



Newsletter

Winter 2020-21



Group. Alton Local Food Initiative

Web www.altonlocalfood.org.uk

Secretary 01420 362637 Ann Foulkes

Email alficomunity@gmail.com

Christmas Market fun

On December 12th the ACAN stall was shared by ALFI and The Alton Society. We were in a lovely spot right below the Town Hall and in earshot of the recorded carols performed by St Lawrence Lockdown Choir. It was a lovely Christmassy event. Lesley had put together a lovely basket of goodies for an ALFI raffle, which was very well supported making a magnificent £112. There were information sheets available to take away and the Food Directory that Lesley masterminded was also available. People showed a lively interest in the stall throughout the day.

ACAN had various crafts, clothes and books and games, the latter were from the Community Share.

The Market itself was for charities and the offerings on 'our' stall were for a donation. The Alton Town Council has held a series of Christmas markets this winter, which have proved very successful and have been much appreciated by the locals and by those helping on the stalls.

Theme for 2021: Tree Planting

Trees delight throughout the year: blossom in the spring, green leaves in the summer, red and golden in the autumn. They provide food and habitats for wildlife. And fruit and nut trees give us a crop as well. Quite a return for a proportionately low level of maintenance. Tree planting has also been identified as a key solution to help mitigate the effects of climate change.

We are hoping to find suitable spots via Alton Town Council for us to plant some fruit or nut trees.

We'd also like to encourage others to plant one or more trees. If you are interested, The Woodland Trust and Tree Council both provide a lot of advice on their websites about choosing and planting trees.

See:

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/11/planting-fruit-trees

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice

treecouncil.org.uk/take-action/seasonal-campaigns/tree-care-campaign

It's best to buy locally grown trees to reduce the risk of diseases, and they are more likely to be adapted to our climate. We have good experience with Southern Fruit Trees in Liss www.southernfruittrees.co.uk



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Plant-themed Market—Saturday May 15th

ATC/ ACAN Ecofair—Sunday July 11th - Public Gardens.

Gilbert White's 31st birthday celebration— Sunday July 18th at the Wakes in Selborne

Winter vegetable & lentil soup

Ingredients

85g dried red lentils
2 carrots, diced
3 sticks celery, sliced
2 small leeks, sliced
2 tbsp tomato purée
1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
3 large garlic cloves, chopped
1 tbsp vegetable bouillon powder or vegetable stock cube
1 heaped tsp ground coriander



STEP 1

Tip all the ingredients into a large pan. Pour over 1½ litres boiling water, then stir well.

STEP 2

Cover and leave to simmer for 30 mins until the vegetables and lentils are tender.

STEP 3

Ladle into bowls and eat straightaway, or if you like a really thick texture, blitz a third of the soup with a hand blender or in a food processor.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q—Is there a membership fee?

No-if we have an email address then we'll send our regular newsletters to keep in touch.

Q—What happens to the produce grown?

Anything that is grown is available for the community. There is a basket for produce on the Vicarage Wall or on the table at the station.

Apples from the Orchard

Fruit and Veg at the Station Plot

Soft Fruit at the Vicarage Plot

Herbs in the various plots and planters around the town

Please help yourself

Q—How do I get involved

Follow us on Facebook: Alton Local Food Initiative or look at the website www.altonlocalfood.org.uk

Here you will find dates of the various working parties. Just turn up, no experience needed, just enthusiasm.

Sloe Gin

There are plenty of sloe bushes in the hedgerows around Alton and I collect them locally in the early autumn but I've seen some sloes around even now on their bushes.

Ingredients

500 g ripe sloes
250 g golden caster sugar (you can just use white caster sugar)

1 litre gin (can be cheap gin, it will still taste good)

1 Rinse the sloes and remove any remaining stalks, dry, you can prick the sloes individually with a cocktail stick but I now freeze them, as on thawing the skin of each is ruptured. Put them in a 2 litre jar or two one litre jars, I use a Kilner or similar jar.

2 Add the sugar and gin and seal the jar. Shake, to mix the ingredients well. Shake the jar well each day for the first 7 days. Store in a cool, dark place for 2-3 months.

3 Line a plastic sieve with a square of muslin and put over a clean bowl and pour the sloe gin through to strain it.

4 Pour it into bottles, it is now ready to drink. If you want to make it for presents you can get small bottles, as shown in the photos, to divide it up. It will improve and mature over time, so although you can drink it straight away you can make it and keep or give for the following year!

Cheers!!



Wishing you all a Happy New Year

and good growing in 2021

