



Fresh Boxes '09 Newsletter

Update From the Gardens...

28/08/2009.

Summer glides gradually towards autumn, and the gardens reach their most abundant phase of the year. All the veg is still coming along nicely, and to add to the bounty the autumn fruits start to mature and ripen. We love being able to add our own-grown fruit into our diets at this time of year...plums and apples for now, autumn raspberries, pears and damsons to follow soon. Currently in the UK over 80% of the fruit we eat is imported, and whilst bananas and oranges are never going to make it in our climate as a nation we could be growing a lot more fruit than we currently do. We've been doing our bit towards this at the Ecoworks gardens over the last couple of years, planting over fifty blueberry bushes, forty fruit trees (apples, pears, plums, and cherry) increasing our production of blackcurrants, raspberries and strawberries, and experimenting with some slightly more tender fruit such as kiwis, apricots, peaches and figs! We are also working towards instigate some collaborative community projects to grow a lot more fruit across the city. We hope you will enjoy some of the fruits of our labours in the coming weeks and years.

This Week's Fruit and Veg Bags

The lovely Victoria plums in this weeks large bags have been supplied to us by a neighbouring gardener on the allotments, and all the other produce is still from our own gardens.

Small Bags: Potatoes, Runner Beans, Red Onions, Rainbow Chard, and Salad Pack

Large Bags: As above plus Cucumber, Spring Onions, Beetroot, Mixed Fresh Herbs Pack, Apples, and Plums.

We hope you might enjoy trying something new with your runner beans or beetroot with the recipes over the page from our very own Claire.

All the best from the Ecoworks team

Claire's Culinary Corner

I always tend to return from holiday with random lists of ingredients written on napkins, in the hope that I can recreate what I have tried in restaurants when I come home.

I must say, I've had some pretty mixed results in the past, but a couple of very simple salads I have picked up over the last couple of years have been real successes and have featured a lot on my dinner table ever since - and I hope will give you a couple of different ideas to try with your veg this week....

Beetroot and Yogurt....

I picked this up from a little cafe in Crete, and it really is so simple and really tasty.

All you need is some beetroot and a tub of greek yoghurt, plus a little oil. You simply roast the beetroot with a light covering of oil (don't ask me how long for - I just do it by eye until the skins have blistered and it looks cooked!), allow to cool and then peel off the outer skins. Then you simply grate the beetroot with a standard cheese grater, and mix with a generous quantity of greek yoghurt. It's really tasty and goes a beautiful bright pink colour so looks great too.

French Bean or Runner Bean Salad with Pecorino

Again, this is dead simple and I'm always looking for new things to do with beans. I picked this up in Italy earlier this year, and have been avidly cooking it every week since then!

You will need....

A generous handful of French or Runner Beans

About 50g lettuce leaves or rocket (nice green tender leaves - I wouldn't recommend iceberg).

A few mint leaves

About 25g of grated Pecorino cheese (this is a little pricey, but lasts well in the fridge and you only need a little so one piece makes this salad several times)

A dash of Olive oil

A smaller dash of vinegar (white wine or cider works well).

The quantities used can be flexible - I tend to make it up as I go along, so you can adjust any of these ingredients to taste!

First, take the ends of the beans, and cut into app. 1.5 inch lengths. If you are using runner beans, I usually remove any hard or stringy edges and then slice lengthways into thinner pieces.

Boil the beans in water until they are done to your preferred degree (I like mine quite well cooked, but you might prefer them to remain a little crunchy).

When cooked, drain in a sieve or colander, and run under cold tap water.

Shred your lettuce or rocket leaves (about 1-2cm in width) and finely chop the mint. Mix the leaves, beans and mint together, then dress with the oil and vinegar. Finally add the grated or shaved pecorino and give one final mix before serving immediately or storing in the fridge until ready to eat.

Enjoy!

Claire