

Newsletter

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Gardening in a Changing Climate

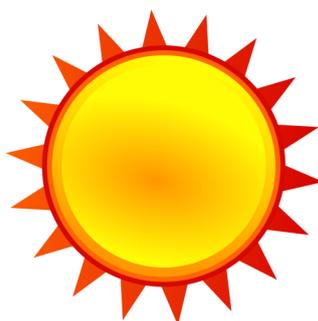
Climate change has numerous threats and we are already experiencing some changes to our climate, including more unpredictable weather patterns. We can, however, plan to take advantage of longer periods without rain in the south, more storms and windy periods and floods and a longer growing season, by using more appropriate plants that thrive in such conditions. In the longer growing periods we can use more edible plants to enhance the crops. We need to avoid those plants that are intolerant to flood/excess water so we don't lose plants in extreme weather periods.

Water capture for dry periods includes using water butts and using water storage, e.g. downpipes to underground water tanks, so summer watering can be used where required. Using compost from garden waste will also help to stop evaporation from the soil and add in nutrients to help fertilise the soil. The use of shredded bark also helps to stop evaporation and also adds nutrients while preventing weed growth.

Fruit and vegetables can be sheltered by planting by walls, for example, to avoid storm damage. Cold and heat tolerant plants and trees are useful including currant (*Ribes*) and lime (*Tilia*).

- Insect pests are likely to be more prevalent in a changing climate and so we need to use strategies to ensure we avoid monocultures and have mixed plants/crops in our gardening. Companion plants such as French marigolds could be increasingly important to include in planting to help prevent pest infestation in crops such as runner beans.

We have concentrated here on growing fruit and vegetables, but ask at garden centres when choosing plants to ensure you choose those that are robust and will not die if the weather is extreme or changeable. Vulnerable plants that may have been successful in some environments in the past may no longer thrive or survive in a changing climate.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday February 9th—Seed Swap

Methodist Church 10am - 12

Working Party Dates

Jubilee Orchard Sunday February 10th 11—1pm

Westbrooke Friday s March 8th, April 12th - 2—3.30

Vicarage Sundays March 24th , April 28th 10.30—12.30

FARMERS' MARKETS

February 9th

March 9th

April 13th

ENERGY ALTON

Weds 13th March - 7.30pm

AGM and Sharon Watson—Recycling in E Hants

Weds 15th May—7.30pm

Consumer Culture , Circular Economy & Repair Cafes

Friday March 22nd—Alton Maltings 6.00 for 6.30pm start

FILM - TOMORROW

Be inspired by the award-winning, positive and affirming film 'Tomorrow', showcasing creative solutions across food, energy, transport, economics and education; many community-led. Featured projects include one that helped to inspire ALFI, Incredible Edible Todmorden. The screening at the Alton Maltings—doors open at 6pm for 6:30pm start on Friday 22 March. It will be followed by discussion over food and drink.

Hosted by The Alton Society, Energy Alton and ALFI.

ALFI SEED SWAP

'Seedy Saturday' on February 9th (10am–12pm, Alton Methodist Church Hall) gives you the chance to pick up some new varieties to grow in exchange for your excess seed.

Seed packets usually have more seed than you're going to want to grow, so divide out some of the excess and bring them along.

Sharing seeds you've harvested from last year's successful crops offers other gardeners seed that may be more adapted to our micro-climate.

Please do not bring seed if you have any doubts about its viability. For more information on viable storage times and methods see our guide at altonlocalfood.org.uk/projects/seed-saving-guide/

Don't forget to label your seeds with type, variety and date saved.

Spare envelopes or bags will be available on the day for you to put your selected seeds into.

Swapping seeds like this helps preserve lesser known varieties and maintain genetic diversity. The more varieties we maintain the more options we will have to deal with pests, diseases and a changing climate. It also reduces wastage and helps gardeners to save money.

And it's always good to share growing tips and your plans for this year over a cup of tea or coffee.

If you subsequently end up with surplus seedlings you can bring them along to our 'Seedling Swap' at the May Alton Craft Market.



480g self-raising flour

Pinch of salt

50ml (3 tablespoons) sugar

30ml (2 tablespoons) cooking oil

2 eggs, beaten

200ml milk or evaporated milk

410g sweetcorn (fresh but cooked or one can cream-style corn)

100 g grated Cheddar cheese

1 tablespoon freshly chopped parsley

Mix the flour, salt and sugar. Beat together the oil, eggs and milk and add to the flour mixture. Add the remaining ingredients, mix thoroughly and spoon the dough into a well-greased loaf tin at 180 degrees Celsius for 1 hour.

Makes 1 loaf

Alternative: Chop and fry 4 rashers rindless bacon and use instead of sugar to make bacon bread.

Cheesy Mealie Bread



Wishing you all a Happy New Year

and good growing in 2019

