

## March 2018: The Beast Bites Back



*Winter returns to allotment-land... AGAIN.*

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# Dream Of Summer



*The SASA Heritage Potato Table generated interest at the 2018 Show*

Everything is being knocked back due to the unusually low temperatures that have had Edinburgh feeling like Novosibirsk on a bad day. If you've not got your seedlings started off, don't worry. Those that have already been planted won't be doing much (unless they've got the luxury of "bottom heat"). Fingers are crossed that things might look up shortly, indeed, medium range forecasts show a return to normal conditions. Before long it might even be summer time.

The Allotment Officer advises that the **water supply** to Council allotments (where such a thing exists) will be switched on during the first week of April. Please do not pre-empt this as in the past pipes have burst due to taps being turned on during frosty weather. Another casualty of the weather is the **SASA Heritage Potato Club**. This time, it's not the snow but the wet weather which has slowed things down.

Potatoes will be distributed to all who have signed up - but you will have to be patient! Also, the **Gorgie City Farm Seed Swap** has been scaled down and rescheduled - see below.

There *will* be an **Edinburgh Allotment Show** by summer's end and now is the time to start thinking about what to grow and what to show. The organising team has convened and, while heartened that the show is making a good comeback, is far from complacent. They recognise that many more members of the Edinburgh allotment community have yet to be persuaded that participation might qualify as fun. To try to encourage greater support a few ideas are being kicked around. These include having a table for non-competitive entries where folk can show what they've been growing without the fear of judgement, and an apple press demonstration.

The Newsletter will be covering aspects of the Show in forthcoming issues. The main thing at the moment is to think of varieties that do well on your plot and make sure they're sown or planted up in good time for the big day: **Saturday 8th September**.

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# Winter Notes: It May Be Cold Outside But Life Goes On



*Charles celebrating his winter allotment.*

Here are a couple of snaps taken recently on a harvesting and inspect-the-greenhouse trip to the plot.

We harvested leeks, swede, celeriac and Brussels sprout. All easy to dig up as the depth of snow insulates and the ground was not frozen.

We also

have red cabbage, parsnip and kale to harvest. The other pic shows the water bottle cloches keeping the snow off the January-started broad bean. Once the snow melts, the cloches keep the wind at bay and also protect from mice by using a nice blanket of gorse (a Whin-Whin opportunity). Also now growing for this year are snowball onions, Offenham spring cabbage, winter lettuce, leaf beat and chard.



*How to keep the snow off tender bean seedlings.*

It continues to surprise me how few people grow vegetables for the winter, at least at Midmar. So many good things to enjoy. There are lots of practical things you can do to give you some pleasure in the fresh air, and exercise to earn a good pint afterwards. Winter pruning, path maintenance, preparing beds to sow early potatoes and shallots, visits to Longniddry beach to harvest seaweed and bracken mulch (and then lunch after a beach/birding walk) at a suitable cafe. Anyway I rabbit on, a crop curiously and happily absent from Midmar this last year.  
*Charles Passmore.*

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## **An Evening With Alan Gardner**



Alan Gardner the Autistic Gardener is doing a talk at Central Library, George IV Bridge, on Thursday 29th March starting at 7pm.

He's a garden designer and had a show on Channel 4 recently. Click [here](#) for further details.

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## Garden Design Course

Are you interested in horticulture allied with design principles? Maybe you'd like to curate the ultimate allotment plot as a thing of beauty. Perhaps it's your back yard you'd like to reinvigorate. Or maybe even a change of career. The SRUC is running Garden Design Saturday morning courses from 21st April that may just be the thing for you. Click [here](#) for further information. Alternatively, see the flyer on our [Events](#) page.

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# Mini Seed Swap 2018

Sunday 25th March 1-3pm

## Ready, steady, grow!

Get ready for the growing season at our Seed Swap event at Gorgie City Farm.

- Bring along any spare seeds to swap in our community event.
- Don't have any seeds? Come along anyway, and for a donation you can take away special heritage varieties of seeds.
- All welcome!

Event held in the polytunnel of the farm garden.



# Half Price Remaindered Onions: Roll Up, Roll Up!



The FEDAGA Shop will open again and for the final time this season. There are a large number of 500g bags of Sturon, Stuttgarter and Red Karmen onions as well as Golden Gourmet and Red Sun shallots still available. Additionally, a few 3kg bags of seed potatoes have yet to be sold.

