

NOTES OF BOGS MEETING

Wednesday 16th March 2011

There were 17 present

1. From the last meeting:

Plant sale at Chapel Saturday 7th May – Pat needs pots and stuff to plant in and also plant material.

Gardeners World poem – no discussion.

2. Black Gold – Finn said he was ordering 20 tons aiming for delivery next Wednesday at Bernard's.

Cost of £40 – paid for using BOGS funds. We agreed to advertise. To the BOGs group until end of weekend, then google group.

It is mostly leaf mould (street sweepings, prunings etc.) – could mix with ordinary soil/use as mulch.

Steve Redmond said he used it neat for tomatoes but produced leggy plants with not many trusses.

Finn can also order wood chippings – needs to know how much.

3. Heptonstall allotment group have big expansion plans – should we invite them to come and tell us about it ? - May visit – 16th May?

Could also get Mark Simmons (Calderdale Orchard Group) to come and give a talk. There is a course on grafting this Sunday.

4. From last meeting Ash will test soil samples for us (for PH).

5. Visits: We could take in Phil & George allotment at Hudson Mill – on the way to Jan & Jan's. There are some problems with the other dates previously proposed.

6. Growing under glass and plastic:

Many of us have greenhouses/polytunnels. Also cold frames etc.

Ash grows in a polytunnel.

Achieving adequate ventilation is more of a problem with polytunnels than greenhouses – also greater temperature change day/night.

There is always a problem of harbouring fungal spores on ledges etc.

Light levels not very different in polytunnel and green house but different u/v light transference.

Life expectancy of polytunnel covering is 5 – 6 years. Useful for extending the season.

Steve uses oil heater.

Jan's 26x13ft greenhouse is divided into two sections in winter, Line one half with bubble wrap and heat it (electricity from heater) use the other half to store onions etc., and bay tree.

Can be a problem of too much sun. Aim is to even out heat.

Steve left his bubble wrap up all year.

Need to change soil in beds in greenhouse or polytunnel – say annually - to remove pathogens.

Jan: this time of year start off seeds which need long growing season – also have heated propagators – harden off in cold frames.

Does not sow anything direct into the soil. Uses root trainers – even for carrots, parsnips etc.

We heard about tomatoes grown in pots sunk into the soil – better for avoiding drying out.

Also ring culture – green house floor covered in chippings – plant tomatoes in compost in bottomless rings (about 9” wide x 9” deep) feed the gravel and water the ring – tomatoes have different roots for feeding (low roots) and watering (high roots).

7. **Potatoes** (Ash went to Joe Madens talk): Potatoes in bags – can get 4 crops/year by growing under cover/indoors.
Method: fast cropper eg. Swift or rocket. chit as normal then pot up when shooting. Plant into bag – no more than 3/bag. One secret is not to water much in the first month then water as the tubers start to swell. Harvest a few at a time as they get to size.
Other spud points :
1st and 2nd early/maincrop – myth that they are sown at different times – longer growing season. Some eg. Jersey Royal, can be harvested as new potatoes or as mains.
Blight is a big problem – especially for maincrops. Jan follows his earlies with leeks and only grows blight resistant main crops – sarpo varieties. Suggested a blight alert on googlegroup.