

SPRING Fayre 2015



Bulletin No 1 February 2015

Save the Date—Saturday May 9th

The Count Down Begins!

Spring Fayre 2015 will take place on **Saturday May 9th**. It is the main fundraising event for the Reading School Parents' Association each year, and we need as many parents and students as possible to get involved to ensure that it is a massive success. All proceeds go towards the RSPA School Project for this year, the Biology and Chemistry Laboratories, which will directly benefit most pupils for several years during their time at Reading School.

Members of the Spring Fayre Committee have been busy planning the event for several months. Over the next couple of months they will need help from more parents. There are several ways that you can get involved depending on the time you have available. The Committee needs volunteers to help to plan and organise the key elements that will ensure the event goes smoothly. If you would like to help, please get in touch with the Chairs, **Sandra Rodrigues** or **Patricia Fryer** by emailing San (san@rodody.clara.net) or Patricia (p.c.fryer@gmail.com).

If you are short of time, but keen to help in other ways, there are several ideas in this bulletin. Look out for further news in future editions.

Share your scientific knowledge



As the proceeds of this year's Fayre will go towards improving science teaching facilities, the event will have a science theme.

We would really like to get some STEM ambassadors involved in the event to communicate some interesting scientific ideas or phenomena.

Are you a scientist, mathematician or engineer? Would you like to share your love of all things scientific with others in a fun and interactive way? We are liaising with the local STEM Coordinator, who can provide support with materials, or developing your ideas.

Calling all gardeners

The plant stall is always very popular at the Spring Fayre and links nicely with this year's theme.

If you are a keen gardener, you are probably already planning your planting scheme for this year. Could you plant a few extra seeds to donate to the Fayre?

Even if you are not very experienced, you can still contribute.

Year 7 mum, Natalia Loukiantchenko has very kindly written some growing tips to help you get started. Read her advice on what you can start growing this month on pages 3 and 4.



Keep in touch with developments for Spring Fayre 2015 at www.rspa.org.uk

Use your connections

If you have any connections with people involved in the catering, publishing, manufacturing, scientific or technical industries, please get in touch. It could help with the costs of the Spring Fayre.

We also need donations for the silent auction and raffle. Is your company willing to donate a prize? Could you offer a skill or asset as a prize? Previous donations have included driving lessons, Indian cooking lessons, a holiday cottage for a week, and landscape gardening services.

It is good to have offers of donations early so that we can add them to the publicity materials. Please get in touch with Sandra or Patricia as soon as possible (see page 1 for their contact details).

Keep unwanted Christmas gifts



Donate them to the Tombola or Silent Auction and they could help raise a tidy sum.

We don't have space to store them yet, but let us know which items you've got and we can include them in our list of donations.

Recycle books and DVDs

If you are spring cleaning your house in the next couple of months, don't chuck out any unwanted books or DVDs.

Box them up and donate them to the book stall. They are always very popular with Reading School bookworms, and it helps save the planet too.



RSPA Project for 2014-15—Science and Biology Labs

During 2014-15, the RSPA will be fundraising to help cover the cost of equipment and furniture in one of the laboratories in the new Biology and Chemistry Building.

Building work will begin in the Spring, and is due to be completed in early 2016.

Biology and Chemistry are extremely important subjects at Reading School. All boys study them as separate subjects up to GCSE and many continue with at least one for AS and A Level. They are also gateway subjects for boys wishing to study STEM subjects, such as medicine and engineering at university.

Our Biology and Chemistry teachers help boys to achieve some amazing examination results each year. This is despite the poor state of our current laboratories, which are too small and too few for the number of pupils currently on roll. Much of their success is due to the emphasis on practical sessions, and the hands-on experience which enables boys to gain a deeper understanding of scientific concepts.

Each new laboratory will be able to accommodate more students per class, which will increase safety and enable teachers to deliver better lessons. We will also have more laboratories, which will give each boy access to more practical lessons each year.

Did you know that over 60% of our leavers each year go on to study a STEM subject, such as Life Sciences, Medicine, Engineering, Chemistry or Biology, at university?



