tied in as they grow to prevent a tangle. To make this process easier, plant your blackberry in the centre of your row. Tie in all your new canes to the right. In the autumn when these have fruited, cut them all out. Tie in your new canes to the left; then cut them all down after they have fruited, and so on. (Or you can use the upper wires for fruiting canes & low wires for new growth.)

Fruit is produced July to October. Pick when fruit is dry on a sunny day to prevent mould forming. *Fantasia*, discovered on an allotment, has very large berries. Among the thornless varieties is *Oregon Thornless* which has deeply toothed decorative leaves which turn red in autumn.

Hybrid berries are usually a raspberry/blackberry cross. They are not as vigorous & need a sunnier position.

Loganberries are the oldest hybrid. They produce long dark fruit which have a distinctive sharp taste. Good for culinary use. **Tayberries** produce good yields of sweet aromatic fruit in July/August. Choose the virus-free Medana strain. Look out for Boysenberry, Silvanberry & Veitchberry too. These berries are all rich in Vitamin C & freeze well. They make delicious jams, jellies & crumbles.





Fruit growing is ideally suited to the sunny south-facing aspect of Sunnyside Allotments with its well-drained soil, & 2010 was a really good year. We have only been able to give a few pointers here but it is not complicated, it need not be time-consuming & it can be very rewarding. If you don't fancy slaving over hot pans of jam at the height of summer, most fruits can be frozen & made into jam later. Good husbandry is vital to reduce the risk of pests & diseases. See what other allotment tenants are growing; ask them which varieties do well for them.



All the photographs in this calendar have been taken by Sunnyside Allotment Society members & several were entries in the Photographic Competition. Thanks to all who have contributed photos.

If you feel tempted to take on an allotment, tenancy forms are available from the Chairman of Sunnyside Allotment Society, or from the tea hut on B15. Alternatively phone Berkhamsted Town Council on 01442 228945.

To find out more about Sunnyside Allotment Society and to view more photos in our galleries, visit our website: www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk