



Newsletter

## February 2018 - Extra Issue - Potato News And Other Stories



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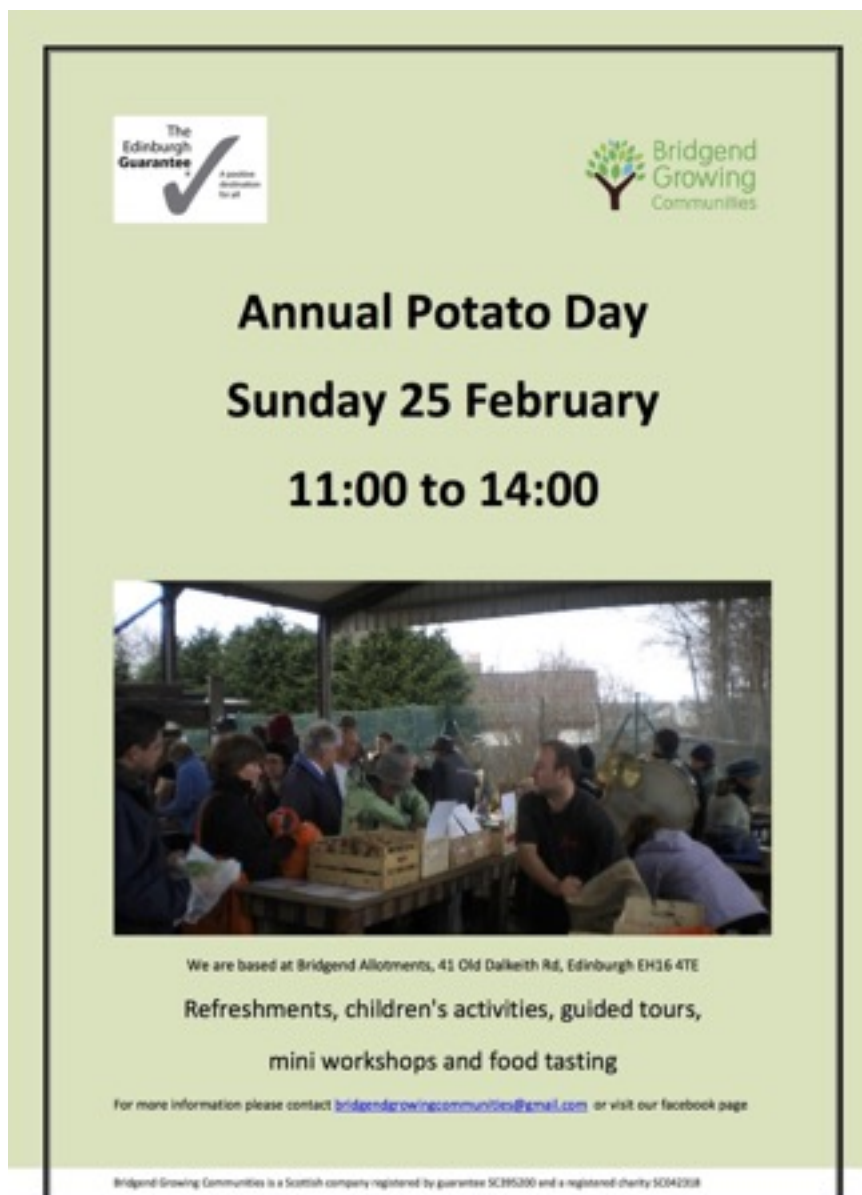
## SASA Potato Club Continues in 2018



Our partnership with Science and Advice for  
Scottish Agriculture (SASA) continues for a fourth  
year.

We are delighted to announce that SASA will again supply sample varieties from their seed potato store to any FEDAGA members willing to grow them. Three tubers of a named, yet commercially unavailable, variety will be supplied in time for planting. This is usually around the beginning of April. All you have to do is grow them and report back via a short online questionnaire on how you got on and what they tasted like. We'll also try to put on a small display at the Allotment Show in September.

It's fun to try a piece of potato history and, who knows, you may discover the tastiest potato you've ever tried. A few people have! If you'd like to take part this year then email - [sasatrials@fedaga.org.uk](mailto:sasatrials@fedaga.org.uk) before 16th March with your name and site.




The poster is a light green rectangular card with a black border. At the top left is the 'The Edinburgh Guarantee' logo, which includes a checkmark and the text 'A positive alternative for all'. At the top right is the 'Bridgend Growing Communities' logo, featuring a stylized tree icon. The central text is bold and black, announcing the event. Below the text is a photograph of a busy outdoor market stall with people and crates of produce. At the bottom, there is contact information and a small disclaimer.

**The Edinburgh Guarantee**  
A positive alternative for all

**Bridgend Growing Communities**

**Annual Potato Day**  
**Sunday 25 February**  
**11:00 to 14:00**



We are based at Bridgend Allotments, 41 Old Dalkeith Rd, Edinburgh EH16 4TE

**Refreshments, children's activities, guided tours,  
mini workshops and food tasting**

For more information please contact [bridgendgrowingcommunities@gmail.com](mailto:bridgendgrowingcommunities@gmail.com) or visit our facebook page

Bridgend Growing Communities is a Scottish company registered by guarantee SC395200 and a registered charity SC042208

# FEDAGA Trading Scheme & Shop Hours



This year's seed potato order will be delivered to Inverleith allotments on the morning of Wednesday 21st February. Details have been sent to volunteers who will help sort and collect their site's order (plus onion and shallot sets). Your site representative will arrange for distribution on your site shortly.