Growing Tips by Natalia Loukiantchenko

Sowing Seeds Indoors

Some varieties (such as radishes and sweet peas) can be sown indoors as early as January, though most flowers and crops can be started between February and May.

Flowers to sow in January - Sweet Peas, Antirrhinums (Snapdragon), Begonia, Geranium (Pelargonium), Dianthus (Carnations/Pinks), Laurentia, Lobelia.

Vegetables to sow in January - radishes, broad beans, chillies.



Getting Started...

1. Small seeds should be sown into shallow seed trays and pricked out into larger pots while still at the seedling stage, medium-sized seeds can be sown into individual modules in a tray, and large seeds can be sown individually into 9cm diameter pots.
2. Choose a standard soil-based compost for seed sowing as these varieties tend to be finely milled and contain few nutrients which could damage seedlings.
3. Fill the container with compost, level, firm gently, and water well. Check seed packets for specific instructions and preferences of your chosen crop.
4. Small seeds can be scatter-sown thinly over the surface of the compost, whereas larger seeds can be pressed individually into the surface of the compost a couple of centimetres apart in a seed tray. If you are using a modular plug tray, sow one seed per plug.
5. Label your crop, lightly water, cover with clear polythene or place in a heated propagator with a lid and maintain a temperature of around 18oC, unless seed packet states otherwise.
6. Check daily for emergence. Once germination occurs, the polythene or propagator lid should be removed to increase ventilation.
7. Keep the compost moist at all times to maintain steady growth until the seedlings can be transplanted to bigger pots.

Growing aubergines, chillies and peppers

How to sow seeds

1. Fill a 7.5cm pot with seed compost, level and tap to settle. Lightly firm.
2. Scatter the seeds of your chosen variety thinly on top - most seeds germinate so you only need to sow two more seeds than you need in case of losses.
3. Cover with a fine layer of vermiculite, water and label - this is important to help you identify them if sowing several varieties.
4. Pop into a heated propagator or put a clear plastic bag over the top, secure with a rubber band and place on a windowsill.



Growing Tips are continued over the page: -

Growing Tips

Growing aubergines, chillies and peppers

After germination

Your seeds should start to appear in about a week. Remove the pot from the propagator or take off the bag, and place on a light windowsill. Ensure the compost does not dry out.

Potting up seedlings

1. When seedlings are about 2cm tall they can be moved to their own pot. Carefully loosen the compost, then gently hold a leaf and lift, while levering from beneath the roots with a dibber.
2. Fill a 7.5cm pot with multipurpose compost, level and tap to settle.
3. Make a hole in the centre of the compost with a dibber and lower in the seedling, until the leaves are just above the surface of the soil.
4. Gently firm, water and label each plant. Keep plants in a light place, such as a windowsill or greenhouse.
5. When roots show at the bottom of the pots, move into a bigger, 12cm pot, filled with multipurpose compost.

Aftercare

When plants reach about 20cm tall give them some support by staking with a small cane or peastick and securing with garden twine.

When they're about 30cm pinch out growing tips to increase branching.

At the end of May plants can go outside. Pot them into their final container - a 5-litre pot will do. As the plants grow, swap the small stakes for a larger cane.

In hot weather you may need to water twice a day. These plants are incredibly thirsty and dry compost will quickly lead to a check in growth. This applies particularly to plants grown in a greenhouse, where it can get very hot even in late summer.

The first flowers will appear when the plants are quite small. When this happens feed weekly with a liquid feed high in potash, such as tomato fertiliser.

Harvesting

Fruits can be harvested with scissors or a sharp knife between July and September. Chilli peppers can be picked green or left longer to turn red.

Before the autumn frosts, sever the plants completely and hang the branches upside down so the fruit continues to mature.

Each aubergine will produce up to five fruits, depending on variety and the weather - pick when they have reached full size and the skin is shiny.



Keep in touch with developments for Spring Fayre 2015 at www.rspa.org.uk