

25 August 2010

# Local Food News

## News from our East Anglian suppliers: Hughes Organics

It's a bountiful harvest this week with the Tomatoes abundant and Sweetcorn coming on stream and looking very full with the recent rains. The accompanying warm breezes and intermittent sunshine have brought many crops on. Flat and Round Beans are also still plentiful and the top-fruit season begins with Discovery Apples and Greengages from Karen and Edwin Broad in Cambridgeshire.

Soon it will be September and I think now that the crops will have recovered from the early drought and we will be seeing the first Autumn/Winter vegetables, it's a plentiful time of year.

Best wishes  
Grahame and Lizzie Hughes

## In your bags this week

Our produce is as local as possible. It comes from Hughes Organics (H) and small farmers in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire; or from Hawkwood Nursery, our own growing site in Chingford. Other suppliers include Langridge Organics (L). Contents may occasionally vary due to availability.

**Standard Vegetable Bags** have New potatoes (OrganicLea), carrots (Norfolk-H), onions (Norfolk-H), tomatoes (Norfolk-H), and mixed salad leaves (Norfolk-H). With French beans, bunched beetroot, mini-cucumbers and flat-leaf parsley from OrganicLea's growing site in Chingford. The **'no-potato' bags** have courgettes (Norfolk-H).

**Small Vegetable Bags** have New potatoes (Camb-H), carrots (Norfolk-H) and tomatoes (Norfolk-H). With ultra-local parsley from Hawkwood and mini-cucumbers and teenda (summer squash) from a local allotment holder.

**Standard Fruit Bags** have bananas (Dominican Republic-H), galia melons (Italy-L) and greengages (Cambridge-H). With locally scrumped apples, plums and damsons.

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## Local Fruit!

One of the toughest challenges ordering for the bags and stall is getting organically grown UK soft fruit. Even when the English fruiting season has really kicked in, we often still need to order fruit from Europe. The scarcity of UK organic fruit is due to the difficulties small organic farmers face producing them. With a short ripening and harvest season (for cherries this can be only one week), they are a production risk; all ripening at once, a short shelf life and squashable. And sudden weather changes can reduce an entire crop.

Luckily our scrumping project (where we harvest surplus fruit) and our local cropshare suppliers can help us get ultra-local fruit into the bags. This week they are heaving with ultra local plums, damsons and greengages. Thanks to Sid, Chris, Ru, Sean and Catherine for the logistics of getting the abundance to the right place! Willing hands are always welcome – if you want to be part of picking or preserving please get in touch. Or if you know anyone with fruit they can't use, or spot fruit-laden trees as you roam around the borough, please pass on a scrumping leaflet or let us know the details.

In the bags – the plums are the red/yellow medium-sized fruit, some may need a little more ripening so leave them on your window sill to sweeten up and enjoy raw. The greengages are also great to eat fresh – they're very sweet. Damsons (dark purple) are great in jam, Chris who makes jam for the stall reliably informs us.

## Organic certification – it's 'official'

A little event at Hawkwood tomorrow will mark the the 'official' launch of the Nursery's move towards getting Soil Association organic certification, as outlined here a few weeks ago. There's been a lot of media and local authority interest and we're using it as an opportunity to encourage other similar urban food growing development.

bana



**Small Fruit Bags** have

**Organiclea Community Growers and the Hornbeam Centre**

www.organiclea.org.uk Tel 020 8558 6880 Email



## Yes indeed Bob, we're jammin'...

### Damson Jelly

**Ingredients:** 1.8kg ; juice of 2 lemons;  
preserving sugar (not jam sugar with pectin)

Wash the fruit, then tip into a preserving pan with the lemon juice and 300ml/1/2 pint water. Bring slowly to the boil, and simmer for 30-40 minutes until the fruit is soft.

Carefully pour the contents of the pan into a scalded jelly bag with a large bowl underneath to catch the juice. Leave for several hours.

Measure the juice back into the pan, then add 500g of sugar to every 500ml of juice. Stir over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved, then rapidly boil until setting point is reached. Test by spooning a little on to a chilled saucer. Cool slightly then push with your finger - if it wrinkles it is ready. If not return to the heat, boil 5 more mins and test again.

Pot into warm sterilised jars and cool before sealing. Can be eaten straight away, but keeps for up to a year.

For more on preserving come to the **Italian preserving workshop** at the Hornbeam on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2-5pm. A chance to learn the traditional methods of turning tomatoes into passata sauce and preserving courgettes, green beans, and aubergines in olive oil "sott' olio"..

### Specials on the stall this Saturday

As Grahame mentions, Hughes Organics in Norfolk have enjoyed bumper crops of sweetcorn and tender round beans this week and they will, of course be well represented on the Saturday stall. Also expect peppers, cucumbers and tomatoes from Hawkwood and a surprise selection of ultra-local 'scrumped' soft fruits. This week Rebecca and Clare will be staffing the stall, the dream team!

### Ryan Leaving....

A thousand thank yous to Ryan! He's done a great job co-ordinating the box and stall while Rebecca swanned about having a baby and making flapjacks. A lot of hard work has gone into making the box scheme bigger and better, transforming the cold store shelving, and other unglamorous but important leaps forward! He'll still be around – but for the next month he's off to a writing retreat in Wales. No pressure Ryan but

we look forward to reading your novel when

you



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get back!

### Still to come in August

#### Friday 27 August – Hornbeam games night

Come and play with your food! Doors open 7pm,  
£1.50 entrance, food and drinks available

#### Saturday 28 August – Hornbeam summer sizzler

Come along to the café for delicious barbecue fare, music and (hopefully) sunshine

#### Sunday 29 August – Hawkwood open day

A chance to visit Organiclea's growing site and look around or take part in practical work. With a wild food walk at 11am. All welcome.  
Directions at [www.organiclea.org.uk](http://www.organiclea.org.uk)

### E17 Art Trail

This year the Hornbeam and Forest Recycling are hosting over 20 artists who have come together under the theme 'Common Grounds'. The art trail runs from **Friday 3rd - Sunday 12th September**

and the exhibition and café will be open on Sundays as well as the usual Wednesday to Saturday hours, plus some special performances and workshops are planned:

#### Saturday 4th September

12-2.30pm: Oral History workshop  
with Julian Beere

#### Sunday 5th September

10. 30am–12.30pm: Artist Books and Cards  
with Wendy Le Ber

3–4pm: Experimental Drawing  
with Mary Pullen

4. 30 – 5.30pm: Beyond the Mekong  
The colourful cultures of minority groups  
Slideshow and talk with Tribasia

#### Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th September

5.45 and 6.45pm both days:  
Counterclock Creatures - Teardrops Puppet show

#### Wednesday 8th to Sunday 12th September

10-5 each day: Knitting, Crafts & Sewing Circle  
drop in – chat and craft

#### Saturday 11th September



HORNBEAM CENTRE

11am-1pm: Meet an artist – Julian Beere.  
2-5pm: Meet an artist – Michelle Reader.  
Discuss works on show.



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