

26 May 2010

Local Food News

News from our East Anglian suppliers: Hughes Organics

Well the brilliant sunshine has to be welcomed but it highlights the desperate need for rain on recently planted or sown crops. In the Glasshouse it has been seriously hot this weekend and excellent for killing off the weeds germinating under the planted crops. We will follow with irrigation and the crops will race away. And the sunshine has been good for regrowth of the salads and Asparagus.

The sun has also brought on the first Little Gem Lettuce of the season and Kohlrabi from Simon and Shelley Steele on the Cambridgeshire fens. On the other hand Leeks have come to an end but there will be Round Summer Cabbage in a week or so.

Although it remains lean at the moment some rain to assist growth in the warmer conditions will see a flood of new crops in June with Broccoli, New Potatoes, bunching Carrots and Savoy on the horizon and perhaps Fennel, Cucumber, Courgettes and Salad Onions from the Glasshouse. Then it will seem that abundance will have returned and we are looking forward to that.

Best wishes, Grahame and Lizzie Hughes

In your bags this week

Where not stated, produce is from Hughes Organics and small farmers in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Contents may occasionally vary due to availability.

Standard Vegetable Bags have Ware Remarka potatoes, carrots (Italy), onions, asparagus, kohlrabi, courgette (Italy), gem lettuce and cauliflower. The '**no-potato**' bags have mushrooms.

Small Vegetable Bags have Ware Remarka potatoes, onions, asparagus, courgette (Italy), kohlrabi, beetroot and garlic.

Standard Fruit Bags have bananas, (Dominican Republic), Jonagold apples (France), oranges (Spain), lemons (Spain) and kiwis (Italy).

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Nursery Bags have bananas (Dom. Rep.), Jonagold apples (France), Blood oranges (Italy) and kiwi (Italy). They also contain tomatoes, kohlrabi, mushrooms, courgettes (Italy) and carrots (Italy).

Hornbeam Barbecue this Saturday

The Hornbeam cafe will be serving our speciality barbecue fare on Saturday 29th May, including delicious vegetarian burgers, fresh salad and bicycle powered smoothies! Come along for tasty food, music and a good street corner vibe, as well as an opportunity to buy some of Organiclea's plants for getting started in your garden, home baked bread and fresh fruit and vegetables. Cafe open 10-5, market stall 10-3, plant stall 10-2 but come early to avoid disappointment!

Seeking new Chef!

As many of you know, AJ the Hornbeam chef has done an amazing job developing the café menu over the last year, but sadly for us she has now decided to fulfil long term plans to move away from London, so the café is recruiting for a new chef. If you or anyone you know would be interested in this exciting role please see www.hornbeam.org.uk for the job description and application details, or pop in the café to find out more. Closing date is Thursday 10 June.

Hawkwood open day, Sunday 30 May

Join us at the growing site any time from 11am to 4pm. Skillshare at 11-11.30am on a seasonal growing topic led by one of the growers. Drop in and have a look around or join in with gardening activity. Plants will be for sale throughout the day, half price to residents of North Chingford! Bring packed lunch if staying for the day.

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Small Fruit Bags have bananas (Dominican

Organiclea Community Growers and the Hornbeam Centre

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



Don't lose your tempura - box clever.

For many of us, the shift from buying 'off-the-shelf' to a box scheme is not just a change in our buying habits; it gives a new flavour to our entire relationship with and attitudes towards food – in particular how we relate to waste.

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Waste is a familiar issue for box customers. I know only too well the nagging guilt at last week's pathetic, wilted cabbage as the next bag comes around too soon, or the mounting slag-heap of sprouting potatoes on top of shrivelling carrots. Guilt is never healthy, but it does indicate a sense of responsibility. And perhaps once in a while – maybe the next time we dispose of a past-it lettuce – we should celebrate that sense instead of beating ourselves up for failing in our 'duty' to consume!

Sometimes we feel like we are wasting more with a box scheme than when we were choosing what we want when we want it. But perhaps this is just because *now* we are seeing and taking responsibility for the waste we generate.

The difference in 'off-the-shelf' buying is that in joining the world of free choice, we entrust the responsibility for our waste with the retailer. At Organiclea, the relationship between the box-scheme, our market stall and the Hornbeam café means that our organic waste is very minimal. But, as we know, not all retailers take their responsibilities so seriously. And, as long as we demand our 'right' to unlimited choice, the mountains of food waste sent to landfill at the clear-up of every Walthamstow market day is no less our waste than the squidgy beetroot in the cupboard under the sink.

The guilt reaction can lead to shutting the cupboard in our minds and returning to the blissful ignorance of unlimited choice. But another approach might be to try and take a new perspective on the culture of food that supports the 'off-the-shelf' system we have grown up in. To ask ourselves what are the habits and behaviours and assumptions about food we have been taught? And what new ideas, skills and behaviours might help us engage with food and waste in a healthier and even more responsible way?

Food for thought? If so, please email your musings to box@organiclea.org.uk and we will 'feed' them back via future editions of this newsletter. But for now, a recipe to end all

unused veg dilemmas, the uber-weekly clearout recipe of first and last resort:

Tempura Leftover Vegetables

Any mixed veg you have, including, but not limited to: potatoes (sticks or thinish slices), carrots (sticks), kohlrabi (thinish slices), courgette (sliced), mushrooms (thickly sliced or whole if small), onions (quartered layers), asparagus (whole if you dare), cauliflower (smallish florets), bananas (halved and sliced lengthways); sprigs of dill made into fritters (don't knock it till you try it!), etc., etc., etc...

200g Flour

Iced water (preferably sparkling)

Salt, a pinch

Baking powder, ½ tsp

Vegetable oil (or Sesame oil), 1 tablespoon

Mix all the above, adding water until the batter is about the texture of double cream. Coat the veg in the batter and drop in hot oil until golden brown. Drain on kitchen towel or similar. As an option you could use sesame oil in the mix, or even mix in some sesame seeds.

Dips:

- Soya sauce and lemon juice – about 60:40 but adjust quantities to taste.
- Peanut Satay – Mix a blob of peanut butter, spoon of vegetable oil (or sesame oil), squidge of tomato puree, and as much hot pepper sauce as you can handle.

Finally, don't waste those Kohlrabi leaves, steam or sautee them in oil and lemon juice!

Activities for Children on Fridays in the Hornbeam cafe, from 11th June

All ages welcome. Group gathers at 10.30 am to start at 11am and finish around 12pm in the cafe space. Activities will include storytelling, drama, kiddie yoga, music, movement, painting and drawing with sessions facilitated by parents and teachers (parents requested to stay on site, it's not a drop-off session). Payment by donation to the Hornbeam - suggested £1.50 per child.

We are trying this out initially - ideally we are looking to build a pool of session leaders so that this event can run each Friday at the Hornbeam in the cafe space downstairs. If you are a parent interested in leading a session please contact Rachel on blue_sage7@yahoo.co.uk or at the Hornbeam on 020 8558 6880. Parents who lead the session will not pay for their child to participate on that session.