



CALENDAR 2012





Winter hoar frost



Sunnyside Allotment Society



January 2012

<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Sun</i>
						1 New Year's Day
2 Bank Holiday	3	4	5	6	7	8 SAS working party
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	31					

Potatoes were growing in the Andes thousands of years ago. They were introduced to Europe by the Spaniards in the latter part of the 16th century after the Spanish conquest of the Inca empire. They were slow to be adopted in Europe but by the 19th century had become an important food staple. Potatoes are good for us in spite of being full of carbohydrates as they contain a significant amount of Vitamin C & Vitamin B (Niacin), also traces of copper & phosphorous. The small green potato fruit should not be eaten. They produce the toxin solanin & are poisonous, as are tubers that turn green after exposure to light.

Potatoes are an easy crop to grow but they do take up a fair amount of ground. If space is short, concentrate on a few plants of early potatoes. These can also be grown in bags or tubs. The variety is huge so we are intending to hold a **Potato Tasting Event in September 2012** where you can bring several of your own favourite varieties for other people to taste. Remember to keep back a few of your early potatoes to include. The more people who participate, the greater the variety.

Dill & potato scones

8 oz self-raising flour
1 ½ oz butter
1 tbsp finely chopped dill
6 oz mashed potato
2-3 tbsp milk

Pre-heat the oven to 230°C/Gas 8. Grease a baking sheet. Sift the flour into the bowl & rub in the butter with your fingertips. Add the dill & pinch of salt & stir. Add the mashed potato to the mixture & enough milk to make a soft, pliable dough. Roll out the dough on a well-floured surface until it is fairly thin. Cut into rounds. Place the scones on the prepared baking sheet, leaving space between each one. Bake for 20-25 mins until risen & golden brown. They can be eaten as a snack or topped with flaked salmon, kipper or mackerel for a light supper.



Working parties



Sunnyside Allotment Society

February 2012



<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Sun</i>
		1	2	3	4	5 <i>SAS working party</i>
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 <i>Shrove Tuesday</i>	22 <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	23	24	25	26
27	28	29				

Choosing which **seed potatoes** to buy depends on three things; how much space you have got, how you are going to use your crop & your own tastes. Potatoes are described in terms which refer to the time taken from planting to harvesting. '**Earlies**' grow quickly & take about 12-14 weeks, & can be eaten straight from the ground; '**second earlies**' take about 15-18 weeks, & '**main crop**' require 16-22 weeks depending on conditions. These can be stored for use over winter.

Potatoes are divided on a scale between *waxy* or *floury*. Waxy potatoes are low in starch & high in water content, while the floury ones are high in starch or dry matter & lower in water content. Certain varieties will be better for different cooking methods. If you don't have much space, probably the best choice is **earlies** which take up less space & give you that exquisite 'new potato' taste in early summer. A 3 kg bag will plant about 2 x 5 m/15 ft rows. The ideal seed potato is the size of a hen's egg. Taste is obviously very subjective, but flavour can be influenced by soil conditions, weather, cultivation etc. If you eat a delicious potato in Birkenhead it may not taste the same grown in Berkhamsted!

Leek, potato & rocket soup

2 oz butter
1 chopped onion
3 chopped leeks
2 diced medium floury potatoes
1 ½ pints chicken stock or water
2 large handfuls rocket, roughly chopped
garlic flavoured ciabatta croutons to serve

Melt the butter in a large pan, then add the onion, leeks & potatoes & stir until they are coated in butter. Heat until sizzling, then reduce the heat to low. Cover the pan & sweat the vegetables for 15 mins. Pour in the stock or water, bring to the boil & simmer for 20 mins until the vegetables are tender. Liquidise the soup, return to the pan, add the rocket & cook gently for 5 mins. Season to taste & serve with croutons.

First crops planted





Sunnyside Allotment Society

March 2012



Growing conditions. Potatoes prefer a sunny open site. The soil should be dug & manured the previous autumn. Avoid lime; potatoes prefer an acid soil with a pH of 4.6 & over. Well rotted compost & some blood, fish & bone fertiliser should be incorporated before planting. It is said that potatoes are good for cleaning rough ground. There is nothing magical about the potato; it is the preparation & fertilisation of the ground, the earthing up of the plants & finally the harvesting of the crop that improves the land. So this piece of ground will have been worked 3 times in one season.

