

# Compost Corner

## One freezing afternoon in January

Only the hardy and brave would exclaim with a laugh and shake of the head, "It's all good fun!"

Lorna Betts is one of the town council's most recent allotment holders, and has been working hard preparing her plot by creating planting beds, applying manure and chippings, and cultivating! She's talking to me on the phone from there, and it's just started raining.

A keen recycler, Lorna is using "collars" given to her by a friend who was emigrating - and has runner beans, broad beans, peas, onions, garlic, broccoli and spring cabbage, all on the go in these wooden frames.

Alongside magazines, Lorna finds useful information on the internet, such as a Facebook page called 'Allotment Online' (there are many to choose from). "What is quite funny" Lorna reveals, "is that I have more cardboard than cupboards in my kitchen!". Lorna is following a 'no dig' system which has its many benefits, and requires its own storage space.

She observes that in the current lockdown and whilst being furloughed, having an allotment to work on is very rewarding. Her plans include adding a small wildlife pond with tiny solar fountain, sowing more seeds to enjoy seeing what comes up, and of course eating allotment-fresh strawberries.

Look out for Lorna at the Borehamwood Covid test centre behind the Civic Centre, where she is one of the many people helping things to run smoothly, and give her a warm smile. Something we don't need to be hardy or brave to do!

*Anne Nicodemus*



## Nettle soup recipe

If you look on Countryfile's website you will discover some amazing benefits you never knew about nettles. One you will have heard about is for nutritious 'nettle soup' for a perfect spring recipe:

### Ingredients

- Fresh nettles 500g – wear gloves while picking, washing and handling while fresh;
- Onion 1, diced;
- Butter 50g;
- Carrot 1, chopped;
- Celery sticks 2, chopped;
- Garlic cloves 2;
- Large potato 1, cooked and diced;
- Vegetable stock 1 litre;
- Double cream or crème fraîche 40ml.

### Method

#### Step 1

Wearing gloves, pick over the nettles and wash them carefully and thoroughly in hot water, discarding the tougher stalks. Wear protective gloves to avoid a nasty sting.

#### Step 2

Melt the butter in a large pan and fry the onion, carrot, celery and garlic until soft. Add the vegetable stock and cooked potato and simmer until cooked – approximately, 15 minutes.

#### Step 3

Add the nettles and boil for a couple of minutes until the nettles have wilted. Whizz in a blender with the double cream and a pinch of salt and pepper. Serve with a chunk of fresh bread.

