



# THE LAND OF COMMON SENSE

No. 11

An occasional newsletter from the Community Farm at Donington-on-Bain

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Contact us at [Doncomfarm@gmail.com](mailto:Doncomfarm@gmail.com) or text 07388 671264

Fresh ingredients from the field

## Herby lentils



Thanks to Jamie Oliver and his 'Return of the Naked Chef'

We are still at the end of the hungry gap but two of our first crops to come through are spinach and herbs - so this recommendation from Harriet is ideal.

"The photo suggests eating the lentils with salmon," she says, "but you could happily serve it with all sorts of things or just eat it on its own. For instance, I had a lot of mushrooms and eggs today, so we had it with a cheese, mushroom and garlic omelette, and potatoes fried in olive oil."

- \* Boil the lentils until tender. Season.
- \* Add lemon juice and olive oil.
- \* Just before servicing stir in two good handfuls of herbs (parsley, basil, mint etc.), and spinach, on a high heat until wilted
- \* Serve with



yum! 😊



This idea for lunch emerged during a hoeing conversation amid the growing spinach.

## The hoe is twice blessed ...



Harriet and Martin take care of the spinach and onions on Saturday morn-

Thanks for the photos Alison

**The simple hoe blesses those who use it and the weed-free plants which benefit. The idea is to scrape up the weeds while they are still small, from between the rows and plants of spinach or beans or whatever is being grown to let them get off to a good start. But there are other benefits too, when hoeing becomes a 'community activity'.**

When supermarkets took away the arduous field task of weeding, they also inadvertently took away an opportunity for valuable conversation, and learning about growing our own food amongst other things. To hoe is to share knowledge, discuss plans, improve skills, have a laugh, share a recipe, and take some fresh air and exercise as well as to control pesky weeds.

### Spinach looks after its own health before it looks after ours

Spinach, like other deeply coloured vegetables, has its own set of 'phytonutrients', natural chemicals which protect it from bugs, fungi, parasites, and even the sun. When we eat the plants, similar protections are passed to us.

Phytonutrients include antioxidants which protect tissues from damage and, in turn, help prevent inflammation. Inflammation, though good in small doses when healing an ill, can cause serious complaints in people when left unchecked: arthritis, heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer's. Spinach is also rich in dietary fibre and minerals like calcium, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, iron, zinc, copper, and manganese. Popeye knew what he was doing. Sources: <https://www.katefarms.com/articles/featured-articles/about-phytonutrients/>; <https://www.livescience.com/52541-phytonutrients.html>; <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/playing-with-the-fire-of-inflammation>





## BUBBLE REPORTS

### Polytunnels



Lettuce in a sheep's trough growing abundantly well in Poly 3.



Peppers coming through.

Container strawberries looking good.



Kale—always a great crop for nutrients and longevity.

Mooli—with seed saved from last year's wonderful crop.



Kohlrabi—back due to popular demand.

# “How do the plants drink when they are thirsty?”



We think the children found Mickey! Helen introduces her grandchildren to the Community Farm.

Helen's grandchildren enjoyed a trip to the farm last week, experiencing all we have in polytunnel and field. They ventured into the hen coup to see eggs in the nest boxes, and visited Mickey, grazing amongst the apple trees.

Thanks for the photos, Helen



In the polytunnel, they were excited to see tomatoes growing on plants – its easy to forget that if they don't see it, they won't know it.

“How do the plants drink when they are thirsty?” they asked. “How big will they grow?”



Exercising judgement and developing decision-making skills...

Alison R teaching the youngest member of the family how to water peppers.



### WHO ELSE IS SAYING WHAT?

#### Where will we store our root crops in the future?

We hope to compost on site—more efficient and effective. What about storing produce on site too? Alan's got an interesting idea...

#### Underground field store for root crops

- Get a digger, carve out a trench, 7 feet deep, and with digger push in posts so does not collapse.
- Slide in boards or hessian covered weld mesh
- Cover top with branches, then soil.
- Construct steps down with a door and you have a store to minus 25—good for - potatoes, squash etc.



WE'RE  
A PROJECT  
IN THE  
MAKING  
—COME  
AND CREATE  
THE FUTURE  
WITH US