Traditionally potatoes were planted on Good Friday but it depends on the weather & the state of the soil. If conditions are right, mid March is the time to plant '**earlies**', '**2nd earlies**' follow at the end of March & '**maincrop**' are planted soon after in April. Seed potatoes can be *chitted* ie forced to sprout before they are planted. About 6 weeks before planting, place seed potatoes on egg trays in a cool light place to sprout. The sprouts should be about 1" when planted. This is especially beneficial for **earlies** as they will get off to a quicker start.

Sweet potato bread with cinnamon & walnuts

1 medium sweet potato
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 lb strong white flour
1 tsp dried yeast
2 oz walnut pieces
½ pint warmed milk

Boil the peeled potato whole until tender. Meanwhile, sift the cinnamon & flour together into a large bowl. Stir in the dried yeast. Mash the potato & mix into the dry ingredients with the nuts. Make a well in the centre & pour in the milk. Bring the mixture together with a round-bladed knife, place on to a floured surface & knead for 5 mins. Return the dough to a bowl & cover with a damp cloth.

Leave to rise for 1 hour. Turn the dough out & knock back to remove any air bubbles. Knead again for a few mins. If the dough feels sticky add more flour. Shape into a ball & place the bread in an oiled & base-lined 2 lb loaf tin. Cover with a damp cloth & leave to rise in a warm place for 1 hour. Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas 6 & bake on the middle shelf for 25 mins.

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



Spring blossom





Sunnyside Allotment Society

April 2012



To cultivate potatoes you can either take out a drill or plant your seed potatoes in individual holes. They need to be planted about 10cm/4" deep. If you are using a trench, a good tip is to cut some comfrey leaves (if they have grown yet), put them in the base of the trench & cover with soil. This will help feed the tubers as they grow. **Earlies** should be planted about 30cm/1 ft apart with rows about 45cm/1 ½ ft apart. **2nd earlies & maincrop** need more space so should be planted 45cm/1 ½ ft apart with rows 60cm/2ft apart. As soon as the leaves appear, the plants should be *earthed up*; draw the soil from the sides of the rows up & over the plants. This will protect the growing tubers from the light & encourage more growth. It will also help to protect them from frost.

The emerging leaves are very susceptible to frost. If frost is forecast, plants need to be protected by soil, fleece, straw or newspaper. If the leaves do get frosted, the plants will survive & grow new leaves, but this will delay the formation of potato tubers. Gardeners are divided on whether potatoes need watering. In a dry year, some people water when the plants are flowering, others water well before harvesting ie water the next few plants to be dug for about a week before you dig them. Others claim that if you have added enough organic matter into the soil, this should retain adequate moisture.

Lyonnaise potatoes

2 lb floury potatoes
vegetable oil for shallow frying
2 tbsp butter
1 tbsp olive oil
2 medium onions, sliced into rings
sea salt
1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Boil the potatoes for 10 mins. Leave to cool slightly, then slice finely. Heat the vegetable oil & shallow fry the potatoes (in 2 batches) until crisp, turning occasionally. Meanwhile, melt the butter with the olive oil & fry the onions until golden. Drain the onions & potatoes on kitchen paper, then mix them together carefully in a bowl with the sea salt. Sprinkle with parsley.

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



Gardening in progress





Sunnyside Allotment Society

May 2012



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

Earlies or new potatoes will be ready to harvest after about 12-14 weeks when the flowers are fully open. Use them as you dig them. They will not store & if left in the ground they will grow & lose their new potato flavour. **2nd earlies** need about 15-18 weeks in the ground & can be harvested once the foliage begins to die down. These can be kept in a cool dark place & consumed once the **earlies** have finished.

