



Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme



newsletter

no. 6, Thursday 11 October 2007

-  News from the field
-  Full Membership at last!
-  Plastic bag revolution
-  New Canalside arrival

An estimated 1.7 tonnes of onions were pulled over a two week period in early August, with great help on one of the Wednesday volunteer mornings. After pulling, the onions were left on the field for a few days and then taken over to Ryton to dry out thoroughly in their glasshouses. In a hotter summer we'd hope not to have to do this, but because of the very wet weather we needed to be sure that the onions were properly dried before going into storage.

The potatoes were harvested at the end of August with the invaluable aid of Thalia's potato lifter. We were extremely glad of all the help we had with the tatty harvest; at its peak there were 16 people on the field searching, sorting and picking. The harvest took about three days, on and off, and at the end we calculated roughly about 3 tonnes of potatoes were safely in the store. This was less than we'd hoped at the beginning of the season, but on reflection we were very pleased.



Produce from the polytunnels has been very satisfactory, with shares of tomatoes peaking at 1.5kg and 1kg per share for large and small shares respectively. Peppers and cucumbers were productive but we realise now that we will need more plants next year to be able to put them in the share as much as we'd like. And after a poor summer heat wise we weren't expecting much from our aubergine harvest and so were pleasantly surprised when they did produce enough to give everyone at least some.

The polytunnels are now coming to the end of their productivity in terms of summer crops and we are now in the process of removing the old plants and preparing the soil for the winter and spring crops. We have recently finished

erecting our third polytunnel which will have our winter lettuces in, with the earlier two polytunnels being used for spring cabbages, brassica salads, early spring carrots and spring onions. We then intend to have a fourth tunnel up in time for bringing on our early crops of climbing French beans, beetroot and possibly courgettes.

This is very much the time of turning in the field, with summer crops feeling the cold and lack of daylight hours and the autumn and winter crops starting to appear. We are also really feeling the lack of squash and pumpkins at the moment as many of our plants were destroyed in the June floods. Usually October would be squash season but this year we'll not be able to give the quantity or variety we'd have liked to. There is certainly enough for folk to have a taste and we'll be using some of the pumpkins for soup at the Samhain social on Saturday 27 October.

As always, a huge thank you to anyone and everyone who has made it along to any of our regular bi-weekly work mornings – your input really is invaluable.

When we first started the veg shares in June we were using normal plastic bags to pack our leafy veg and herbs in. This did not sit well with any of us, as the number of plastic bags used each week was relatively high. Recently, however, we re-stocked our plastic bags with biodegradable ones, so, while we still dislike having to use plastic at all, at least the ones we use now will decompose.

Well, certainly the best news of the last few weeks is that we are now up to our full membership for our first season! Our aim was to reach the equivalent of 80 small shares, which we have now achieved. It's all happened rather quickly really – just in the last couple of weeks, membership forms have been pouring in! If you visit the website, you'll notice we've now closed our veg subscription uptake; instead we will have a waiting list, and until further notice will be working on a one-in-one-out basis. So, for those of you who were still hoping to sign up to the project, please get in touch if you'd like to be added to the waiting list. We'll probably be taking a few more veg members at the beginning of next summer, but will not be greatly increasing our numbers until summer 2009.



And last, but certainly not least, you'll all probably know by now about the safe arrival of our (Caz & Tom's) new baby, Kerewin, who was born on 21 September. Here's a picture of Tom with her, after just a few days in the world. Many thanks to all of

you who sent lovely emails and cards – we consider ourselves very lucky indeed for our children to grow up in such a loving community.



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**