

4 August 2010

Local Food News

Growing nutrition in North Chingford!

Keeping these bags full of fresh, organic and local produce is one of Organiclea's growing commitments! Box schemes, like this one, have been around for a while now. They were set up to keep fresh produce local, creating an important connection between growers and the eaters. Also encouraging us all to eat seasonally, i.e. the vegetables in the fields of East England and North Chingford growing now, are the ones in the veg bags today. (Next week we'll talk about fruit!)

August gives us season to celebrate! Today we launch a box scheme pick-up point at our Hawkwood growing site in North Chingford – welcome! And the vegetable bags have more produce from our Hawkwood growing site than ever before. More London-grown produce than any other box scheme in the capital, vegetables grown in this community and picked or dug-up less than 24 hours before being packed into your bags. Organiclea is really proud that we are currently filling more than half of the vegetable bags with our own ultra-local food because it means we're managing to grow more food in London – a key to a more healthy future, and **you are getting vegetables packed with nutrition**. The closer you eat something to the time it was harvested, the more essential vitamins and minerals you get: e.g. spinach loses 50% of its vitamin C, 24 hours after being harvested. (It still contains a lot, good old spinach, but gradually loses it). Supermarkets don't sell us this. Their produce sits in warehouses, cold stores and shelves for weeks, often months, bleeding the true value out of food.

Thanks for supporting the production of real food. We hope you enjoy the coming months - English harvest season. In your bags from North Chingford this week you have: new potatoes, salad, cucumbers, borlotto french beans, leeks and sorrel (see right for some cooking suggestions for this tasty but not so commonly seen leaf).

In your bags this week

Our produce is as local as possible. As well as our own Chingford produce and local allotment holders' surplus, we buy from Hughes Organics (H) and small farmers in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk., and sometimes also from wholesaler Langridge Organics (L). Contents may occasionally vary due to availability.

Standard Vegetable Bags have New potatoes (Organiclea), bunched carrots (Norfolk-H), onions (Cambridge-H) and Batavia lettuce. With sorrel, French beans, leeks and cucumbers from Organiclea's growing site in Chingford. The '**no-potato**' bags have green peppers (Norfolk-H).

Small Vegetable Bags have New potatoes (Camb-H) and onions (Cambridge-H). With cucumber, mixed salad leaves and French beans from Organiclea's Chingford growing site.

Standard Fruit Bags have bananas (Dominican Republic-H), nectarines (Italy-L), peaches (Italy-L), plums (Spain-L) and Guyot pears (France-L).

Small Fruit Bags have bananas (Dominican Republic-H), nectarines (Italy-L), peaches (Italy-L) and Guyot pears (France-L).

What's that zingy taste? – Sorrel...

Sorrel works in salads, especially those that benefit from a citrusy lift, such as a potato salad. And for those with fruit bags, I could recommend a sorrel, walnut and pear salad with a splash of balsamic (and optional feta).

But it also acts as a kind of combo- substitute for lemon and spinach in sauces, soups and lentil dal. It works well in creamy bechamels (especially with soft goat's cheese) and in spicy, tomato based sauces. Or why not try making your own sorrel pesto (blend with parsley, garlic, toasted sunflower seeds, olive oil and (optionally) parmesan)?

As always, experiment and share your results – good and bad! Contact Ryan at box@organiclea.org.uk with recipe comments or any other feedback on the box scheme.



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