

## Allotment & Growing News

Sean Pettit HPAA Chairman [www.hpaa.org.uk](http://www.hpaa.org.uk)

So here we are again, Spring is just around the corner, Jack Frost has been around for a while and hopefully breaking down the earth and killing off a few of the gardener's nightmares – slugs, snails and the like. The allotment and garden is just beginning to show signs of awakening once again. So, this is the time I start to really get down and plan my plots out for the coming growing season. I have ordered my seeds and continually keep studying the packets waiting for the dateline to say time to put them in the ground or propagator!



The moment the first new shoots appear is magic to me! But what jobs should you be doing right now? I have just started off my onion seeds, aubergines and peppers are also in the propagator and sitting on the window sills ready to spring into life, cannot wait till they are bearing their fruits, I love growing chillis! Well, I like to get the plots tidy at this time of the season and I usually make one area of a plot rest so I weed it, manure it and cover it ready for the Autumn planting vegetables. If this area is to be used for basics, the soil is treated to good dose of lime, this helps protect against the dreaded club root. I finish off any pruning work, move trees and this time of year is also perfect to your divide rhubarb crowns or maybe start to force a couple of crowns to get an earlier crop.

You should have your seed potatoes by now so get them off to a flying start by chitting them, this is a process of pre-sprouting them, some say this makes little or no difference but I always like to get them underway before they go into the ground. A bigger project this year for me will be creating raised beds, I am going to try my hand at the no dig method and I'll update you on this project in the coming months as this can be quite a lengthy process. But first I need to make the containers so that will be my next thing to start on the plot!

Things to harvest this month if you planted them all those months ago are leeks, parsnips, swedes, celery and celeriac. My favourites though are kale and early purple sprouting broccoli. I usually have a good supply of chard too! So, as the papers and newscasters keep bemoaning vegetable shortages our table still has a good supply of allotment treats. If the shortages of vegetables in the shops and steadily rising prices make your eyebrows lift, why not join us and grow your own, with a little planning and a very small outlay you can get fitter, eat better and save money too! We have a couple of plots free currently so why not get in touch and have a plot! Telephone: 01621 85629 or 07966 662556 Email: [chairman@hpaa.org.uk](mailto:chairman@hpaa.org.uk)

Happy growing and a healthy life Sean Pettit

*Apologies to all readers, particularly Allotment Association members. Due to a gremlin, the article under this heading in the February 2017 edition was that which appeared in the February 2016 edition. Don't ask how, we can't explain it. Ed*