**ELTHAM AND AVERY HILL GARDENS SOCIETY**

Website: www.eahgs.org.uk

**NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2023**

Welcome to the New Year 2023. Here are some inspirational thoughts from the RHS Newsletter: “Another 12 months of horticultural possibilities await and, as gardeners, we need to be hardy at this time of year - just like our plants! The winter weather is less than favourable, but the tidy-up must continue, and our greenhouses readied for the sowing season. The best way to start a new growing year is with fresh eyes and an open mind - let the creativity flow. What will you grow and plant this year?”

**TRADING**

The shop opens again on **Sunday, 5th February 2023**, usual hours 10am - 12noon. *Please note we will be closed on Easter Sunday, 9th April 2023*.

We are now well stocked with composts, including peat free, fertilisers, all varieties of John Innes and farmyard manure etc for the growing season. While current stocks last the shop will continue to sell peat-containing compost but, like everywhere else, we will be re-stocking with only peat-free by the end of 2023. Please see the price list (which is subject to change) on the website.

We are expecting the delivery of pre-ordered seed potatoes in February so please check the website or noticeboard at the shop regularly for updates. Once received they will be bagged up ready for collection from the shop.

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE SHOP**

**HERE AT GLENLEA** our correspondent writes: The whole garden world is waking up to the fact that from the end of 2023, peat for use in composts will be banned. Knee jerk reaction is to stockpile but that is not really the long-term answer. Here at Glenlea we are going to start trials of various alternatives over the coming year and we will give the results and you will also see some results on the bench at the next show.

Also, some of our trials will be purely hydroponic. My neighbour who is a good grower and excellent cook, has agreed to do a cook and taste test to see if there is any difference in results between the methods of growing.

We have a good variety of trials lined up but if you have any ideas that you think would be of interest, just let someone in the shop know. GOOD GROWING!

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**The AGM will be held on Friday, 31st March at 7.30pm in the hall at Holy Trinity Church, Southend Crescent, SE9 2SD.** This is your opportunity to meet fellow members and make suggestions about the Society’s activities.

**Our 71st Annual Show will be held on Saturday, 2nd September 2023 at St Mary’s Primary School, Glenure Road**, **SE9 1UF**

And, as mentioned above, **the shop reopens on Sunday, 5th February 2023, 10am – 12 noon.**

Here is a favourite seasonal recipe from one of our plot holders:

**Nordic stewed leeks** - serves 2

6-10 leeks depending on size

4-6 juniper berries, lightly crushed

1-2 chilli peppers according to taste, chopped

1 garlic clove crushed

Teaspoon of caraway seeds (or equally fennel or anise seed or all three)

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Olive oil

Trim leeks and slice thinly, wash and clean

Put olive oil in a wide pan that has a lid

Gently fry the garlic, juniper berries and chilli pepper

Add leeks and stir well

Stir in the caraway (or other) seeds

Season generously with salt and pepper

Place lid on pan and stew gently until leeks softened (approx 10 mins) without letting them burn

The stew can be as a sauce on freshly made polenta, sometimes also adding grated parmesan, or on mashed potatoes.

It is a million times more yummy than it may sound!

**MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWALS**

Annual membership runs from 1 October to 30 September and the Society currently has 106

members – 31 Ordinary members and 75 Seniors. The cost of membership is £5 per annum (£3 for Seniors). Those not on email, a donation towards postage and printing of newsletters would be welcome. And for those whose membership has lapsed, the easiest way to re-join is still in person at the EAHGS shop at Pippenhall on a Sunday morning between 10.00-12.00. If you want to re-join but really cannot get to the shop on a Sunday morning, please contact Brian (brian@eahgs.org.uk) or leave a message for him on 020 8850 6714.

To keep in touch with all the Society’s news, shop price lists and many other items of interest, log on to:

**www.eahgs.org.uk**