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No 4 2003

# *The Allotment Gardener*

**The Journal Of The Allotments &  
Gardens Council (U.K.)**



# Allotments & Gardens Council (U.K.)

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## 2003 A Year of Progress

It's been a year for celebration. Membership enquiries rolling in and we have just been advised that the Insurance Scheme premiums will be renewed with only minor adjustments keeping our very competitive edge on member's benefits.

We benefited from great support by Marshalls Seeds and Codnor Horticultural Supplies who in 2003 provided samples for the show promotions and they are still offering the same generous discounts schemes for our members.



Joe Hedgecock Winner of the  
Queensway Allotments,  
Bootle Pumpkin Competition  
Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2003



Colin Muscutt, Publicity Officer  
At the  
RHS Malvern Autumn Show  
RODIN'S NEW MASTERPEICE  
"THE POSER"  
With apologies

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### COMING EVENTS

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> March**  
**1p.m.**

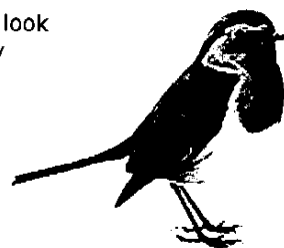
**Annual General Meeting**  
**Venue**  
**Nuthall Lodge Hotel**  
**Nottingham**

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**Frontispiece** Many thanks to Bill Maher for his lovely photo of a robin on a spade handle with a wonderful background of his plot but when I tried to "blow it up" the robin hibernated.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula* AKA European robin The UK's favourite bird. Males and females look identical, and young birds have no red breast and are spotted with golden brown. Aggressively protect their territory, they drive away intruders. Sometimes sing at night next to street lights

Eggs: 4-6	Incubation: 14 days
Fledging: 10-18 days	Maximum lifespan: 8 years
Length: 14cm	Wingspan: 20-22cm
Weight: 14-21g	UK breeding: 4.5 million territories



## From the Editor

Firstly I would like to thank everyone who responded to my letter of mid October asking for local news from the regions. The response has been amazing and I have been receiving not only photos and articles, but promises of more for future issues including an article on bee-keeping. Just one small point to bear in mind, the colour photos need to be quite light to print well in black and white.

Some of you mentioned problems you encountered so we have a "Problems Page". Anyone with additional answers, please let us have your replies or remedies and more questions for the next issue.

One of the main problems this year in 2003 has been the lack of rain. A lot of people have mentioned that their Runner Beans in particular seem to have suffered from the dry summer with the cropping finishing much earlier than usual. This is certainly a problem on sites where watering with a hose is not possible. One of the members of my site who really concentrates on watering his row of beans with half a gallon of water every day to each plant, has had the usual glut of beans. On nearby plots where watering has been less dedicated, it really showed up the difference this year.

Graham Seignot, Chairman of the Cardiff Allotment Federation, and Secretary of Llanishen Allotments is a dedicated weather man. He monitors the weather with a meteorological station on his roof, which feeds data into his computer. It even calculates the WINDCHILL Factor so he knows when it's time to put on his thermals.

Rainfall measured in inches (Up to the end of November 2003)													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
1997	0.46	6.59	1.42	1.51	3.94	2.89	1.48	7.33	2.56	3.28	4.94	5.28	33.54
2000	1.80	6.21	2.16	5.22	3.51	3.37	3.36	3.43	8.47	10.80	8.92	7.80	65.05
2001	3.53	5.06	5.83	4.80	1.19	2.38	6.21	6.83	1.87	8.44	3.84	1.75	50.73
2002	5.01	7.36	2.51	3.57	5.15	2.43	3.16	1.41	1.09	6.06	7.48	5.05	50.27
2003	3.88	1.66	1.59	2.37	4.00	2.52	3.66	0.86	0.88	3.29	4.00	—	28.29
AVERAGE SINCE STARTING RECORDS IN 1995													49.52

If the dryer summers continue, reducing transpiration of moisture from the soil, is going to be an important issue for vegetable growers. One interesting idea, especially in a greenhouse, where the temperatures and transpiration are even more important than on the plot goes like this. First lay a "trickle feed" hosepipe in a zig-zag over the ground then cover with plastic sheeting which is black on the lower side, and white on the top. Then you just water for an appropriate time each day, and the white upper surface also reflects more light back up onto the plants. This sounds ideal for polytunnels but could be adapted for use on the plot and in a traditional greenhouse.

In view of the positive response to my original request for assistance, could I draw your attention to the need for advertising revenue? This is vital to produce a worthwhile magazine in the quantities needed for our distribution to our members and spare copies for use at our various forthcoming promotions and show stands. I hope this issue may give you ammunition to approach possible advertisers in your locality.

Finally, have you any ideas for a promotional stand at a horticultural event in your area ?. We have the technology ready if you can provide a venue.

I wish everyone a productive year on the plot in 2004 (and may the Flu bug miss you.)

Cam Burgess.

P.S. Keep the news items and photos coming, please. **Last Dates** for receiving your items in 2004 **29<sup>th</sup> February**, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 30<sup>th</sup> November.

## A Year for Celebration The RHS Bicentenary 1804 – 2004

After reading my copy of the RHS letter to members, I am pondering on the old saying about how great oaks from little acorns grow, and trying to imagine where the A&G C Journal will be like 199 years into the future.

A number of the Allotment & Gardens Council UK members societies are affiliated to the RHS. For just £15 a year allotment and garden societies have access to the research and advice of the RHS experts by phone, fax or e-mail. Their web site is full of information at the touch of a button.

You can enjoy a free visit to one of their gardens every year for up to 55 people.  
(extract from the letter to members.)

*Founded on 7 March 1804 as the Horticultural Society of London by seven friends, the Royal Horticultural Society now has more than 330,000 members across the globe. In the last 200 years we have grown from being a purely learned society to the UK's leading gardening charity advancing excellence in horticulture and promoting gardening.*

*To celebrate this special occasion, the RHS has developed a special year round programme of events. Highlights of the celebrations include the Bicentenary Plant Collection, a Science Exchange conference in association with the Natural History Museum, Sotheby's valuation days at a selection of outstanding gardens UK-wide, and the series of illustrated lectures on plant exploration. We do hope you will join with us and help us celebrate 200 years of great gardening.*

Where will the Allotments & Gardens Council be in 199 years?

## Winter Time

It's here again, that dreaded time  
When some of us, feel ninety nine,  
With aching limbs and throbbing head,  
You only want to stay in bed.

They stagger in their dozens, up to the local doc,  
Whilst on the way, they pass many a crock,  
All coughing and sneezing, without rest,  
To open the door, is a real test.

Thermometers are popped in ear,  
Your throat is checked, and that's not clear,  
"It's just a virus" you are told,  
Paracetamol and water, not too cold.

You wheeze and sneeze, then cough and splutter,  
Oh for the morning, is all you ask,  
Your nose feels like a flooded gutter,  
Will that blessed virus never pass?

You carry on, you can't give in,  
Some people will say, my gosh, you're thin,  
You feel as if you've done the loop,  
That's what happens if you live on soup.

Eventually you're feeling stronger,  
The days now seem, longer and longer,  
No need to call the doc in yet,  
Next time you might call out the vet.

Arthur Monk,  
Cardiff  
November 30<sup>th</sup> 2003

## Nottingham Organic Gardeners

Nottingham Organic Gardeners meet on the second Tuesday of each month. 7.30 p.m. at the Gladstone Pub, Loscoe Road, Carrington, Nottingham.

We arrange a full programme of talks, by speakers on a variety of topics related to organic gardening and garden visits.

The 2004 programme starts on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February when we will hold a "Composting Forum".

For further information contact:-

Joe Sowerby, 37 Coronation  
Road, Mapperley, Nottingham.  
NG3 5JS Tel: 0115 840 9288.

If you can help with transport, or  
need transport, please let us  
know on 0115 840 9288.

## **The Allotments & Gardens Council Year 2**

### **Some thoughts from Colin Muscutt**

#### **Where have we come from?**

The modern allotment movement has developed over several centuries, from the enclosure movement and compensating individuals for rights to graze a cow or a few geese on the former common field of a village or town.

By the end of the nineteenth century the word "allotment" was being used in Acts of Parliament, in regard to the cultivation of small parcels of land by the "labouring poor" either out of charity, or as part of the poor law as a way of making able-bodied paupers work for their keep.

The modern national structure of allotments probably started in the 1930's. The Allotments Act of 1922 gave some security of tenure to tenants, and the depression encouraged more unemployed people to take up plots. This was further encouraged by the "Dig for Victory" campaign in the 1939-45 war. Since that time there has been a steady decline, possibly due to the provision of large numbers of council houses with their own gardens, and general access to the family car, so other leisure activities took spare time away from allotmenting.

The trend in numbers of allotments is shown in the following table

Year	No. of allotments
1950	1,100,000
1960	860,000
1970*	532,964
1978*	479,301
1996*	296,923

\* 1970 and 1978 England and Wales. 1996 England only.

The period 1940 -70 had established a vigorous, competitive and social aspect to an allotment society. It widened the concept of town and country shows, was an enabler of working class society to widen their horticultural skills to be recognised in the higher spheres of the horticultural world.

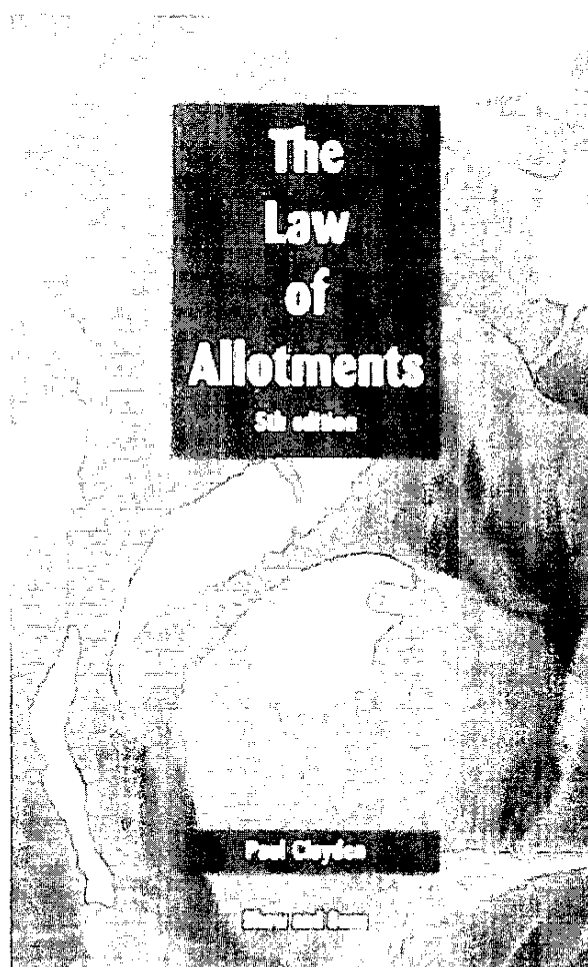
Perhaps specialisation contributed to the break-up and decline. Chrysanthemum, fuchsia, sweet pea etc etc developed did not retain their alliance and powers that be did not recognise the threats of this trend with their carrot and potato mentality. Those in the allotment movement who could see this decline were unable to get their concerns taken heed of.

#### **WHERE ARE WE GOING ?**

For the past two years, the Chairman with his vast experience in allotment organisations, has been our anchor man. With the aid of a few dedicated helpers from the regions, he has organised stands at horticultural shows to fly the flag of A&GC (UK) to gain new members.

Within our thousands of allotment members, there is a fund of countrywide talent but we need people in each area to concentrate on promoting our organisation with county councils, and other bodies, through horticultural shows, letters to the press can widen political knowledge of our objectives. Our Aim must be to be represented at both national and European level in the allotment movement to protect and further the future stability of the concept of allotment and leisure gardens in the UK.

Colin Muscutt  
Publicity Officer



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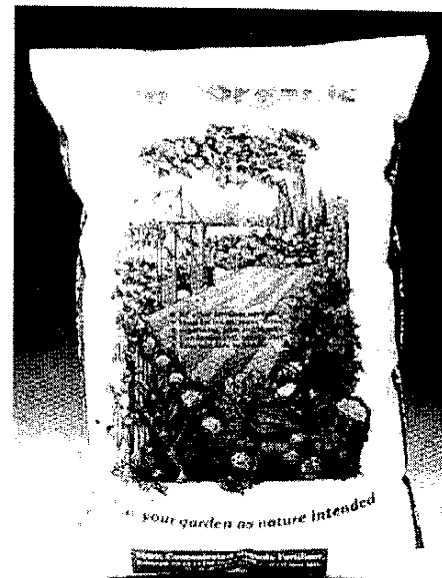
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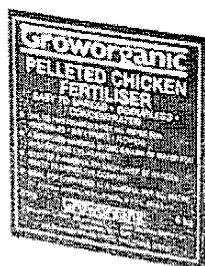
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## ALLOTMENTS COMPETITIONS

WOW! What a scorcher of a summer we have had. The temperatures have been in the nineties for days on end and crops that we normally find easy to grow have given us some headaches. Many gardeners have had downy mildew on their onions. This happened just at the time when the leaves had reached their full height and the bulb was beginning to swell consequently they never reached the size that was expected and so some had to be destroyed altogether. Runner beans also did not grow as straight as they should do. Quite a lot of them grew all curly whirly and although they were still eatable they were hardly fit to be put on the show bench.

Fortunately all these problems happened after the allotment competitions at the end of June and into July. Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> of June was the day that the individual allotments were judged at West Bridgford. Eleven plots on five different sites had entered the competition. The standard was very high and the final scores showed that only a few points separated the winners.

The following Saturday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, Reg, Doreen and myself travelled up to Wigan to the New Springs Allotments to judge the individual plots. There are 65 plots on the site and 57 had entered the competition, so there was little time to hang around. A quick cup of tea and off we went with pen and paper and a copy of the rules, jotting down the scores and trying to be as fair as possible to everyone. The quality of the crops and the variety of vegetables and flowers grown was astounding. Consideration had to be given to the fact that some of the gardens were on a very steep slope but the workmanship and originality of layout and planting left nothing to be desired. Once again it was a case of totalling the scores and checking carefully because only a few marks separated the winners. It is a pity that in these competitions there has to be winners and losers. None of the plotholders had anything to be ashamed of and the standard of the whole site showed that all the gardeners and the committee members were doing a first class job in looking after the site and each of the plots. The hospitality that we had was superb making the day a very pleasant experience.

The competition for the individual plots and the sites for Nottingham City Council took place on July 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>. John Stirland who judged the plots had plenty to do with extra entries this year. With only four points separating the first and second proves that a lot of hard work and enthusiasm has to be done to show the judge that your plot is just that little better than all the others. What it is cannot be put into words but one thing is certain, all the gardens are an inspiration for anyone who is privileged to have a look at the gardens and stand "gobsmacked" at what has been achieved.

The site competition was judged on the same two days. This time it was Ian Jones from Doncaster with myself assisting, who had the pleasure of touring the sites in different areas of the city. In this case it is the committee and the other gardeners who have to put in extra work to get the avenues and hedges tidied up and got ready for inspection. Occasionally allotments get more than their fair share of visits from vandals, but they never stop the enthusiastic gardeners from repairing the damage and carrying on as if nothing had taken place to dampen their spirits. Several times during our inspections we were told of instances which to some would have been soul destroying but to these people it was just something that had to be sorted out on the spot and then try to get back to normal. Each site has a different story to tell and a different problem to solve but to have the opportunity to walk down all the paths and avenues leaves you in no doubt that hard work and dedication is there in abundance.

Both Ian and myself hate to choose winners and losers and we know that nobody will be put off from entering the competition and hope that next year others will enter and have a try to get their name on the trophy.

Horace Grant



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## Who are you calling Henpecked?

**A few eggstraordinarily egg-sitting ideas scrambled not poached, from our fowl correspondent at New Area Allotments in the heart of Darkest Merseyside.**

At a local show, with other allotment societies, to demonstrate what can be grown on an allotment, we displayed a dozen eggs. The most frequent question was "How do you grow eggs on an allotment?" We replied, "Quite easy, from an eggplant, or to be precise, a hen".

New Area Allotments, Liverpool, are the only plots in the city with permission to keep poultry. As far as we can determine, they have been kept here since the early 1950's. Most of the plots are a little bigger than a Liverpool standard allotment (30yds x 90yds). However because of size constraints most poultry keepers have taken on the adjoining unit and most units are let as doubles.

The tenancy agreement stipulates no more than 35 birds per unit but most members keep less. Despite us having been here first, the newly built shanty town backing onto the field has resulted in cockerels being banned. Most members have a mix of chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys, some a few rabbits and pigeons. My own choice is a selection of hybrid hens plus some rabbits. Ducks and geese are too messy for us. At present we have a dozen hens which to date have been providing a steady flow of a dozen eggs a day.

What is the cost? Rent £25 p.a. Water £9 p.a. Management charge of £8 per member. Point of lay hybrid pullets can cost anything from £3 to £8.50 (2003) Feed costs vary depending on the number of birds. Using the site stores hut, our feed costs about £10.50 a month. Our costs exceed our returns from sale of eggs by about £14. The term "Sale" includes those we give to family and friends, so perhaps the actual costs are greater, but what else can you do to enjoy yourself for a year which would cost you £14?

The cost of suitable housing has to be allowed for, but by building ourselves can only estimate a fair cost, if you bought the material, works out about £10 p.a.

The hidden cost is the personal time devoted to the care of the flock, about an hour a day, cleaning "dropping boards" and clearing the bedding onto the compost heap, an uncosted benefit to the fertility of our garden plot.

Our feeding regime comprises boiled potatoes mixed with meal and our own blend of mixed corn. We find the bought mixed corn too rich at 50/50 wheat and cut maize. Our own mix is 80/20 wheat and cut maize. Sometimes we feed them leftovers from our own meals, e.g. rice or vegetable leftovers, but are careful not to include any meat scraps. Current thinking inclines to the theory that meat could be a source of salmonella in poultry.

Are the birds a tie? To some extent they are, but friends look after each others birds when they go on holiday. If we need to get away for a day, we can usually manage by "double feeding" the birds, the second feed put into the feeder after they have gone to roost. This, to date, has usually been adequate, but we usually manage to look in on the birds on the way home. (Yes, even in the dark).

There is not much else we can tell you apart from that we shall be purchasing another dozen birds early in the new year, to ensure continuity of eggs. As the birds get older their egg production drops so one would expect to replace the flock once a year to eighteen months.

Any aged birds, are put into the pot for cock a leek soup or used to make a casserole. As with all home grown produce, you can really taste the difference when compared to store bought chicken and eggs.

Another question we were asked when manning the stand was "How do you get jars of honey". But that is the subject of another article.

Graham Mallanaphy  
New Area Allotments, Liverpool



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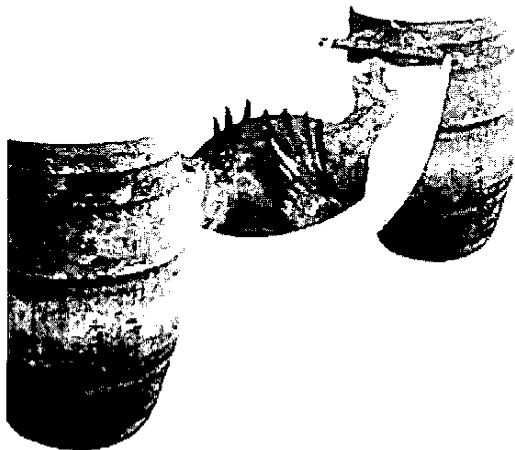
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**Trouble with Pheasants.  
OR  
Something to Grouse about.**



I am a humble pheasant and the gardeners on this site in Southport have been trying to stop me eating their lovely new crop potatoes, sweet corn and cabbages etc for several years.

They have put up rattles, funny looking shiny discs and some net but myself and my family have got past them all to eat yummy food.

Until this year, when the tall people seemed to declare war on us. They put down something like corn that my friends eat in big fields, it was lovely, and I think they put some booze in it. We all felt a bit rocky and woozy, but we ate it all, had a sleep then ate all the other growing things on their allotment.

They tried again the next day, we didn't eat it all, but our friends, the little birds in the trees, were singing their heads off, so we thought that they had eaten all our boozy corn, which they had.

Then a big tall thing, must be a man, put down this funny sort of square cage, like my friends the rabbits have been caught in. My wife, The Lady Pheasant, got caught in this, and she screamed and screamed until the big man came to take her away.

We are still eating all the nice things where there are no cages, but I think we may have to find somewhere else to go to fill our bellies.

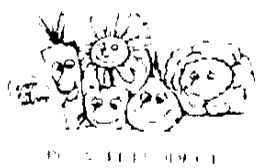
The above is all true, and the cages have helped. Cost approx £45 each and baited with corn but must be checked every day to prevent unnecessary cruelty and then, and then... nice... roast...  
**PHEASANT !!!**

I am pleased to give any information on these traps, apparently, yuppy types put corn/alcohol down to poach pheasants etc.

Tony Weston - Webb Southport Allotments Tel: 01704 547 385

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As a compost manufacturer we are often asked, "Why don't you produce a cheap brand compost?" Our answer to that remains the same. Our main brand of Growell composts are made to a standard for the professional growers and contain top quality nutrients, wetting agents, and blended peats. To make a cheap brand, would, as many people will have already found out to their cost with some other brands, involves lowering the peat quality, using cheaper nutrients and withdrawing the wetting agent. With wetting agent, if a plant dries out, when you water it is much more easily absorbed into the compost, whereas with some cheaper brands the water will sit on the top looking at you. Over the last twelve months, sales of Growell composts have risen by 20% to allotment societies, which goes to show that members of allotment societies go for quality first. Add to this that all allotment societies who buy from us receive all the products at wholesale prices and as is the case with most, put very little on when they sell to their members.

Remember, it's what's in the bag that matters, not the pretty picture on the front.

On the question of growbags, another question that we are asked is why do we only do a 4 plant growbag. Quite simply, the labour and cost is in handling and filling the bag. Next time you see a 3 plant growbag work out how much compost you are getting per plant and at what cost. Some of these look as if they have just been run over by a 30 tonne truck. Our 4 plant growbags which look a good full 40 litre plus size can offer you much better value and are made using the same nutrients as our range of composts. With regards to the environment, all our peat is supplied from Scotland and our suppliers are members of the Peat Producers Code of Practice Environment Conservation.

Where possible, compost should be kept in a dry store. Bags that are left on a concrete base can absorb water through the vent holes of the bag. We advise that all our composts are given a supplemental liquid feed after about six weeks. Additional feed too early can do more damage than good, especially on seedlings and young plants.

Remember, gardening is for pleasure as well as business, so enjoy and help support your local allotment society. Without them you would be paying more for your fertilisers, chemicals, composts, seed potatoes etc. Growing your own vegetables ensures that you know what is in the end result. During the war we had Dig for Victory, now you can Dig for Health. Enjoy.

Byron Elwell (Managing Director, Codnor Horticultural (Wholesale) Supplies Ltd).



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### THREE EXCLUSIVE NEW POTATOES MARSHALLS 2004 OFFER

The 2004 Kitchen Gardener's catalogue from Marshalls offers customers a free trial sample of a new first early seed potato variety, which is outstanding for use in salads. It is called Gabriella, and it produces oval tubers with a very firm and waxy texture, and a flavour which is at least as good as any other in our range. Gabriella is only available in limited quantities, so we would like to offer a few tubers to anyone who buys 12kg of seed potatoes. We also include a report form, so gardeners can let us know whether they share our views. Also new and exclusive from Marshalls for 2004 growing are potatoes Operl and Mozart. Operl, a first early, yields heavy crops of extremely uniform, medium size tubers of fine flavour. They are as uniform in size and shape as peas in a pod. Mozart is an excellent red-skinned early maincrop. I predict that Mozart may prove to be the new Desiree, which I realise is quite a claim. It produces bold, smooth skinned tubers, perfect for both boiling and baking, and its shape, skin quality and very shallow eyes mean it will be good for exhibition too. Most importantly of all, it has a lovely flavour

We are also offering all customers the chance to trial a new lettuce variety totally free of charge. Anyone placing an order may claim a packet of Experimental Romany 2. Romaine (large cos) lettuces are now very popular, and I believe Romany 2 may prove to be one of the best. It will produce a succession of slender, upright, dark green heads of excellent flavour and texture.

Top fruit continues to be an important part of Marshalls offer, and the range is improved by the addition of an historic mulberry. Mulberry Charlton House not only produces sweet, juicy berries, but also has a fascinating story behind it. Charlton House in Greenwich was the home of the tutor to Prince Henry, son of James I. James I. looked to increase his wealth by silk production, so ordered mulberry trees from Flemish silk producers. They were not keen on competition, so they sent him black mulberry trees. The King was unaware that silk worms only prosper and breed on white mulberry trees! He planted his trees all round London, including one at Charlton House, where it remains to this day. Marshalls mulberry trees are propagated from this magnificent and long-lived specimen.

Among the many new vegetable seed varieties are a space-saving calabrese, a much improved celeriac, the heaviest cropping courgette and a maincrop pea of outstanding flavour. Calabrese Kabuki is an exceptionally early strain, being ready to cut just 65 days after planting out. It can also be grown at closer than usual spacings to provide a fine crop of mini calabrese. The plants are low growing and produce dense, dark green, domed heads of very good flavour.

Celeriac used to be something of an "ugly duckling" with its knobbly skin, which was both difficult to peel and, wasteful. That is a thing of the past with the introduction of Celeriac Monarch. It has a much smoother skin than older strains, its flesh has a finer texture, and its flavour is also superior. More and more cooks appreciate the versatility of this easily grown and subtly flavoured vegetable, for it is delicious grated into autumn salads or served hot.

Courgette Venus looks to be another worthwhile addition to the Marshalls range. We have never come across a heavier cropping variety than this glossy skinned, dark green newcomer, the fruits of which are so uniform that it is a "natural" for the show bench as well as the table. Venus is so high yielding that we recommend regular feeding of the plants to help them to retain their vigour and cropping ability.

Pea Greenshaft has generally been regarded as the best maincrop pea for many years, but that may be about to change with Marshall's launch of Pea Greensage, which is, quite literally the "Son of Greenshaft", having been bred from that marvellous strain. Greensage is even sweeter tasting than its parent, and the 4in long pods carry up to 11 peas. The plants are semi-leafless, grow to about 30in and, when block-grown, are virtually self-supporting

*By Richard Massey*

### Cardiff & District Allotments Federation Trips and tours organised by The South Rise Leisure Gardener's Society

*For information & bookings contact Cam Burgess: 02920752321*

Date	Please note, only available to allotmenters & Associate members	Coach & Entry
Sat 24th Jan	Dundry Potato Fair. Stow for lunch, Painswick Rocco Garden for tea	£12
Sat 17th Apr	Hereford & Blossom Trail	£16
Thur 6th May	8 day Tour of France Based at Nantes	Full
Sat 24th June	Westonbirt Garden Festival. Tetbury & the Gardens of Rodmarton Manor	£17
Sat 25th July	RHS Gardens, Wisley, 200th Anniversary year	£17
Sat 15th Aug	Broadway, Chipping Camden for lunch, afternoon at Hidcote Manor	£17
Fri 17th Sept	5 day tour stopping for lunch at the Hardwick Inn, and visiting Hardwick Hall, en route to York 4 nights D.B&B with trips to Castle Howard, Harlow Carr RHS Gardens and a drive through the dales to Whitby, Capt Cook Museum. Finally a morning at Chatsworth House with time for lunch, on the way home	£248 £20 deposit to book

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Tel Ripley 01773 856615  
Email [byron.elwell@virgin.net](mailto:byron.elwell@virgin.net)



**WRITE UP FOR ALLOTMENT MAGAZINE.**

**CD AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE A.G.C.(UK)**

Dear Reg,

Just to let you know that I will shortly have a cd available that will contain many of my own instrumentals, plus a few others. Having played Telstar many times with a band in the 1960s I have decided to write some of my own material and record it. These are all instrumentals with a similar feel to Telstar and some contain mystery female backing vocals, hence the name Space Babes. On the cd there are 20 tracks, around 13 are my own, the rest other peoples recordings that I have redone. There have been excellent reviews in three leading instrumental magazines and also from the Joe Meek Appreciation Society (Joe Meek wrote Telstar).

Relive the pounding beat of Telstar, Robot, Apache etc,etc, plus a few gentle piano ballads.  
Includes many other new instrumentals.

2 track cd Tornado/Reflections. Space Babes. Total £2.80

20 track cd 'Worlds Apart'. Space Babes. Total £7.95

These can be sent post paid with an order from Codnor Horticultural or collected.

For posted cds, please add 60p post and packing.

Order now from Codnor Horticultural 01773 742847 or via the A.G.C.

Written, produced and recorded by Byron Elwell, Chestnut Bank Productions, Chestnut Bank House, Bobbin Mill Hill, Fritchley, Derbyshire, DE56 2HN. Email [byron.elwell@virgin.net](mailto:byron.elwell@virgin.net)

Regards Byron.

**INDIVIDUAL/LIFE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

To The Allotments And Gardens Council (UK)  
7 Mattingly Road, Hempshill Vale, Nottingham NG6 7BD.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Capitals Please)  
the undersigned, hereby apply for INDIVIDUAL/LIFE membership of NDAC.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose my remittance for:

☐ £10.00 for 1 YEAR MEMBERSHIP ☐ £100.00 for LIFE MEMBERSHIP Please tick as applicable



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**ALLOTMENTS AND GARDENS COUNCIL (U.K.)**

- RENTS - LEASES • TENANCY AGREEMENTS
- SELF MANAGEMENT SCHEMES
- LANDLORD PROBLEMS
- WATER SUPPLY - WATER USE - WATER CHARGES
- SITE FACILITIES • LAYOUT OF SITES
- FENCES AND BOUNDARIES
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- PREVENTION OF CLOSURE/SALE OF ALLOTMENTS
- INSURANCES
- ALLOTMENT WATCH - TRESPASS - DAMAGE NOTICES
- COMPENSATION
- BONFIRES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
- GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
- PUBLIC ENQUIRIES
- SEED SCHEME • STORE HUT TRADING
- PRINTING - SHOW SCHEDULES, ETC



For further information, you should write or telephone:-

**REG KNOWLES - (0115) 9276860**

7 Mattingly Road, Hempshill Vale, Nottingham, NG6 7BD

The Allotments & Gardens Council (U.K.) is the trading name of The Nottingham & District Allotments Council.



### **AFFILIATED MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

To The Allotments And Gardens Council (U.K.)  
 7 Mattingly Road, Hempshill Vale, Nottingham NG6 7BD  
 We the undersigned, hereby apply to be an affiliated member of A.G.C. (U.K.)

Name of Society \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

The affiliated membership fee being £1 per member (minimum £12)

We enclose cheque for £\_\_\_\_\_ Number of members \_\_\_\_\_ Made payable to A.G.C.(U.K.)

## Preparing for 2004.

### 1. Back to Basics on the plot.

#### Will Organic Principles help ? - The practice of Crop Rotation

The principle is to grow specific groups of vegetables on a different piece of land each year. Groups are moved around in sequence so they don't return to the same spot for at least three years.

*Pest and disease control* Soil pests and diseases tend to attack specific plant families, so by rotating crops life-cycles are broken and build-up is reduced.

*Weed control* Some crops (e.g. potatoes and squashes) can suppress weeds, minimising problems for following crops.

*Soil fertility* Different crops have different soil requirements and benefits. Changing crops from year to year minimises deficiencies and allows the soil to replenish.

*Soil structure* Alternating between deep-rooted and fibrous-rooted crops improves soil structure.

#### Planning

Divide the vegetable plot into equal sections of four or more. Decide which crops to grow. Then group them, firstly following plant family (linked to pests and diseases), then soil requirements and soil benefits. To rotate the beds as described below move each bed back one space so that legumes moves into the brassica bay and brassica moves to umbellifers for example:

Year one - as in the table below

Year two - legumes, onions, potato family, umbellifers, brassicas

Year three - onions, potato family, umbellifers, brassicas, legumes

Year four - potato family, umbellifers, brassicas, legumes, onions

Year five, umbellifers, brassicas, legumes, onions, potato family

Year 1	Family	Examples	Soil requirements	Soil benefits
Section 1	Brassicas	Cabbage, cauliflower, radish, swede	Leafy crops need nitrogen-rich soil; may need liming	
Section 2	Legumes	Pea, bean (broad, French and runner)	Well-drained but moisture-retentive; not nitrogen-rich	Fix atmospheric nitrogen in roots for future crops
Section 3	Onions	Onion, garlic, shallot, leek	High organic matter; may need liming	
Section 4	Potato family	Potato, tomato	High organic matter and nitrogen (potato); no lime	Suppress weeds, break up soil structure
Section 5	Umbellifers	Carrot, parsnip, parsley, celery, Florence fennel	Root crops need stone-free soil; not freshly manured; fine tilth	Root crops break up soil structure

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**(0115) 927 68 60**

## **Back to Basics Part 2.**

### **Checklist of things to be done in January**

1. Have you completed your seed and seed potato orders if not check out the new varieties described in the Marshalls article.
2. Dig over heavy soils and leave in clods to allow the frost to break them down.
3. Covering the dug over areas keeps them weed free. Old carpets or black plastic sheeting.
4. Keep hold of egg boxes, they will come in handy for potato chitting next month.
5. Plan a rotation system for vegetable plots to ensure the same crops are not grown in the same beds year after year to help prevent disease build up.
6. Place mouse controls near stored fruit and vegetables. Regularly check stores and remove any rotting or mouldy specimens.
7. Harvest sprouting broccoli.
8. Clear spent crops from the vegetable garden.
9. Protect root vegetables left in the ground by securing under a layer of dry straw or newspaper.
10. Start forcing rhubarb.
11. Net crops if not already done so to reduce pigeon damage to cabbages and to keep bullfinches off fruit buds.
12. Prune apple and pear trees. Be sure to remove any dead or diseased wood, including spurs with mummified fruit, the result of brown rot infections earlier in the season.
13. Consider renovating old apple and pear trees if the quality and flavour of the fruit is worth the effort.
14. Mulch fruit trees, bushes and canes with organic matter.
15. Place cloches over strawberry plants for an early crop.
16. Erect a clear polythene rainproof cover over wall-trained peaches to prevent problems with peach leaf curl from January-April. Do not let the cover touch the plant and ensure it is in contact with the soil.

## **Back to Basics Part 3. Things to be done in February.**

### **(All the things left over from January) plus:-**

1. Cultivate and cover empty beds with cloches or clear polythene to warm the soil ready for early sowings.
2. From mid-February onwards sow greenhouse-grown tomatoes and cucumbers with some heat.
3. Sow carrots, parsnips, early beetroot and bulb onions under cloches.
4. Plant out garlic and shallots on light soils and make outdoor sowings of broad beans and summer cabbage. Delay planting on heavy soils until the soil warms up.
5. Unpack mail ordered onion sets, shallots etc. Store in a dry, airy place.
6. Set potato tubers to chit (produce shoots) as soon as they arrive. Stand upright with rose end (with most shoots) upwards. Old egg boxes make excellent holders.
7. Net crops to reduce pigeon damage to cabbages and keep bullfinches off fruit buds.
8. This is the last month to prune apple and pear trees. Be sure to remove any dead or diseased wood, including spurs with mummified fruit, the result of brown rot infections earlier in the season.
9. Check ties on cane, cordon and fan fruit - replace ties that are broken or damaged.
10. Protect blossoms of early flowering apricots, peaches and nectarines from frost damage by covering with fleece. Hand pollinate if insects are scarce.
11. Pot grown strawberries need to be outside so chilling can induce flower formation.
12. Place cloches over strawberry plants for an early crop.
13. Apply a general-purpose fertiliser to all tree, bush and cane fruit at the manufacturer's specified rates.



## **Problem Page and - Any Answers Please.**

### **Everybody's Problem - Locking the Allotment Gate.**

"All allotment gates MUST be locked each evening"...

Four people were responsible for seeing that it was done:

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

This was a very important job and Everybody thought Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did.

All the plots were ransacked and emptied of their produce.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that

Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed

Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Onion Disease.**

Mr. Garwood of Wighay Allotments, Hucknall, Nottinghamshire has a problem with onions. This has occurred over the last seven years. It starts with a brown spot which gradually gets bigger and goes down into the stem and into the onion then they won't keep over the winter. Two other members of the site, John and Danny, have been experimenting by trying to lift their onions out of the ground before the "dreaded lurgy" gets hold. We would love to hear if anybody else has any ideas on the subject as the pesticides they have tried have had no impact.

*We think it may be the larvae of the Leek Moth at work, but it would be useful, next time the "dreaded lurgy" strikes to let us have a sample for inspection and enable us to get a scientific investigation done. Ed.*

### **WHAT PRICE SPENDING A PENNY?**

From Bob Coulter, 315 Smorrall Lane, Bedworth CV12 OLQ

Help needed with some research into the funding of allotment toilets.

In this day and age you would expect the average sized allotment site to have a toilet for the use of their members, but from my experience that is not the case. In fact very few of the sites I have contact with have a toilet facility.

If our site of 44 plots is typical of the country's allotments as a whole, very few members (both male and female) live in the close proximity of the site so the call of nature would be a distressing issue for most of them at some time or other, especially the elderly or physically restricted members. I would be very interested in finding out how many sites have a toilet facility and the problems (and solutions) associated with providing that facility, like planning permission, objections, sewage disposal etc).

Please contact me at your convenience (sorry!) and let me know

1. The name of your association (e.g. Veggiatown & District Horticulture Association)
2. Type of management, i.e. Council run/Self Managed etc.
3. The number of sites in the Association
4. The number of sites with a toilet facility
5. The type of toilet (Flush into sewer system/chemical toilet etc.)
6. How the funding was raised

I would be grateful for any information or useful advice on the subject and hope to be in a position to pass on the results to other societies who may be concerned with this issue.

**Replies please to Bob Coulter.**

## REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Wollaton Canal Association Nottingham. from Bill Mayer

This year has produced excellent crops not just in vegetable and flower ranges but also in the wide range of fruits.

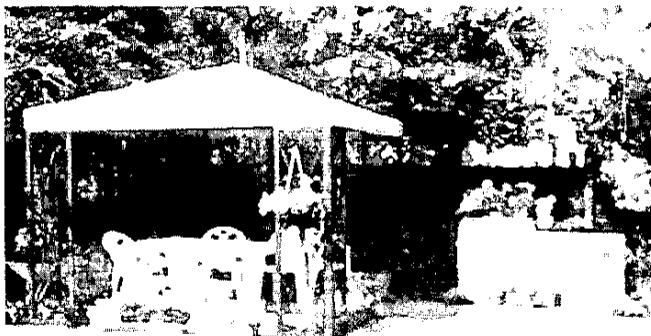
By way of an example, a peregrine peach being trained as an espalier on a south facing wooden fence, has produced in excess of seventy peaches. This is a well established variety, producing large firm and extremely good tasting fruit. Rosemarie, our guardian of the tree, is seen here inspecting the fruit prior to sampling.



While the area supports a range of fruit trees, two of our popular apples shown here are James Grieve and Discovery. Both are classed as dessert varieties, are heavy croppers and good eaters, with the James Grieve having an exceptional flavour. The Discovery turns a deep red when ripe. These are grown on an M9 rootstock giving them a height in the region of 2 metres, which is ideal for the garden or allotment.



In addition to established fruit trees such as Conference Pear, Victoria Plum, Egremont Russet, Laxton Superb and Bramley Seedling, some of the older varieties were planted in 2001 as part of an orchard project. These are all apples and are now becoming established some of which are bearing fruit. These varieties are Newton Wonder, Kidd's Orange, Sunset, Belle Pippin and Lambs Seedling and are all on short rootstocks (M27 and/or M9). Another few years should see them all producing good quality fruit.



The gazebo, in addition to its wide range of uses, such as morning tea/coffees, B-B-Q's, rest area, etc., was also the venue for our AGM.

Last but not least, no allotment is complete without our friendly robin.

## **(New Product information)     NutriMate**

### **You'll wonder how your plants did without it!!**

Prepare yourself for a technical journey through one of the most exciting discoveries of this century regarding plant growth. I am traditionally a gardener with over 32 years in professional horticulture and never before have I experienced such results. So what on earth is NutriMate? Well it isn't a fertilizer and it isn't a soil conditioner, so what on earth is it? That's the easy bit! NutriMate is 70 million years old animal and plant remains from high altitude sources in New Mexico, simple! So how does it work? Ah! This is the difficult bit! Imagine a product that you can use in all growing situations with every type of plant all year round to get earlier crops, better taste, less fertilizer costs, more flowers, bigger flowers and prevent harmful fertilizer run off..... it's endless.

Right so how does it do all this? NutriMate is an organic material that is derived from animal and plant remains that have been laid down in such a way as to produce, within the product, two organic acids. These two acids work together in harmony but do completely different jobs. The two acids are called Humic and Fulvic acid, humic? Humus? The plot thickens! Now for the technical bit.

#### Humic Acid

Humic acid has a very long molecular weight and stops all nutrient leeching from the soil. In the UK we lose about 30% of all the fertilizer we apply. In addition a lot of the nutrient we apply is locked up in the soil and is unavailable to the plant. The humic molecule within NutriMate stops this and also makes available all the nutrient currently locked up in your soil.

#### **Now for the next bit of technicallia.**

Cation exchange capacity (CEC) is the term used to identify and quantify a soil's ability to hold nutrient. Why is a sandy soil hungrier than a clay soil, why can a clay soil hold more nutrient than a sandy soil? Easy if you understand cation exchange capacity. Cation exchange capacity is a measure of soil ability to hold nutrient and is measured in milli equivalents per litre. The CEC of sand is low at around 4-10 m eq per l hmm, not very fertile. Clay is better at between 40-60 m eq per l, getting better? Wait for it! The CEC of NutriMate is 280 m eq per l. The humic molecule gives the product the high CEC, which holds all the nutrient within the soil ready for the plant to use whenever it needs to! We all know that humus holds nutrients! NutriMate is concentrated humus! And it's ORGANIC

#### Fulvic Acid

It gets better! Fulvic acid has a very short molecular weight and passes into the plant cell very quickly. Once inside the plant the high level of fulvic acid allows the plant to photosynthesise more effectively, or, produce plant food from the nutrient more effectively within the leaf. Again this means that the plant can grow better and bigger with less nutrient and less light! An ability to grow more effectively with less light means earlier growth and much faster establishment of all crops.

And there you have it! NutriMate working with plants to improve growth with fewer nutrients and less light. No loss of nutrient through watering and no need for expensive slow release fertilizers.

#### Uses

Well endless! In any type of container, pot, tub or basket, no nutrient is lost through watering. On all seedlings establishment is faster and every plant grows to its maximum when NutriMate is drilled with the seed. The amount you need is very small and the effect is dramatic. Used in composts it helps with establishment of all plants and promotes fast growth in all seedlings.

Why does manure grow excellent plants when there is little if any nutrient in manure? Because well-rotted manure contains high levels of humic and fulvic acid! 4.8 Kilos of NutriMate is the equivalent to 1 tonne of well-rotted farmyard manure! and no weed seeds, in concentrated form! Beat that! Try it and see for yourself.

Andy Hardie  
NutriMate Limited

NutriMate limited is a registered company and they sell NutriMate through specialist preferred distributors or by mail order. It is available in 10Kg buckets and 20Kg bags either direct from their distributors or with a package and postage cost by mail order direct from the company.

#### **Distributors**

Codnor Horticulture of Ripley  
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**Andy Hardie is available to give talks to societies on the product individually if required and can be contacted on the main telephone number.**

**For a detailed information leaflet on how to improve your crops telephone  
NutriMate Limited on 01772 641181**

# COOKS CORNER

## GRANS HOMEMADE NETTLE SOUP

from Graham Elliston, Cardiff

### Ingredients To serve 6

½ carrier bag full of nettles, tops or young leaves  
55g butter  
1 large onion finely sliced  
1 large carrot chopped  
2 celery sticks chopped  
1 large garlic clove crushed  
1 litre chicken or vegetable stock  
3 tablespoons cooked rice  
2 tablespoons thick cream or crème fraiche  
salt and freshly ground black pepper & nutmeg

### To Garnish

A little extra cream or Crème fraiche  
A small bunch of chives, chopped  
A few sprigs of parsley, chopped

### Method

Pick over the nettles and wash thoroughly. Discard only the tougher stalks, as the soup will be liquidised. Melt the butter in a large pan and sweat the onion, carrot, celery and garlic if used, until soft but not brown. Add the stock and pile in the nettles. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5-10 minutes, until the nettles are tender. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg.

Puree the soup in a liquidiser with the cooked rice. Return to a clean pan, stir in the cream and reheat, but do not let it boil. Check the seasoning then serve, garnishing each bowl with a swirl of cream and a generous sprinkling of chopped herbs.

## BARBECUE SPECIAL BEAN & VEGETABLE CHILLI Gill Davis Cardiff

Prep 15 mins Cook 30 mins Serves 4

Cost per portion 89p

30 ml (2 tbsp) oil  
1 large onion peeled and finely chopped  
1 red pepper cored, deseeded and sliced  
1 green pepper cored, deseeded and sliced  
2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed  
2 celery sticks sliced  
1 397 gm (14 oz) can tomatoes  
150 ml (¼ pt) passata  
½ tsp dried thyme  
½ tsp dried oregano  
½ tsp ground cumin  
½ tsp chilli powder (optional)  
Salt & freshly ground black pepper  
1 432 gm (15 oz) can chilli kidney beans  
1 432 gm (15 oz) can cannelloni beans drained  
1 432 gm (15 oz) can chickpeas drained  
1 432 gm (15 oz) can borlotti beans drained  
1 tbsp fresh chopped coriander

Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion and peppers for about 5 minutes stirring occasionally until softened.  
Add garlic and celery and cook for a further 3 minutes stirring until softened.  
Blend in the tomatoes, passata, and herbs, cumin and chilli powder (if desired) and seasoning. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.  
Stir in remaining ingredients, bring back to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes

To Serve:-

Sprig of rosemary, Lime wedges, Sour cream

Garnish with a sprig of rosemary and lime wedges, and serve with sour cream and Mexican rice.

## Mexican Rice

Prep 5 mins	15 ml (1 tbsp) oil
Cook 20 mins	small onion peeled & chopped
Serves 4	¼ tsp Chilli powder
Cost per portion 25p	225 gm (8 ozs) long grain rice
	300 ml (½ pt) vegetable stock
	50 gm (2ozs) crushed tortillas

Heat oil in a saucepan and cook onions for 5 min, until softened. Add the chilli powder and cook for 1 minute. Stir in the rice and cook for 2 minutes.

Pour in the vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes, (Add extra water if necessary), until rice is tender. Place in a warm dish and sprinkle over with crushed tortilla chips.

**Beetroot Tip** from Mr. Garwood of Wighay Allotments, Hucknall, Notts. Do you know you can freeze beetroot? Cook, skin and slice or leave whole and freeze. Remove as and when required from the freezer. It can be eaten whole, or sliced in vinegar. NO MORE JARS!



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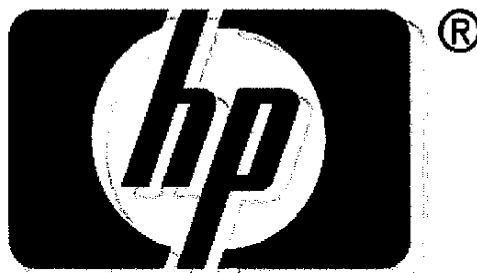


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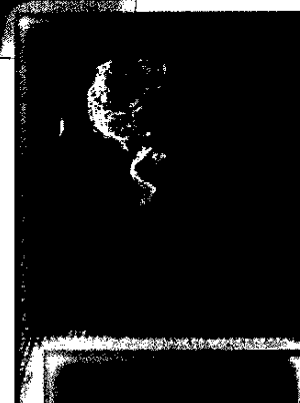
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