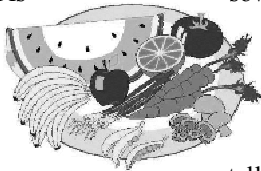


M.U.W Allotments and Gardens Association

It's not easy being a contributor. Well there I was in December, still waiting to see if Santa had received my letter and wondering if it would be tears again on the big day, when the Editor (who must be obeyed) mentioned an approaching deadline. This pronouncement was accompanied by a hard stare. As a true wimp I rushed home and cranked up the trusty laptop. There followed a long pause - it is difficult to put yourself in the end of January frame of mind when it's turkey and Christmas pudding that's occupying your attention.



Muck, no Bullets and Badgers

In the lead-up to the festive season you may remember that we had a pleasant and very dry autumn but since then we have had a couple of really wet months. This coincided with the arrival of about two tons of manure at the allotment and I needed to move my share across to my plot (thanks Chris for hosting the heap!) It may have been two tons when it arrived but with the rain it seemed to gain weight. Still, I am almost there and the preparation of the ground for next year is proceeding haltingly in the drier spells. Despite the rather cool and sometimes dreary weather, I do enjoy the wide views from the allotment, the fresh air and the great sense of expectation as I optimistically plan the great successes that I am sure will follow this year.

My one major project will be to find a way of stopping the badgers eating all my sweetcorn again; several solutions have been suggested but let me assure you that I am only considering the non-

lethal ones. I will let you know how things work out.

Hot Tips

For those of you with a desire for tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and other exotica, it is not too early to think about sowing seed (in a warm place or heated propagator). These plants need to be well away by the time the weather warms up if you are to get a good crop. However, Linda tells me, (a bit like the Editor, she commands attention), that she intends to stagger the cucumbers this year to avoid the deluge of fruit we experienced last year and from which we still bear the emotional scars.

By the time you read this the January Cheese and Wine Evening will have been and gone. We had a very interesting talk in November by Roger Turner on *How to improve your Garden*. As a designer, architect and author he was very well qualified to talk and I found it fascinating. Preceding that, in October, we had a talk on medicinal plants.

Spring Talks-Please Come!

Our next talks are; *Flowers of the Swiss Alps* by Mornee Button on **24th February** and on an even more exotic theme, Malcolm Brownsword will talk on *Growing Hardy Orchids in your Garden and Cold Greenhouse*, on **24th March**. All talks take place in Milton Village Hall and start at 7:30 pm.

Everyone is welcome, both members and non-members and this applies to the good people of Shipton just as much as it does to Milton dwellers.

Tony Lewis