Main crop potatoes need a longer growing time of up to 22 weeks or more & can be harvested once the foliage turns yellow & dies down. These will be stored for consumption over the winter so it is important that they are harvested carefully so that they keep. Try to dig them on a sunny day when the soil is dry & falls off easily. Lay them on the soil for a couple of hours to allow the skins to set. Put aside any damaged tubers for immediate use. Store the remainder in Hessian or paper sacks with newspaper between the layers, & put them in a cool, dark, frost-free location. Check them regularly.

Aloo sag

1 lb spinach
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tsp black mustard seeds
1 onion, thinly sliced
2 crushed garlic cloves
1" piece finely chopped root ginger
1½ lb firm potatoes, cut into 1" chunks
1 tsp chilli powder
1 tsp salt
120 mls water

Blanch the spinach in boiling water for 3-4 mins. Drain the spinach & when cool squeeze out any remaining liquid. Heat oil in large pan & fry mustard seeds for 2 mins, until they begin to splutter. Add the onion, garlic & ginger & fry for 5 mins & stir.

Add the potatoes, chilli powder, salt & water & cook for 8 mins, stirring occasionally. Finally add the spinach. Cover & simmer for 10-15 mins, until the potatoes are tender.



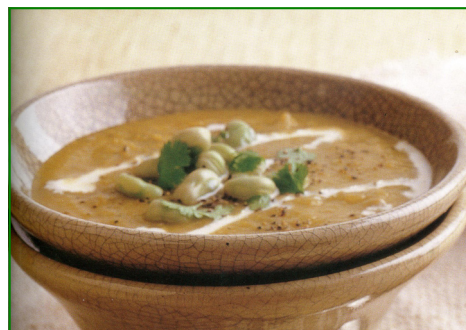
Summer time





Sunnyside Allotment Society

June 2012



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

Pests & diseases. Blight, scab, eelworms & slugs are the main problems on our Allotments. **Blight** is an air-borne fungus which occurs in summer when the weather is still, damp & humid. It usually hits tomatoes first then quickly spreads to potatoes. A sure way to avoid it is to grow only early potatoes. Once the brown blotches appear on the leaves, cut the haulms down to about 2" & burn. The spores will have been dispersed onto the ground so to prevent the tubers being infected, leave the potatoes undisturbed for at least 2 weeks before harvesting. Research into the disease has been done in Hungary & breeders have come up with a number of new varieties which are resistant to blight, *Sarpo Mira* being the best known. This is a floury main crop potato which is also resistant to drought & slugs. *Juliette*, *Romano* & *Mayan Gold* also show good resistance.

Scab may affect the look of the potato but it is alright to eat. It is worse in a dry year. Avoid liming the soil & add organic matter. If scab is a regular problem, grow more resistant varieties such as *Desiree*, *King Edward*, *Lady Christl* or *Maris Peer*. Small black keel **slugs** which live in the soil can do damage. They will be worse in a wet year. *Arran Pilot*, *Desiree* & *Epicure* are said to show resistance. *Cara* produces a good crop & is **eelworm** immune.

Catalan potato & broad bean soup

2 tbsp olive oil
2 chopped onions
3 diced floury potatoes
1 lb fresh broad beans
3 pints vegetable stock
1 bunch coriander, finely chopped
seasoning

Heat the oil in a large pan, fry the onions until softened but not brown. Add the potatoes, beans (reserving a few for garnish) & stock, bring to the boil, then simmer for 5 mins. Stir in coriander & simmer for a further 10 mins. Liquidise & then season. Serve garnished with coriander leaves, beans & cream (optional) or yogurt.



Bloomin' marvellous



Sunnyside Allotment Society

July 2012



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

Boiled & salad potatoes. All early potatoes boil well. They have a high water content which results in waxy flesh. For that special new potato taste, boil or steam the potatoes then once they are cooked, add some butter & chopped mint & place over the heat for a few minutes to absorb the flavour. Salad potatoes, grown for their waxy texture, boil well too. *Charlotte* is a very popular waxy potato & is a good general all rounder, but possibly *Ratte*, & *Juliette* have a better flavour. *Pink Fir Apple*, late to mature, has arguably the best flavour but the tubers are knobbly & mis-shapen. *Harlequin* is a Pink Fir Apple/Charlotte cross which is tasty with smoother tubers. *Vanessa* is a pretty pink in salads while *Maris Peer* is a good cropper. *Lady Christl* can be cropped within about 8 weeks of planting & *Rocket* is very early with waxy white flesh.

Beetroot & potato salad

4 medium beetroot
4 potatoes, peeled & diced
1 red onion, finely chopped
¼ pint low-fat yogurt
2 tsp cider vinegar
2 gherkins, finely chopped
2 tsp creamed horseradish

Boil the beetroot & then peel & chop into rough pieces. Cook the potatoes then place in a bowl with the beetroot & onion. Mix the yogurt, vinegar, gherkins & horseradish & pour over the salad. Toss & serve with parsley sprigs.

Creamed spinach & potato soup

1 large onion, finely chopped
1 crushed garlic clove
2 lb floury potatoes, diced
2 celery sticks
2 pints vegetable stock
9 oz spinach leaves
½ lb low-fat cream cheese
½ pint milk
dash of dry sherry

Place the onion, garlic, potatoes, celery & stock in a large pan & simmer for 20 mins. Season the soup & add the spinach, cook for a further 10 mins. Liquidise the soup & stir in the cream cheese & milk. Add a dash of sherry & serve with crusty bread & chopped fresh parsley.



Sunnyside Open Day





Sunnyside Allotment Society

August 2012



<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Sun</i>
		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		
Late Summer Bank Holiday						

Roast & mashed potatoes. For these cooking methods you need floury potatoes with high dry matter content. Par-boil the potatoes before roasting & toss in the pan to roughen up the edges. Roasting in goose fat is considered to give superior results. *King Edward* has long been thought of as one of the best varieties for roasting & *Golden Wonder* is another old variety which has a good flavour & makes a good roast potato. *Desiree* & *Valor* both do well locally & are good roasted. They are also good for mashed potato as are *Lady Balfour* & the pink-skinned *Rooster*.

Chocolate potato cake

7 oz sugar
9 oz butter
4 eggs, separated
10 oz dark chocolate
3 oz ground almonds
5½ oz mashed potato
8 oz self-raising flour
1 tsp cinnamon
3 tbsp milk
white & dark chocolate shavings

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Grease & base-line a 9" round cake tin with a circle of baking parchment. In a large bowl cream together the sugar & 8 oz butter until light & fluffy. Then beat the egg yolks into the creamed mixture one at a time until it is smooth & creamy. Finely chop or grate 6 oz of the chocolate & stir it into the creamed mixture with the ground almonds. Pass the mashed potato through a sieve & stir it into the creamed chocolate mixture. Sift together the flour & cinnamon & fold into the mixture with the milk. Whisk the egg whites until they hold stiff, but not dry peaks & fold into the cake mixture. Spoon into the prepared tin & smooth over the top, making a slight hollow in the middle to help keep the surface of the cake level during cooking. Bake in the oven for 1¼ hours until a wooden toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool slightly in the tin, then turn out & cool on a wire rack.

Break up the remaining chocolate into a heatproof bowl & stand it over a saucepan of hot water. Add the remaining butter in small pieces & stir well until the chocolate has melted & the mixture is smooth & glossy. Peel off the lining paper & trim the top of the cake so that it is level. Smooth over the chocolate icing & allow it to set. Decorate with white & dark chocolate shavings & serve with lashings of whipped cream.



Winning entry - The Very Hungry Caterpillar



Highly commended - Dolly Parton



Scarecrow competition





Sunnyside Allotment Society

September 2012



Chips & baked potatoes

Chips don't have to be deep-fried, they can be cooked in the oven. One of the best varieties for chips is *Yukon Gold* with its lovely golden flesh. *Mayan Gold* has a similar good colour while *Maris Piper* has always been popular for chips. Two of the most popular varieties for baking, *Desiree* & *Rooster* have attractive red skins. But *Saxon* & *Picasso* also produce large regular tubers which are suitable for baking.

Many of the varieties suggested in the calendar are also good **general purpose potatoes**; *Desiree*, *Picasso* & *Rooster* being good examples. *Maris Peer*, *Red Duke of York*, *Rubesse*, a new variety, & *Vivaldi* all come into this category.