These will be virtually given away at half price. The shop is open on **Sunday 25th March** from **2 to 3pm** at Inverleith Allotments (West Gate). Come and fill your boots.

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# Bridgend Farmhouse: Opening Saturday 24th





This beautiful shot of Bridgend Farmhouse in the recent snowy spell serves us with an excuse to remind you of the imminent and much anticipated opening of a great community resource at Bridgend allotments.

The day is split into two parts as Day and Night Events, the Day Events being child friendly. If you are planning to attend you are best to book free tickets in advance. There will be some places available on the day for the Day Event so get down early if you don't have tickets. However, **The Night Event is sold out.**

Tickets are available via Eventbrite for the Day Event:

Click [here](#) for Day Event tickets (1pm - 5pm)

No Parking: There will be no parking available in the farmhouse site or anywhere in the immediate area, so you are best to arrive by bike, bus or on foot.



Help **FEED THE 1000**  
on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> of May

Please donate any surplus  
fruit and veg by placing it in  
the collection box

Kat and her team of volunteers will collect any  
items between now and Friday 4<sup>th</sup> of May.

Changeworks and partners will then transform  
the food into a fantastic FREE Sunday lunch to  
raise awareness of food waste in society.

Lunch will be served from noon to 3pm at:  
Out of the Blue Drill Hall, Dalmeny Street. Leith  
The Leith Community Croft  
The Citadel Youth Centre

Need a collection?

Call Kathleen on 0790 967 3171

Or email:

[kvaughn@changeworks.org.uk](mailto:kvaughn@changeworks.org.uk)

*Waste less*  
*Save more*

30  
SAVE  
CHANGWORKS

# Resilient Allotment Communities Grant



The Scottish Government has made some money available to support small community organisations facing disadvantage to improve their resilience. The Scottish Community Alliance (SCA) whose aim is to represent and support the community sector in Scotland secured this funding and the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS) was allocated a proportion to distribute amongst our members. The purpose of the funding is to improve resilience and address disadvantage. SAGS have therefore decided to use the funding to purchase 16 packages of good quality and long lasting tools for loan to plot holders, and allotment sites are invited to apply for one of these packages. Good tools are essential for working an allotment but purchasing these is a considerable investment for anyone. By providing tools anyone, whatever their financial circumstances, will be able to participate on an allotment site.

Apply for a free tools bundle:

Allotment associations are invited to apply for a one-off grant of equipment and tools valued at £1000 and essential for working an

allotment. The tools must be held communally on the allotment site or in a secure area where any member of the site can easily borrow, use and return them. SAGS are able to allocate 16 packages consisting of: *A wheelbarrow \* 2 Spades \* 2 Forks \* 2 Hoes \* 2 Rakes \* A Fire Bucket \* A Safe Store \* 3 Secateurs \* A Saw \* A Lump Hammer \* An Axe.*

The deadline for applications is **31st March**.  
To apply, and for more information click [here](#).

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## Compost Survey Results



The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens want to give a big thanks to all who filled in the UK-wide composting survey. Here is a brief synopsis of the results:

They received 90 responses in total including 39 from Scotland.

You compost a mix of garden and food waste, mostly generated on site, and largely in open bay compost facilities.

UK-wide you compost the equivalent of 1000 tonne sacks annually.

Compost produced is mostly used on site but many respondents have to supplement their own with bought-in compost.

Many respondents face challenges in co-ordinating their composting efforts.

Respondees said they'd like more training in maximising production and in composting regulations.

If you would be interested in receiving training on composting please contact [lou@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:lou@farmgarden.org.uk).

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# Fruit Tree Grafting Opportunity

If you're interested in learning how to graft fruit trees, then a course on Sunday 25th March at Leith Community Croft might be of interest. Click [here](#) for further details.

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The Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High Street  
Saturday 7th APRIL 2018 10:00 - 12:00

Tea, fresh coffee, delicious cake, jams and preserves and chutney.



Truly huge seed swap/ exchange/ giveaway.



Free sharpening Garden tools, scissors, knives, chisels etc



A lovely place to pop in on Saturday morning!