The FEDAGA Shop at the West Gate of Inverleith allotments will be open for the sale of surplus stock between **2 and 3.30pm** on the following Sundays: **25th February** and **4th March**. First come first served.

See the October 2017 Newsletter [here](#) for details of varieties that might still be available.

Please note that all the bags of Rockdust have been sold.

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## How Gardens Can Bring Beauty and Dignity to Refugees



Far from being temporary, refugee camps can provide accommodation for displaced people for many years. Gardens bring stability, beauty and dignity. There is an interesting article in the February issue of Gardens Illustrated (see link below) looking into the work of the Lemon Tree Trust, a project supporting those living in Domiz, a refugee camp in the plains of Kurdistan, Iraq. Here is a little information about the project.



If proof were needed that gardening is much more than just labour, then the stories emerging from a remote area of northern Iraq make a powerful case. Domiz is a windswept refugee camp in the plains of Kurdistan.

Intermittent water and electricity supplies to more than 5000 shelters provide a home of sorts to around 26,000 refugees, many of them women and children, most forced out of neighbouring Syria by the brutal seven-year civil war. But for the past two years Domiz has been the seedbed of a small but important project to create gardens among the makeshift houses, tended by people who have lost almost everything. It's co-ordinated and developed by the Lemon Tree Trust, a UK-based Community Interest Company that began working in the camp in 2015 after seeing people creating their own patches of garden among the ugly sprawl of concrete, steel and flapping tarpaulins. It began in the simplest way possible, a modest competition to celebrate Domiz's best garden, and has developed into a lifeline providing food, work and hope for hundreds of migrant families.





The Lemon Tree Trust is now extending its work to providing Crisis Response Garden Kits, ranging in size from a family garden to a large community project, providing seeds and tools so that newly arrived refugees can start growing food immediately. To date 1200 kits have been designed and assembled in Domiz by a workers' co-operative made up of refugees, with funding from cosmetics company LUSH and distributed by an Iraqi NGO, Mercy Hands.

*Caroline Beck.*

• Read the full feature [here](#).

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More information about the Lemon Tree Trust [here](#).

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## Bridgend Farmhouse Grand Opening



Exciting times at Bridgend as the Bridgend Inspiring Growth group celebrates completion of work on the Bridgend Farmhouse with an Opening Party on **24th March**.

They are looking for volunteers to help make the day special. Further details [here](#).

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A poster for a 'Seed Swap 2018' event at Gorgie City Farm. The background is a dark green wood-grain texture. At the top left is the Gorgie City Farm logo, which includes a tractor icon. The main title 'Seed Swap 2018' is in a large, white, serif font. Below it, the date 'Sunday 4th March 2-4pm' is in a smaller white font. The phrase 'Ready, steady, grow!' is in a bold white font. Below that, a paragraph of white text says 'Get ready for the growing season at our Seed Swap event at Gorgie City Farm.' To the right of this text is a photograph of a garden with raised beds, a greenhouse, and trees. Below the paragraph is a bulleted list of activities in white text: 'Swap spare seeds', 'Heritage seed varieties', 'Meet experts, share experiences, ask questions.', and 'Children's activities.'. At the bottom left, it says 'All welcome - beginner or expert!'. At the bottom right is a small logo for 'Edinburgh Allotment Federation'. At the very bottom, there is small white text with contact information: 'Gorgie City Farm | 51 Gorgie Road | Edinburgh | EH11 2SA | 0131 337 4202 | info@gorgiecityfarm.org.uk | www.gorgiecityfarm.org.uk | Registered Charity No. SC203305'.

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## The 2018 Edinburgh Allotment Show

...will be back again this year and plans are being laid to take it from strength to strength. It is hoped to stage more events designed to be of interest all allotment holders in addition to the traditional viewing of the exhibits.

The date for your diary is **Saturday 8th September** and the venue will once again be the Central Methodist Hall, Nicolson Square.

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# And Finally... Voles Turn Up The Volume



*Evil vole destroys crops.*

*Witold writes:* "I've had quite a bad winter with voles. Although netted, all my purple broccoli and Savoy were eaten. Yesterday I opened up the last of my potato clamp. As I dug, one by one, three voles burst out and disappeared into the undergrowth. I had to throw out a third of the tubers. And finally they hollowed out most of my neeps.

"Any tips, apart from trapping, poisoning or encouraging the vixen who also visited yesterday?"

On asking around it seems that there have been sudden spikes in the vole population in and around at least two large sites: Saughton Mains and Inverleith. And, no, we're not talking about water voles. They're protected, as is their habitat.

Given killing the critters is not a preferred option the best line of attack is to discourage them and then prevent recolonisation. Reduce the cover they need to protect themselves from predators. Voles don't like to feed in the open.

Cut down grass and other high vegetation. Pull mulch back 2 to 3 feet from the base of trees and shrubs. Leave the ground bare. Until the situation is under control, you may even need to remove mulch from growing areas.

Finally, digging the soil will destroy the voles' pathway and burrow systems. This is why voles are often less of a problem with annual crops.

Has anyone else seen voles on their plot recently? And if so, what do you do?