Boulangere potatoes

1 lb maincrop potatoes, very finely sliced
2 onions, finely sliced into rings
2 crushed cloves garlic
2 oz butter
½ pint vegetable stock
chopped parsley

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Grease the sides of a large ovenproof dish. Line the dish with some of the sliced potatoes. Scatter some onions & garlic on top. Layer up the remaining potatoes & onions, seasoning between each layer. Push the vegetables down into the dish & dot the top with butter. Pour the stock over & bake in the oven for 1½ hours, covering with foil after 1 hour if the top starts to over brown. Serve with parsley & salt & pepper sprinkled over the top. To make this dish more substantial you could grate cheese over it before you bake it.

Home made oven chips

4 medium to large baking potatoes
olive oil

Preheat the oven to the highest temperature. Lightly oil a large shallow roasting tin & place in oven. Cut the unpeeled potatoes into chips & par-boil for 5 mins. Drain & dry the potatoes & coat lightly with oil. Place the chips into the hot tin. Sprinkle with sea salt & roast for about 20 mins until they are golden brown, crisp & slightly puffy.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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 <i>SAS Potato Tasting</i>



Rest and relaxation



Sunnyside Allotment Society

October 2012



<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Sun</i>
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				

Further information Most vegetable gardening books contain useful information on growing potatoes. Alan Romans, a Scottish potato grower, is the acknowledged authority. He has written the exhaustive & definitive guide *The Potato Book* & also the *Guide to Seed Potatoes* www.alanromans.com. Another good book is *Potato* by Alex Barker & Sally Mansfield, which also gives recipes. There is also a wealth of information on the internet. Several seed potato suppliers offer growing tips as well as descriptive lists of potatoes. Many provide charts of disease resistant varieties & list potatoes according to their cooking qualities. Edwin Tucker of Ashburton does this & the lists also include parentage of varieties when known: www.edwintucker.com. Another example is www.lovepotatoes.co.uk/the-potato/potato-varieties, which gives a point on the waxy to floury scale for each variety.

Tangy potato salad

3 lb new or salad potatoes, cooked in skins
 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
 3 tbsp olive oil
 3 oz chopped red onion
 125 mls mayonnaise
 2 tbsp chopped fresh tarragon
 1 celery stick, thinly sliced

Mix together the vinegar & mustard, then slowly whisk in the oil. Slice the potatoes & put in a large bowl. Add the onions to the potatoes & pour the dressing over them. Season, then toss gently to combine. Leave to stand for at least 30 mins. Mix together the mayonnaise & tarragon. Gently stir into the potatoes along with the celery. Serve garnished with celery leaves & tarragon.

Potato & radish salad

1 lb new or salad potatoes cooked in skins
 3 tbsp olive oil
 2 tbsp wine vinegar
 2 tsp coarse grain mustard
 1 tsp honey
 6-8 radishes, thinly sliced

Cut warm potatoes in half & place in a bowl. Mix well the dressing ingredients with seasoning in a bowl. Pour dressing over potatoes & stir in well & leave to stand for an hour. Finally add the radishes & garnish with snipped chives.



Crops for the winter



Sunnyside Allotment Society

November 2012



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

Containers can be used if you don't have room to grow potatoes on the plot. Make use of **pots or tubs**, but **plastic potato bags** which are on sale for the purpose are perhaps more manageable in the growing & harvesting processes. Empty plastic compost sacks would work as well, with added drainage holes. Put a few crocks in the bottom & then add about 30cm/12" compost. Plant about 3 or 4 tubers – if you grow more you will get fewer smaller potatoes. Cover with 10cm/4" compost. As the plants grow, cover if frost is forecast. Earth up stems with more compost by gradually rolling up the bag. Piles of **tyres** can also be used. Fill the bottom tyre with compost, plant 2 or 3 tubers in the second & cover with more compost. As the leaves grow, add more tyres & compost. The soil in any container used should be kept moist.

