

Bite Newsletter

February 2010

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Bite launch event

Bite held a launch event on 14th January at Harpurhey Centre. It was very well attended with around 70 people. A delicious, healthy lunch was cooked by volunteers at Harpurhey, cakes were provided by volunteers at YASP and Good Mood Food provided trays of fruit. Elaine Dixon HARP's Chief Executive and Harpreet Kaur, Manchester Mental Health & Social Care Trust's Associate Director for Social Care & Inclusion both spoke at the event about the background of Bite and its importance for the future. Both speakers congratulated all volunteers, service users and staff involved. Activities during the afternoon included smoothie & juice making, spring bulb planting and pot painting.

Manchester's healthy weight strategy 2010-2013

I attended the launch of [Manchester's Healthy Weight Strategy](#) which included a showcase of activities across the city designed to tackle obesity. Currently Manchester has around 90,000 adults and 14,000 children who are classed as being obese, the actions set out in the strategy aim to combat that over the coming years.

The five key elements of the strategy are:

- 1) Make reducing obesity a priority for all
- 2) Promote healthy behaviours
- 3) Supporting people to live healthier lives
- 4) Investing in prevention
- 5) Investing in treatment

The strategy lists 'People with a mental health condition' as being within population groups that are more at risk of developing obesity. Activities that are promoted through Bite can help people maintain a healthy weight through physical activity and learning how to cook nutritious meals. A copy of the strategy can be downloaded [here](#)

New Breakfast Club at The Roby

[The Roby](#) in Longsight is planning to start a breakfast Club in March which will be open 8.30-9.30 Monday to Friday. The aim of the Breakfast Club is to promote social inclusion and provide a healthy breakfast to people living and working in and around Longsight. Breakfast will be provided free and will include fruit, porridge, toast and cereals. The Breakfast Club will be led by volunteers, if you think you or someone else maybe interested in volunteering contact Phil on 0161 2572653.

New growing projects

Two new growing projects are currently being planned in the grounds of Harpurhey Centre and the grounds of Victoria Park Centre. The new project at Harpurhey will be led by the Horticulture Team based at Park House at North Manchester Hospital and the project at Victoria Park will be led by Paul Rippon from Start. Both projects are likely to run on a Monday afternoon. If you are interested in finding out more please contact me on 07717002591.

Bite venues



Southern Allotment



The allotment is based near Nell Lane in Chorlton and we have had this allotment just over a year. The first year has mainly been about getting the site cleared as it was very overgrown with weeds when we first took it on. It had been used by someone keeping chickens so we've had to take down lots of fencing and the chicken coop. During the first year we managed to grow garlic, potatoes, broad beans, peas, beetroot and lettuce. We are currently growing leeks and cabbage and are planning to install raised beds over the next few weeks and start to prepare the soil for the coming growing year ahead.

We work on the allotment every Tuesday morning from 10-12. If you want to find out more please call me on 07717002591.

Seasonal vegetable watch - leeks

Eating locally grown, seasonal produce becomes a challenge during the autumn and winter months, when the British climate means that few native vegetables are available.

However, the leek is one vegetable that is at its best during the coldest months of the year and because it's packed with nutrients and crucial anti-oxidants will help stave off winter colds and flu too.

At its best from November through to April, the British leek is a fantastically versatile vegetable that adds flavour and bite.

A favourite food of the Romans, leeks are lauded in the Bible (Book of Numbers), have been eaten by saints (St. David), worn by the Welsh into battle and are said to possess mystical qualities.

- So if like the Emperor Nero you want to improve your singing voice – eat leeks!
- If you want to see your future husband – sleep with a leek under your pillow!
- If you want to repel invading Saxons – wear a leek in your helmet!

Alternatively, if you're looking for a delicious, nutritious and seasonal food to see you through the winter months. Something that can be roasted, baked or braised and has a sweet taste and a smooth texture – then the British Leek is for you

Cooking Leeks

Leeks can be cooked in all sorts of different and delicious ways including:

Pan fried - heat a small amount of olive oil and butter in a frying pan, add some sliced leeks and gently cook for about 5-10 minutes until tender

Sautéed - for super healthy leeks, sauté with fennel and garnish with fresh lemon juice and thyme

Stir fried - heat a little oil over a high heat in a frying pan or wok, add some prepared leeks and stir fry for a few minutes

Baked - place some sliced leeks in an oven-proof dish, sprinkle with cheese or cover with white sauce and bake for 30-40 minutes at 190°C

Roasted - pour some olive oil into a roasting tray and add leeks, making sure they are coated all over. Sprinkle with coarse sea salt and roast in the oven (210°C) for 30 minutes

Braised - pour a small amount of chicken or vegetable stock into a frying pan, add some prepared, sliced leeks, cover and gently cook for 10-15 minutes. Braised leeks dusted with fennel or mustard seeds are a delicious accompaniment to fish, poultry or steak

Raw - spice up a salad by adding finely chopped leeks and dress generously with vinaigrette

Leeks make a fantastically flavoursome vegetable side dish. Equally, they work wonderfully in a wide variety of recipes such as casseroles, omelettes and frittatas, risottos, quiches, pasta sauces and soups.

Curried leek & sweet potato soup

Delicious spiced warming thick soup for supping on chilly days. Great served with fingers of grilled naan bread.



Serves 4

Prep time 15 minutes

Cooking time 45 mins

Ingredients

1kg Leeks, finely chopped in a food processor

1kg Sweet potato, peeled and finely chopped in a food processor

50g Butter

1 tbsp Light and mild olive oil

2 tsp Ground turmeric

1 tsp each of ground clove, coriander, cumin, mild chilli and cardamom

Generous sprinkling of ground sea salt and black pepper

1.5 pints Vegetable stock

300ml Single cream

50g Fresh coriander leaf, finely chopped, leaving a few whole leaves for garnish

Method

1. Gently sweat the shredded leek in the butter and olive oil for 5 minutes to soften. Stir in the spices and cook for a further 3 minutes. Add the sweet potato, seasoning and stock. Bring to a gentle simmer. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes.
2. Whiz in batches in a food processor with the single cream and coriander until smooth. Top with the coriander leaf and serve with fingers of warm nan bread

Gardening jobs

Get organised: Once the growing season starts, it is nice to have all the necessary equipment to hand. This is a good time of year to:

- collect plastic bottles and make bottle cloches
- buy plant labels, gather together supports such as pea sticks for climbing plants and other essentials
- check fleece, netting and other crop covers for holes and buy more if they are in tatters
- scrub seed trays, modules and pots with hot soapy water
- Buy your seed potatoes now if you haven't already got them. Store the tubers in a light, cool (10°C), frost-free spot and leave them to sprout. This is known as chitting. Egg boxes make good chitting trays. Make sure you put the tubers with the 'eye' end - where the sprouts will grow from - upwards

Feed the soil

What you feed your vegetable plots with will depend on what you are going to grow next, what was there last, and the basic fertility of your soil. Root crops and legumes (peas and beans) should thrive without any additional feeding. Other crops may benefit from a dressing of manure, well rotted compost or an organic fertiliser. Fertilisers don't help improve soil structure - on poorer soils it helps if, at the same time, you can add a low fertility soil improver, such as leafmould.

Healthy eating spotlight- Vitamin A

Vitamin A is also known as retinol. Good sources of vitamin A include cheese, eggs, oily fish (such as mackerel), milk, fortified margarine and yoghurt.

Liver is also a rich source of vitamin A. But, because it's such a rich source, if you already eat it every week, you might want to choose not to have it more often.

If you're pregnant, you should avoid eating liver because of the amount of vitamin A it contains.

How much do I need?

Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin. This means you don't need it every day because any of the vitamin your body doesn't need immediately is stored for future use.

You should be able to get all the vitamin A you need from your daily diet. This is:

- 0.7 mg a day for men
- 0.6 mg a day for women

What does it do?

Vitamin A has a number of important functions. For example it:

- helps maintain the health of skin and mucus linings (in the nose for example)
- helps strengthen immunity from infections
- helps vision in dim light

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