

THE LAND OF COMMON SENSE

No. 16
9th November 2022

An occasional newsletter from the Community Farm at Donington-on-Bain.
Contact us at Doncomfarm@gmail.com or come on down to our Field on a Saturday morning!

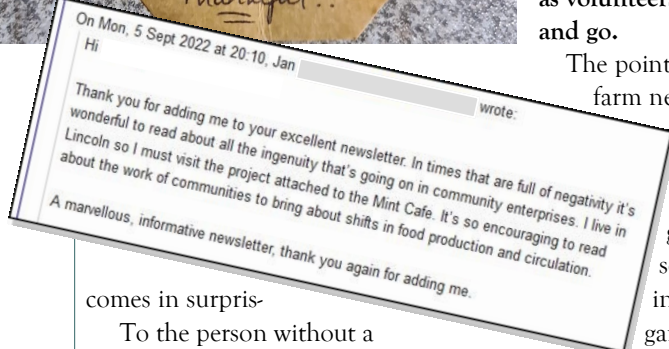
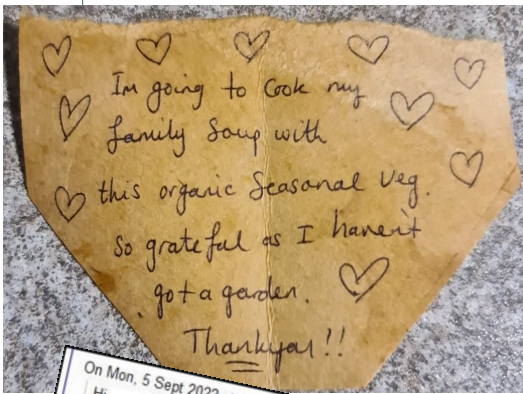
Every farm needs energy

So much energy has been put into developing the Community Farm—from the early days of field feasts, music and massive amounts of work through five years of activity, with waves big and small as volunteers come and go.

The point is—the farm needs constant energy to keep going and some of it in ways.

comes in surpris-

To the person without a left a note in the donation tin, and to 'Jan' an email: we were delighted to read your notes and we'd like you to know a little encouragement goes a long way and provides fuel to the cause! Thank you.



Children's Morning

We loved every minute and had not a single complaint about the rain—it didn't stop our search for vegetables or our passion for painting (in water colours of course!).

Pictures speak louder than words, so 'read' on...

Frank's head and beard looked strangely like an upside down kohlrabi...



Who knew what kale and kohlrabi were when they were four years old?



Chard is an amazingly useful vegetable—you can put it in pies, stews, soups, gratins, you can chop it small and sauté with onion and garlic—or you can wear it on your head!

Hot coffee, Jo's brownies and Dulcie's fruitcake



Wheelbarrow race—the veg won—yay!



First winter garlic going in—Tamsin mentoring the young growers.



Other news

Who knew? Green peppers growing outside still giving healthy peppers at the end of October.



Richard is going for the World's largest apple!

And he proposes a great apple drink with this year's amazing windfall cookers: peel, chop, liquidise, and blend with a little water-



sweeten with eaters.



But why was it such a phenomenal year for apples despite the drought? Richard is

asking if anyone has any insights. [Let us know and we'll share, Ed.]



Empty. After all that hard work—they could've left me another brownie.

Oh well...

Four go to the organic seed co-op

Thanks for the update Jo!

On a sunny autumn day in half term [what a long time ago that was! Ed.], Alison, Harriet, Judy and Jo went on a visit to the Seed Co-operative near Spalding where we've sourced much of our seeds for the Community Farm in recent years.

Alison kindly drove us there, across increasingly flat fenlands, and, luckily, she had visited before, and knew the location, since it is a little shy of announcing its presence. Harriet did some sterling map reading when roads were mysteriously closed and we arrived at the 26-acre site in a blaze of sunshine.

The Co-op has recently come under new management. Sharn gave us a warm welcome with tea and cake, and explained the new dynamism of the biodynamic site and how she and Aileen have great plans for growing more crops on more of their own land. They explained some of the principles of biodynamics, which has a strong philosophy, involving communal stirring of plant food solutions and the addition of horn manure (which matures inside a cow horn), which was certainly new to me.

The site has barns, wide stretches of glasshouses and its own reservoir, which provided enough irrigation to avoid the worst of the summer drought. We saw several of their seed crops *in situ*, with cabbages and onions in the fields, and leeks in their second year in the glasshouse, forming rows of gorgeous seed globes.

The seed room was impressive, with a temperature-controlled store and serried ranks of carefully organised seed packets, ready for distribution. The variety of seeds was mouth-watering, and we were intrigued to learn how buoyant is the market.

There were huge machines in the barn which sift the seed from the chaff, and we are all eager to return on an Open Day to see the miniature helter-skelter pea-sorting spiral in action – and maybe catch a glimpse of the on-site barn owl, the pest controller of the community.

We had plenty of time to offer some bindweed weeding and felt great satisfaction on clearing a bay and a bit in one greenhouse. We were also very proud of Harriet who uncovered what might have been a bindweed-eating grub (that she carefully replaced to continue its good work).

It was a wonderful insight into the production of the seed we all rely on, and the enthusiasm, kindness and (bio) dynamism of all the women we met was very inspiring. We even came away with some gifts of squash, tomatoes and onions. What a splendid day.



Thanks for the photo, Judy

Keep away the blues with the greens

As the days draw in and the rain keeps us indoors, it is good to remind ourselves that a healthy diet can help keep our spirits high. One study has shown that certain foods can help prevent depression. According to this international collaboration, the highest scoring plant-based* foods for depression are:

- Leafy greens – watercress, spinach, mustard, turnip, chicory and beet greens, Swiss chard, dandelion, greens, kale and the herbs coriander, basil and parsley.
- Lettuces – red, green and romaine lettuce.
- Peppers – bell, Serrano and jalapeno.
- Cruciferous vegetables – cauliflower, kohlrabi, red cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts.

* highest animal-based foods included oysters, tuna and giblets
Source: <https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/foods-prevent-depression-mental-health>

And we grow them all (just about!)

What are we up to?

Seed—a possible trip to the seed co-op near Spalding. ✓ done

Market stall in Louth—moved from front to back burner.

Exploring Partnerships meeting — 3pm at The Priory (Louth) Sunday 20th November. Invites in process.

Children's Morning—27th October (in half-term). ✓ done

Cambridge Food Hub— a trip to where food ecosystems all started, 3rd December 2022. Email us if you'd like to join.

Polytunnel—should we move the small poly to the field? Join discussion on WhatsApp.