

Sully & District GARDENING SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

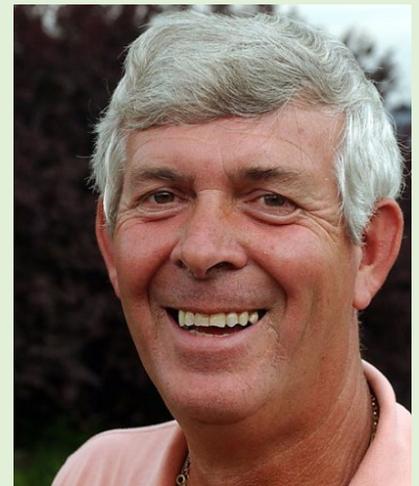
Dear Member,

I would like to welcome you to the Sully & District Gardening Society and to our first meeting of 2019.

At our February meeting we had the pleasure of Terry Walton giving an illustrated talk on "My Radio 2 Allotment in the Rhondda", and what a treat we were going to get.

The Celebrity Bit

Terry Walton has kept an allotment in the Rhondda Valley in South Wales for over fifty years. He started when he was four, helping on his father's plot on the side of the mountain, cutting bracken and collecting sheep manure to feed the vegetables. He was farming his own plot at eleven and he went on to build an allotment empire, selling his vegetables and flowers to local customers. The proceeds paid for his first car, a canary yellow Ford Popular, when he was just seventeen. Then, in 2006, after half a decade of happy gardening, Terry's allotment was adopted by the *Jeremy Vine Show* and he became an unlikely media star.



Terry has been visited on his allotment by Phil Vickery – cooking on the allotment, and has also appeared on *Gardeners World* with Alan Titchmarsh, and has also appeared on *Radio Wales* with a Marrowathon.

He has also cooked for three families between 2007 – 2019 on the series 'Coalhouse'.

Terry is an organic grower, he does not use any artificial fertilisers. He uses a 3 crop rotation system and revises his plan every August. He never buys any vegetables – just the freezers to store what he has grown.

Terry starts his growing by using his wife's airing cupboard for 48 hours to germinate newly sown seeds. With parsnips, he starts them on a piece of kitchen roll placed on a seed tray and sprays them with water. After 3-4 weeks he transplants them into an old toilet/kitchen roll.

For leeks, he plants them in the ground by using a crowbar to waggle in the ground to create a 'V' shaped hole which makes it easier to plant them. When they start to grow, he uses some old round drain pipes about 24 inches long and covers the leek plants ensuring that about 6 inches of the pipe is below the ground. This leaves about 18 inches above ground, which will protect the leeks and ensure that they blanch evenly along their length.



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Terry recommends that you do not plant large seeds directly in the ground, instead he places them into freezer type bags, half filled with moist compost. After 8 days a white tail should be seen, which shows that they have germinated, then you can transplant them into polystyrene cups. A member of the club asked Terry "how do you stop the flowers from dropping on beans", he replied that you should use a handful of lime added to water in a watering can and soak the plants twice a week to allow more nutrients to reach the tops of the plants. **Always water at the bottom of the plants.**

Courgettes

Terry said that they are ready for picking at the beginning of June and they taste great at this time, however if you leave them any later to pick you may have a glut of them and be faced with the decision of what to do with so many. One problem you may experience with courgettes is that you may get mildew on the leaves of the plant, this is caused by the air being damp. To prevent this you can dilute one part of milk to one part of water and spray the leaves with the mixture.

Peas

Terry recommends that you start growing peas in the same way as you grow large seeds – in a freezer bag.

Sweetcorn

Terry suggests that you eat sweetcorn as soon as possible after picking. Harvest sweetcorn when the ears are at the peak of perfection. Left too long, the kernels become hard and starchy. Sweetcorn is best when you harvest it early in the morning. Grasp the ear firmly and pull down, then twist and pull. It usually comes off the stalk easily. Harvest only as much as you can eat in a day for the first few days, but make sure you harvest the entire crop while it is in the milky stage.



Lettuce

Terry thinks that lettuce on its own has no taste, he suggests that you use a decent salad dressing to add flavour. Many people will plant a whole packet of lettuce seeds and then wonder why they have so many to harvest at the same time. He recommends that you plant about 12 seeds in a seed tray every 2 weeks, that way you should have a constant supply of lettuce over the month ahead.



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Other Tips given by Terry Walton

Grow Cucumbers in the corner of a greenhouse – this is usually the warmest part.

Tomatoes – these can be grown in borders – remember to take out the side shoots. Under ripe tomatoes can be ripened with bananas as they produce ethylene gas (C₂H₄), which acts as a plant hormone.

Garlic – best type to buy is Ise of Whits garlic – however do not replant from last years crop.

Strawberries – keep the plants for two years and transplant the second years runners into pots or into the ground. Strawberries should be picked around mid-dy when they are still warm.

Wormery – make a wormery using 25% of warm compost and 75% of multipurpose compost.

Nemaslugs – you can buy these as a powder. Water this into the soil and it keeps slugs under control. Slug nematodes are microscopic, transparent worms, which feed and multiply inside the slug. Easy to apply and completely safe to use around children, pets and wildlife, making it the perfect solution for organic gardening.

Many thanks to Terry for a most interesting and entertaining evening.

**The winner of the February members draw for a £10 voucher for Style Gardens
was
Barbara Richards**

**Do not forget that your membership card entitles you to a
discount at Style Gardens in Wenvoe.**

Kind Regards
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Chairman
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