

The EXCHANGE and M A R R O W

OXTON ORGANICS CUSTOMER NEWSLETTER

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What you are about to read is that rarest of documents, a July E&M. Rare because if I don't manage to get it done before the end of the summer term I usually don't bother again until September as so many of you are away on your hols. This year however I felt I shouldn't let too much time elapse without something being said about this particular summer, or rather the lack of it. As predicted last ish, June turned out to be yet another record breaker weather wise. You could say that wet Junes are anything but occasional. I mean, one Glastonbury mud bath looks much like another in my experience and stoic tennis fans eating strawberries and cream under their brollies can seem like business as usual. But The Royal Show being abandoned on the second day? Things have to get pretty bad to send all those hardy rural folk scurrying for shelter. But scurry they did!

What befell the good folk of Yorkshire however was anything but funny. Living in the Vale means we're no strangers to floods but seeing those images of Hull and Leeds and Sheffield inundated and the resulting plight of thousands of families, schools and businesses sent shivers down my spine I must confess. I found myself wondering how commonplace such events might be in the future and if any of us will ever really be ready. My atheistic credentials mean I'm on shaky ground as regards the biblical, but for a while it certainly felt like "forty days and forty nights". There are no Ark builders in Yellow pages. I checked.....

Still, it's not all gloom and doom. We've got a new prime minister and whatever we might think of Gordon it's nice not having Tony Blair and his much publicised legacy shoved down our throats any more. I know it's only been a couple of weeks but I can hardly remember what he looks like. Political commentators would no doubt describe this last fortnight or so as GB's honeymoon period but for some reason it feels as if we're back to being governed by something close to cabinet consensus after ten years of presidential decree. But then it's early days.

So how's the greening going? Even the most ecocentric of you must be getting a bit concerned that Joe public can only have his carbon footprint analysed so often before climate change fatigue sets in. Because Jayne and I have been involved in this stuff for so long and, we hope, have already made quite a few adjustments both in attitude and lifestyle that we're at risk of seeming a bit smug. Solar panel? Yes. Energy saver bulbs? Yes. Compost heap? Need you ask?! Actually, we're far from fanatical. The push bike still spends most of it's time in the shed, I still eat copious amounts of cheese (and a fair bit of beef) despite the dangers posed by those greenhouse - gaseous bovine farts and have yet to build the composting toilet. But hey, no one's perfect. All I want is to feel part of the solution rather than part of the problem. However, if you're someone who'd like a bit more help in this area can I recommend the "70 ways to save the planet" pullout from last weeks Radio Times. After all, however much you might want to change the planet all you can really change is yourself.

WHAT'S GROWING ON

As you might imagine this season has been nothing if not challenging when it comes to producing veg. Last weekend was the first chance we've had to do any planting for about a month but crops have often surprised us in the past in their ability to catch up. Even so such a sustained period of low temperatures at the height of the growing season is bound to have it's consequences. We can expect poor crops of squash, beans and sweetcorn but hopefully good brassicas as they tend to do better in cool years. Salads should also do fairly well and as always the tunnel crops will be largely unaffected. So far we've been able to lay hands on reasonable spuds and some nice bunched carrots but onions have been and may continue to be hard to come by so be warned!

BOXERS BRIEFS

As mentioned in previous editions we're planning to hold our open day/farm walk in September this year. As part of the day we're trying to organise a conservation workshop to give you all some tips and encouragement so you can get involved in helping local wildlife. We haven't managed to set an exact date for said event yet but those of you who can be contacted online will receive an email (all the more reason to let us have your email address!). Details will be also posted on the website.

Don't forget to give us as much notice as possible when canceling boxes for holidays, etc. As with all alterations, etc. **The deadline is midnight on Monday.** If you forget to cancel you will be charged for unwanted boxes delivered **so don't forget!**

A month has now elapsed since the start of this year's boxes so you all should have sent us at least one payment. We're sorry but we now only allow a month's credit so should you fail to settle your account at least monthly box deliveries will cease until you do.

Again, please return your empty boxes promptly. Remember the punnets we use for beansprouts, etc. can be sent for recycling in your "clear" Wychavon recycling bag. If your local council does not offer this service then feel free to send punnets back to us with your empty box and we will recycle them for you.

CLASSIFIEDS

Entry free to all box customers

DAVE HALLIGAN ESQ. - Physician to those worried by Windows. Hardware and software problems diagnosed. Bespoke databases by appointment, website building etc. Tel.07730775085 or www.thecomputerwhisperer.co.uk

JEFF LYNN - Interior and exterior painting and decorating - Tel. 01386 792198

FLADBURY PIES AND SAUSAGES - Church Street, Fladbury. Prize winning pies, sausages and ready meals. Various high quality meat products, ideal accompaniments for your organic veg. Catering service also available. Tel. 01386 860288

PINS & NEEDLES - MAKERS AND REPAIRERS OF SOFT FURNISHINGS - Loose covers, upholstery, blinds and curtains, bed throws, cushions. Alterations. No job too small or too large. Call Sally on 01386 861550

DUTCH LEWIS' BROADBAND - Music for all occasions Tel. 01386 553557 or visit www.dutchlewis.com

HAWLEY'S EVESHAM HONEY We don't fiddle with our honey - jarred up straight from our hives in Charlton - deeeelicious!! Only £2.50/lb jar call Elaine 01386 860420 or mail el@hoho72.fsnet.co.uk

AROMATHERAPY/INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE - Experienced mobile therapist. Why not try these gentle effective therapies. Chris Tarplee 07707 675216