Potatoes can also be planted through **black polythene** or **ground cover** material. Once the soil is prepared, cover with the material. This will help the soil to warm up ready for earlier planting. Cut a cross in the material & plant the tuber through it. Alternatively, remove the material while you plant the tubers then replace. Once the leaves start to grow, you will be able to see where to cut the material to allow the leaves to grow through. This method is beneficial as you don't have to earth up, the soil will be kept warm & the growing tubers won't be exposed to the light. Also the weeds will be suppressed & moisture in the soil will be retained.

Sweet potato crisps

2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled
vegetable oil for deep-frying

Cut the sweet potatoes into very thin slices & place into a bowl of salted water. Heat ½" layer of oil in a frying pan. While the oil is heating, pat dry the slices on kitchen paper. Fry a few slices at a time until crisp, then drain on kitchen paper. Sprinkle with salt & serve warm.



Christmas drinks in the snow again



Sunnyside Allotment Society

December 2012



<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Sun</i>
					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
Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	Boxing Day				<i>xmas drinks</i>
31						
New Year's Eve						

Sweet potatoes can be grown outside in a sheltered spot, but they need a long warm growing season to do well; at least 4 months. More reliable crops will result from growing in a greenhouse or polytunnel. They prefer a rich soil of about pH6. Most of the seed companies sell *slips* ie shoots from sweet potato tubers. These should be potted on to provide a good root system. Plant in May but delay planting outside until the soil is at least 12°C/52°F. Plant about 3 slips per pot with at least 2 leaf nodes under the soil; more will lead to overcrowding & small tubers. They can also be planted through black polythene or ground cover material to keep up the temperature of the soil. Harvest in September.

Heritage varieties ie pre 1950 are becoming increasingly available from seed merchants. The seed potatoes we buy now are mostly hybrids but the old heritage varieties are non-hybrids bred as a result of generations of careful selection. These give you even more choice regarding colour, flavour & texture, but some might require more attention to growing conditions & cultivation. *Highland Burgundy Red* is better steamed than boiled. *Shetland Black* has yellow flesh & dark blue skin & is good for baking. *Red Duke of York* is good boiled when dug early but is better for baking or chips if left in the ground.

Hash browns

60 mls olive oil
1 lb cooked potato, diced or grated
1 small chopped onion
seasoning & chives to garnish

Heat the oil in a large heavy based frying pan until very hot. Add the potatoes in a single layer. Scatter the onion on top & season well. Cook on a medium heat, pressing down on the potatoes with a spatula to squash them together. When the potatoes are browned underneath, turn them over in sections with a spatula & fry until the other side is golden brown & lightly crispy, pressing down again. Serve with a garnish of chives.



Other potato serving suggestions. *Mashed potato* can be made more interesting by adding eg. mustard, cooked celeriac, or grated cheese. As an alternative to butter & milk, use olive oil & garlic to mash. Leftover mash can be used in potato cakes; vary by adding onions, cheese, herbs or fish. An egg can be used to bind the mixture. Mash can also be used to thicken soups, as a topping for pies & in bubble & squeak. As well as the standard fillings for *baked potato* try more imaginative ones such as avocado & bacon or stir-fry vegetables or other tasty leftovers. *Frittata* is basically a Spanish omelette with ingredients such as slices of potato, onions, garlic, peppers & sometimes cheese. *Steaming* potatoes is a good alternative to boiling, especially for floury varieties that tend to break up in the water. For new potatoes mix them with a little oil & mint in the steamer for flavour. To vary *roast potatoes*, steam them with turmeric & chilli flakes, before roasting. The addition of garlic & rosemary provides another good flavour.



2011 was an excellent year for fruit on Sunnyside

To complement our focus on potatoes in this year's calendar we will be holding a **Potato Tasting Event** on **23rd September 2012**. This will give tenants the opportunity to actually taste a wide range of potatoes and to discuss their own differing experiences of growing potatoes at Sunnyside. Further details will be available in a future newsletter.

We will be holding a an allotment party on **Tuesday 5th June 2012** to celebrate the **Queen's Diamond Jubilee** for tenants, and their family, friends and neighbours.

To find out more about Sunnyside Allotment Society, visit our website: www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk

If you feel tempted to take on an allotment please contact Berkhamsted Town Council on 01442 228945 to be put on the waiting list.