

Hi all—I hope you enjoyed the Easter weekend.

This is edition number 40 of Hextol *happenings*! When we started it during Lockdown 1 I don't imagine many of us thought we'd still be in lockdown now.

The good news is that the “roadmap” out of lockdown seems to be on track so we are planning for the Tans reopening on 17 May and hopefully getting Lunch Club back up and running by the end of June. We'll be in touch about these over the next few weeks.

We are celebrating *Hh* reaching its 40th (and the beginning of spring) by sending you some sunflower seeds. We hope you will plant them and send us pics as they grow, and especially when they flower. Over the page you'll find some advice on what to do with your seeds—our gardening team have confirmed it's right!

We are also encouraging you to think about ways you can be more environmentally friendly. Here at Hextol we have had an Environmental Policy in place for the last 2 years. This commits us to actions such as: constantly reviewing how we use things like paper and electricity; recycling and using recycled products where we can; reducing travel; using “green” cleaning products; and many other things.

If you can think of anything more we could be doing then please let me know. Stay safe—Bruce



Ways to be more GREEN

- Shop plastic free...going to market stalls, local shops and refill centres means you know where your products are coming from and you can take your own bags and packaging to reduce how much plastic is used.
- Recycle...there are very few things that can't be recycled nowadays. Plastic bottles, tins, cans, paper and cardboard can all go in your normal recycling bins. But the Hexham Recycling Centre also has spaces for old electricals, glass, tetrapaks, clothes and shoes, garden waste, bits of metal and more. So if you can't reuse it, sell it or give it to charity...recycle it!
- Eat less meat...top scientists agree that by eating less meat we can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as help protect priceless rainforest. So why not try Meat-Free Mondays and reduce your carbon footprint.
- Walk, cycle or carshare (if you can do so safely)...at the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, there was a massive drop in emissions as many people stopped using cars and planes. While this can't continue to the same extent as the world returns to normal, we can all do our bit to reduce how many journeys we make and start using greener options like walking or cycling.

The Hextol Foundation, 14C Gilesgate, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 3NJ

01434 605253 - contact@hextol.org.uk - www.hextol.org.uk

Company number: 5896869 VAT number: 131 9118 36 Registered charity number: 1120857



The Hextol Foundation
The Hextol Tans



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Grow your own sunflowers!



We have sent you some seeds to get you started and we'd like to see who can grow the best and biggest sunflower by the end of the summer.

Step 1

Construct your pot....

If you have a plastic or ceramic plant pot you can use this. Alternatively, why not use the cardboard toilet roll tube or cut the bottom off a plastic bottle. Just make sure you poke a few holes in to let any excess water drain away. Simply fill your 'pot' with compost and you're ready!



(Remember to put your pot in a drip tray or deep plate so your window sill doesn't get wet!)

Step 2

Poke a hole about an inch deep in your soil and drop in your seed. Cover back over with the compost to make sure its completely covered. If you are planting more than one seed in each pot, allow plenty of space between each one so their roots can stretch out!

Step 3

Water your seed with a little water just so the soil is damp to the touch. Put the pot somewhere with plenty of sunlight that isn't too hot or too cold...an indoor window sill away from the radiator is perfect!



Step 4

Now it's time to let your seed grow! All you need to do is make sure it gets enough (but not too much) water and plenty of sunlight. After about 2 weeks you should have little green shoots growing from your seeds!



Step 5

About 3 weeks after you first planted them, they should have good strong green shoots. At this point you can plant them outside either in a big pot or straight into the ground. All you need to do is dig a hole about the size of your hand and about as deep as your longest finger. Very gently tip out the soil, plant and roots from the pot that you planted at the start and place it into the hole so the shoot is still pointing up. Pack some more compost around it and give it a water.

Continue to care for it as you did when it was on your window sill...plenty of sunlight and water it if it hasn't rained for a few days.



Step 6

Make sure you take lots of photos to send to us at Hextoll!

