



Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme



newsl e t t e r

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- Regular shares set up and running smoothly
- News from the field
- Extra produce and local outlets
- Celebrating the Harvest!

Well, our regular weekly veg collection all seems to have settled into a good routine now. After a few initial hiccups, we all seem to have found our feet with it – the growers have got used to getting up even earlier than usual on collection days to ensure all the harvesting gets done in time, and veg members have been brilliant in remembering all those little things they have to do when they come to pick up their veg! Huge thanks to everyone for their patience and understanding and especially to those of you who have given us such positive feedback on the first few weeks' produce.

These last few weeks have certainly been challenging for us, almost entirely down to the incredible amount of rain we had throughout both June and July. Many of you will have heard about the various agricultural crises throughout the country, with awful tales of farmers having lost their entire year's crops due to excessive rain. Luckily we have not been hit quite so badly, but we have had a few casualties.

Almost all organic growers we have spoken to in recent weeks have complained of potato blight, many of whom have never suffered from it before. We have also been hit by this, which basically means we have had to cut all the top foliage from our plants to try to prevent the disease from spreading any further. It also means we may have to harvest our crop earlier than previously thought. Being in the same family (*solanaceae*) the blight has unfortunately spread to our tomatoes as well. As yet, we do not know the full extent of the damage this has caused, but the



growers are trying to keep on top of it. Lastly, we also have downy mildew on our onions, which means we will have to pull all of these earlier than expected as well, but this is not so bad, as many of them have already reached a good size.

So, what with all these diseases and the apocalyptic numbers of slugs the growers do daily battle with, it's been pretty hard going recently. But, as we keep being told, if we can get through this year, we'll be ok, so we're trying to stay as positive as we can!

On the other side of things, while our membership is still slowly rising, we are still not at our maximum, so have a lot of extra produce that we are having to find regular outlets for. At the moment, our main customer is Gaia (www.gaiacoop.org.uk), which often takes 2-3 orders per week, which is great. Another outlet is Hilltop Farm Shop (www.hilltopfarmshop.com) down the Fosse Way towards Huningham, but this is a lot more irregular, and so not so beneficial for us. We have also supplied veg to the Lillington Food Co-op (http://www.action21.co.uk/projects/the_projects/community_food_project/community_food_project.html) and the local village store in Radford Semele. While it's great to be able to work together with local organic and non-organic retailers, this was obviously not our aim for the project and does take quite a lot of extra work. We are unsure as to whether or not we will continue to grow extras for such outlets in the future, and still want to focus on increasing our veg membership to its full capacity.



And lastly, Saturday August 4th saw a beautiful sunny day (at last!) and our second social event celebrating Lammas/Harvest Festival. We had a great turnout, most of whom were also around for some brilliant weeding work in the afternoon, and the day was a real success. Many thanks to all of you who came along for both the work and the social bit – it's always so rewarding to have so many people (and especially children) on the land – just to see the project in action is really fantastic. Here's a picture of Richard tucking into some of the harvest feast laid out for everyone! ■

We now have over 50 veg share subscribers. However, we're still not at our target, so please keep spreading the word and remember it's not too late to sign up yourself if you haven't done so already!



Administrator: Caz Ingall

Canalside Community Food, Leasowe Farm, Southam Road, Radford Semele,
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 1TY

t: **01926 423939** e:**mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk**

w: **www.canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk**