



Newsletter

Dec 2013 / Jan 2014

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What's In Season?

- Beetroot
- Parsnips
- Turnips
- Brussel sprouts
- Sprout stalks
- Sprout tops
- Cabbages
- Cavolonero
- Carrots
- Onions
- Potatoes
- Cauliflowers
- Kale
- Swede
- Leeks
- Sprouting broccoli

Open Day Success!!!

An enjoyable afternoon was had by all the fifty or so people who attended our Open Day at the Jubilee Centre on Saturday 30th November. The aims of the day were to say thank you to our customers for your support, receive your feedback and suggestions as to how we might improve, and give you the opportunity to get to know us a little better.

Guests were given a potted history of Arthur street = a true David and Goliath tale of how a small band of merry men and women have survived (just!) the onslaught from the all consuming supermarkets and the propaganda machines of agribusiness and pharmaceutical corporations, who have successfully managed to confuse the public about the merits of organic food and disguise the massive havoc being wreaked upon our health and environment by conventional agriculture and globalised markets.

Although times have been and continue to be tough, with Arthur street teetering on the brink for most of its history, thanks to your support we are managing to keep alive the dream of locally grown, healthy and ethical food for the whole of

Hull and the East Riding. However, in order to continue we need to strive to improve and be innovative, which is why we used the Open Day to launch our new Local Food Group Buyers Scheme. We hope to encourage people who are as passionate as ourselves about local, organic food to become Local Food Champions and start a buyer's group in their locality. We will deliver to these groups at wholesale prices which are competitive with conventional produce and also give customers the opportunity to order exactly what they want. Hopefully, this will attract many more people who would like to buy our produce but are unable to pay the extra price or don't like the selection in our weekly boxes.

Groups could be as small as three people if they manage to spend around £50 per week on their groceries, so forming a group may be as simple as gathering a few friends or family together. A group is already successfully up and running in Hornsea and pledges were made at the Open Day to start groups in Beverley and Hull. If you would like to start or join a group please get in touch with us for help and further details.

Feedback from the day was overwhelmingly positive, with some people commenting that the quality of the produce is improving all the time. If, however, you were unable to attend, and have some suggestions, criticisms, complaints or ideas to help us, we would love to hear from you.

We also heard from Search, Food360, Transition Hull, and Food4Hull about exciting local food projects in the city so thanks to them as well as Friends of the Earth for their support.

To round the day off perfectly we all tucked in to a delicious buffet provided by Victoria, made with great imagination and creativity from our vegetable boxes. We would like to say a big thank you to her and all the people who helped on the day, as well as for all your generous donations which helped to cover some of the costs of the event.

If all goes according to plan this year and we can afford it, we will definitely respond to requests to hold another one next year!

Other updates!

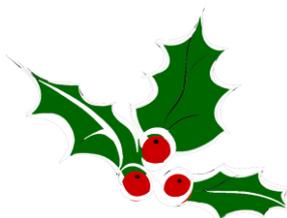


Christmas Orders

**YES we are
delivering over
Xmas & New Year!**

Orders need to be
in by Friday 13th
December

Visit the website or
speak to a member
of the team for
more details



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Bob & Jane Slater's update... (one of our growers)

September proved to be mainly dry with above average temperatures; there was some rain, but not enough to satisfy a grumpy vegetable grower who is convinced that the weather always conspires to do the opposite of what is required!

Regular readers may remember the problem we had with our leek seeds, which turned out to be incorrectly packaged onion seeds. However, the replacement seeds germinated well and were planted out mid-September. As the soil was very dry, we had to water them on a regular basis; but they appear to be thriving, and we should get a good – if rather belated - crop from them.

Our brassicas have done extremely well despite the dry summer. Caterpillars threatened to become a problem, but the plants only suffered in two or three areas, and are now recovering and looking healthy.

The other problem at this time of year is aphids, which generally colonise the weaker plants; they reproduce at such a rate that they soon kill off the host plant and move on to their next victim. Bob checks

regularly along the rows, removing badly damaged plants and breaking off infected foliage on otherwise healthy ones. Healthy organic plants are not attractive to aphids, and Bob finds that careful management and not over-reacting to small infestations is the best way to deal with these pests.

As the summer progressed our squash plants started their rampage across their bed; if they are allowed to cover the whole bed, weeding becomes almost impossible, and it is very difficult to find the fruits as they become lost in a tangle of squash foliage and unrestrained weeds. Bob's strategy this year was to train the quick-growing tendrils to develop along the rows instead of across the bed. The space between the rows can then be mown to keep the weeds in check; and I have spent many a happy afternoon pulling out the weeds which strike up in the rows. They have to grow tall in order to compete with the large leaves of the squashes, and are consequently easy to remove; but Bob says it requires a huge amount of skill to do the job correctly. Before I become too conceited about my

gardening capabilities, I refer to Bob's notes and see that he has added the following – I put that bit in to save Jane having to do it herself. So much for praise and encouragement from the boss!

Bob tries to cut the squashes before they become too large to fit in the boxes, and so far none have eluded his eagle eye. The courgettes have not been as cooperative, and many an oversized 'lurker' has been consigned to the compost heap.

The beginning of October brought the Beverley Food Festival and our annual Soil Association inspection. We had a lovely day at the former – the weather was perfect, the event was well organised as usual, and it was good to talk to customers old and new about our produce and the Walled Garden. The inspection went off without a hitch, and the inspector was once again complimentary about Bob's paperwork and general organisation – at least that's what it says in his notes!

Jane Slater
Slater Organics

It's what's inside that counts!

You may have noticed that our vegetables are not all of a uniform shape and size, nor are they washed clean as in the supermarkets. We prefer it that way as it shows that they have been grown

naturally and the soil on them helps them to stay fresh for longer. We hope you'll agree that the inconvenience of having to wash them is more than compensated for by the improvement in flavour



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