

BOGs notes of meeting held 18/04/12

Finn Jensen, Gail King, Jan Langowski (on crutches), Jan Melloy, Phil Knowles.

As expected only a small select group battled their way through the cold, wet and windy April weather to attend the meeting!!

Phil wanted advice on how to overcome the problems he was having growing tomatoes, onions and cucumbers.

Onions – a lot of his onions had suffered neck rot after harvesting. Suggestions were that part of the cause could be due to poor drainage, so improve drainage by digging in more organic material such as well-rotted manure or compost.

Another idea was related to drying out the onions. Jan and Jan allow their onions tops to turn yellow before lifting the onions and then lay them out on trays to be dried out in a warm, sunny place until dried out thoroughly. Then they invert them upside down to finish off the drying process and then plait them into onion ropes.

We also discussed the feeding regime – Phil uses chicken pellets and organic growmore; Ash uses fish, blood and bone, and Jan uses his chicken s**t solution.

Tomatoes – most of his plants get very bad leaf curl mid way through the growing season, which reduces the yield. He thought that it might be related to the huge temperature differences there were between daytime and nighttime temperatures. It was suggested that it might also be down to the watering and feeding regime.

This led to a discussion about the use of Grow Bag Pots, which Jan and Jan have used for a long time and Phil has just invested in. The concept behind them is that they encourage the development of secondary roots that allow greater uptake of water and fertiliser. They also help in making watering more consistent, avoiding blossom end rot or fruit splitting. *To read up about these pots just Google “grow bag pots”.*

Ash uses a tiny amount of lime (dolomitic is best) dissolved in water when the tomatoes are developing and reckons it helps avoid blossom end rot and fruit splitting. Jan uses liquid seaweed feed on his tomatoes, which also contains calcium and should also overcome these problems.

Chelsea score 1-0 against Barcelona!!

As a side issue Ash, advised that you need to keep pepper plant roots cool to get good fruiting. So he places the pepper plant pot into a larger pot so the internal pot stays cool.

Cucumber – Phil’s cucumbers grow well to start off with, but then fruits and leaves start going mouldy. He thought this was botrytis but there seems to be whole list of cucurbit (posh name for the cucumber, marrow squash family) troubles that can lead to this. Poor drainage and soil preparation; over watering; under watering; too much humidity, poor ventilation; splashing the fruit when watering or the fruit coming into contact with the soil. Jan and Jan grow their cucumbers higher up in the greenhouse to allow maximum light, and Ash has found the plants nearest the door in his polytunnel grow the best, proof that they need good ventilation.

Announcements

Black Gold - Finn said that he was still having trouble getting anywhere with the Black Gold delivery, particularly not getting replies to his calls to Mark Dempsey. Phil said he’ll try and chase it up and in the meantime Finn will email all those who have paid to see if they still want the compost.

Plant Sale – Don’t forget Pat’s plant sale on Saturday 12th May at the Chapel. Besides buying plants, if you have any surplus plants to spare take them along in the morning or even earlier to Pat and Rodger’s.

Horse manure – Gail King has lots of horse manure free to good homes, (or even gardens), contact her at gailking88@hotmail.com .

Topical tips – To protect your bulbs in pots from mice put very fine mesh over the top and bottom of the pot.

If preparing new beds, walk over the soil to compact it, it avoids getting air pockets which can affect seed germination.

It’s time to get those onion sets and potatoes in, but be prepared with fleece to give them protection from frosts.

Trim any hedges or windbreaks.

Finish pruning raspberries.

Never plant cucumbers and melons in the same greenhouse/polytunnel they can cross-pollinate.

Chelsea win 1-0

