

# The EXCHANGE and M A R R O W

OXTON ORGANICS CUSTOMER NEWSLETTER

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Ah! Summer's here....and the time is right for dancing in the street. Hope you can dance in your wellies then cos hereabouts it's raining in my heart. Yes, you've guessed it. The agonising literary fast which is E&M closed season is about to be broken. And what a way to break it with this super-summer "let's see how many song titles we can fit into an organic veg newsletter" edition. Football fans will remember an England squad (not sure which one) playing the same game with unsuspecting sports correspondents a few fruitless major tournaments ago. You ain't seen nothin' yet though.

Ok, so Spingwatch is over 'til autumn when it morphs into Autumnwatch but it's the same ol' song. Cuddly little Bill Oddie looking every bit like a member of some cute, endangered species (if only!) dreaming of all the dosh he'll make from his next B&Q voiceover whilst trying his damndest to keep his hands off of Kate Humble's tit boxes. Still, she wears it well, all boingy haired and chirpy. (Must confess to a bit of a soft spot for Kate. She can show me some rough science anytime!). Oh well, I will survive ..... with a little help from my friends. Heaven knows I'm miserable now.

Of course the arrival of mid-summer heralds the return of that other televisual glimpse at our native wild life in all it's nest soiling, rodent disembowelling, sibling eating glory. Yes, Big Bro 'is back. And, what a shock. (if this seems a little cynical that's because I am). Another series, another racism scandal. Surely this couldn't be about ratings, could it?

Still, things can only get better, as a Blairite might sing. You know I can remember a time when changing prime ministers involved people voting. Yes, and believe it or not, political parties were all sort of, well, different from one another. Let's just hope we don't get fooled again. But I suspect we will.

So, what can we all do to banish the summertime blues? Okay, so there's not a lot of good news about but I get the impression that as far as the media are concerned good news is no news, if you'll excuse an inverted proverb. Well, at least we can all be cheerful about the imminent smoking ban, even us smokers. It's probably fair to say that most of us wished we didn't smoke and soon we'll be reminded a lot more often that our fellow citizens wished we didn't smoke but que sera sera. I must admit to feeling a teeniest bit victimised. After all, when you look at any other life threatening addictive drug it's the dealers that attract the larger portion of public indignation yet somehow it's hard to imagine drug squad officers smashing down the doors of Imperial Tobacco and hauling off the chief exec. In dreams.....

Anyway, getting back to the weather, how are you all getting to grips with your carbon footprint? Whatever your level of climate change cynicism it would be hard to ignore recent meteorological weirdness altogether. Hardly a month seems to pass without a record being broken. Anecdotally, I'd be surprised if June doesn't turn out to be another for the record books. It's certainly the first time in over twenty years in the Vale that I can remember The Avon bursting it's banks on the first day of the fishing season. For my part I've stopped banging on about it. But there's always something there to remind me. Jayne and I do what we can to save energy and cut waste but for most of my generation it seems to be business as usual. We still seem mesmerised, happily making journeys we don't need to to megastores we say we don't like in our oversized vehicles to buy stuff we don't actually need. And heaven help the public official who raises his or her head above the global warming parapet. You'd have thought that the bright spark who suggested reducing domestic waste collection to once a fortnight had proposed compulsory sterilization for all council tax payers. Ah well, I guess I'll just have to carry on doing it my way even if it means I'll do my crying in the rain. Good day sunshine.....

## **WHAT'S GROWING ON**

In case you were wondering, this is where the proper moaning starts. First the weather (yes, again!!). Our waterlogged March delayed ground work, then as soon as I completed the ploughing a hot dry April baked it hard. Not a good start then. Still a kinder May allowed us to make headway on the planting only for an unholy alliance between slugs and cutworm to demolish a fair proportion of our hard work. On the plus side the dry spell allowed us to complete phase one of our tunnel replacement program (we lost two of our five elderly structures during winter gales). With luck all five will be ready by spring 2008. As always this season is likely to follow the swings and roundabouts pattern of most years. Good for some stuff, poor for others. Organic onion sets were impossible to get hold of so sadly none of our own onions this year but lettuce of all kinds, spinach, spring greens and summer cabbage are looking good. Our shiny new and easier to manage tunnels look like giving us decent crops of toms and cucs but due to the tireless efforts of Mr. Slug and friends the bean crop, both french and runner, will at best be delayed.

## **BOXERS BRIEFS**

Usual reminders for the start of the season. However you choose to pay please make sure you get some money to us at least once a month. This is especially important early in the season as cash flow tends to get a bit tight. Please return your empty boxes promptly and, if left outside for collection, do protect them from the weather inside a bin liner or similar. Thanks to some sterling work by Jayne and Dave the Computer Whisperer we're pleased to announce some improvements to the website including online account statements, an up to date picture gallery and E&M's both past and present in PDF format.

Please don't be put off by the absence of the Classifieds. We normally ask regular contributors to resubmit their copy at the start of the season. Also, due to space constrictions, please keep ads down to 40 words or less plus contact numbers. Ta.

Don't forget to give us plenty of notice of holiday cancellations, etc. **YOU WILL ONLY BE EXCUSED PAYMENT FOR UNWANTED BOXES DELIVERED IF THE MISTAKE IS OURS**, so don't delay, tell us your plans today!!!

In order to give you the veg box you want please let us know your likes and dislikes so we can alter you preferences accordingly. We take complaints very seriously but can't put things right if we don't know they're wrong so don't keep us in the dark.

In past summers it's been our pleasure to organise an open day to all our customers to show you what we do and how we do it. This season we're changing things slightly by having the day after the school holidays rather than before. Also this year we're trying to organise a wildlife workshop with demonstrations, etc. To give you tips on how to do your bit for the environment. Watch this space.

Finally an apology but once again the price of organic free range eggs has gone up. This means that the price to you will now be £3.00 per dozen

## CLASSIFIEDS

Entry free to all box customers

**DAVE HALLIGANESQ.** - Physician to those worried by Windows. Hardware and software problems diagnosed. Bespoke databases by appointment Tel.07730775085

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

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