



THE LAND OF COMMON SENSE

No. 8

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

29th March 2022

Contact us at Doncomfarm@gmail.com or text 07388 671264

Ingredients fresh from the field

A great gratin

Harriet has a rather delicious way to employ a *mélange* of vegetables—topped with herbs and/or cheese. Follow the pictures!

1. Sauté onions in olive oil and butter. Add chopped garlic.
2. Make a béchamel sauce: stir cornflour in to onions, add milk and stir until it thickens. Season with salt and pepper, grated nutmeg, 1tsp Dijon mustard and herbs.
3. Add lots of grated cheese stir and cook for just a little longer.
4. Pour over lightly boiled vegetables e.g. potatoes, carrots, parsnips, beetroot, leeks, cavolo nero, chard etc.
5. Put in a hot oven and cook until bubbling and golden brown on the top.



Serve with fresh crusty bread!

150,000 underrated members of the community

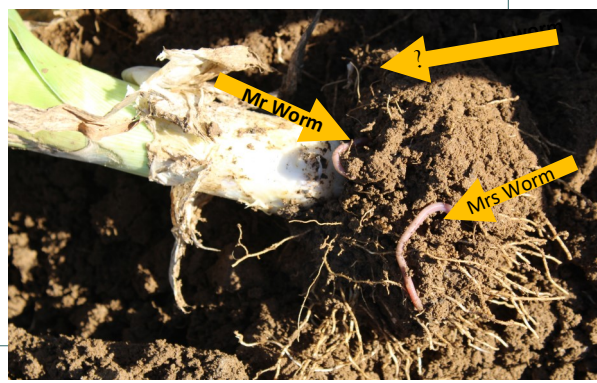
David planted about 58,000 leeks this year on the farm field. In early February they were still the 'best seller' on the stall, still looking healthy and still tasting great. A major benefit leeks are not often noted for, however, is the ability to give rise to interesting conversation amongst those digging them up. Thus arose the question of worms.



As we dug up the leeks and piled them into the wheelbarrow, we noticed that every single plant was alive with worms wriggling around its roots.

A quick calculation indicated a possible 150,000 worms amongst the leeks alone. Considering that 20% of fields in the UK don't have any worms at all, we thought this might be quite good.

The presence of worms can indicate the health of the soil because they drain it, fertilise it (unlocking minerals), and spread organic matter to improve its structure. So we are probably not taking much of a leap of deduction to assume our worms have quite a lot to do with the amazing taste of the veg on the stall.



BUBBLE REPORTS

POLYTUNNELS



2-week old brassicas emerging



Coverings are back on the poly-tunnels and seed trays starting to fill up the tables inside.

SEED



Clare and Jo setting onion and kale seed.

FIELD

It was a windy day when Jackie and Lee set out to spring clean the caravan—now who fancies a nice hot cup of coffee in the warm?



COMMUNICATIONS

After the Bubble brainstormed the concept of having a Networking Card (not a 'business card' because we are not a business!), Harriet painted some beautiful designs. We think they are definitely on the right track to give an impression of the community farm being welcoming (Goal 1), growing organic food (Goal 2), and hitting some of our values too: aiming for beauty, taking decisions with Nature in mind...



The Rota

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Refresh the stall	Andrew	Lee	Jo	Rach	Pam	Pam	Everyone!
Hens	Pam	Pam	Pam	Pam	Pam	Pam	Pam

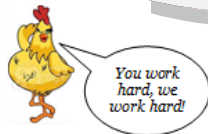
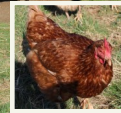


Does anyone else feel this community of Mr Blobby-like beets are chatting effusively and having a laugh in the field as soon as our backs are turned? (Or am I just being paranoid? Ed.)

HENS

The hens are getting protection not just from the foxes now but also from wild birds which might be carrying bird flu. Martin and friend busy sorting out the netting.

Hens laying well – 4 eggs by 11 o'clock this morning.



Slugs and snails and other tiny livestock

Valuing mini livestock is not only referring to worms, Andrew Salisbury in *The Guardian* (4th March 2022) is saying slugs and snails should be cherished too. Even the plant-nibbling species can play a vital role in recycling dead plant material and animal waste, he says, and be food for hedgehogs, frogs, birds, beetles and predatory flies. *How can we accommodate them in a field though?*

Another *Guardian* article talks about the rise of the 'honesty stall'. Although this example is from Australia, the interesting thing is that people drop off their own produce too "just free for people to take." *Haven't we found the same?*

Pests? Gardeners need to rethink how they view slugs, snails and greenfly
Andrew Salisbury

