



Cambridge
organic

courgette

The Cambridge Organic Gazette

We deliver veg boxes to homes in and around Cambridge

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The Party Season

See inside for seasonal recipes for festive nibbles

**We're delivering New Year's
Eve and Day but are closed
Christmas Eve**

**We're closed for a week from
Christmas Eve, resuming
deliveries on New Year's Eve
and working New Year's Day**

Why not double-up?

If you don't want to miss your veggies while we're away, why not double up on your pre-Christmas delivery? Just enter the code: **DOUBLE19** in the offer code box on your basket page online. Or give us a ring (01223 873300) or email admin@cofco.co.uk.

**We'll knock 20% off the price
of your second veg box
when we add it to your order.**

**For Choice boxes, make your selection as usual,
and we'll pack both boxes to the same list.**

**You can also order additional quantities of veg
you need on top of any veg box.**



01223 873300 www.cofco.co.uk  @Camorganic



Duncan writes ...



A recurring theme in my editorials throughout 2019 has been reports of new records being set in the number of boxes we have been delivering. At the start of the year, our benchmark for a really good week was 700 boxes something we had achieved on only five occasions throughout our 21 years in business, with an all time record of 716 that was set in November 2014. But this year has just been crazy. In January, a new record of 717 was set and then in March we did a 720. In May we smashed this record with a 739, and in September we had a week where we did 748 boxes. And then, in the first week of November, we did a whopping 782 boxes!

As good as it feels to break new records, packing and delivering 782 boxes in a week is no mean feat. It really pushes the boundaries of what is possible given our infrastructure. The lion's share of the credit must go to the people who pack and deliver the boxes. It takes a great deal of resolve to turn up at work and be faced with a round of 50 orders that need to be fulfilled, but to a person they have uncomplainingly rolled up their sleeves and got on with it. I feel truly blessed to work with people who go about their work with such a terrific attitude, and who remain cheerful even when stretched to the limits.

Of course, our record week would not have happened without you, our box scheme members either. We have always referred to the people we serve as 'members' rather than 'customers', as we hope you all feel a part of something which is more than simply a business trying to make a little money. In an age when entire cities are trying to reduce emissions and move towards sustainable systems, it reflects very well on Cambridge to have such a well-supported local organic box scheme and this is something I believe we can all collectively celebrate.

Christmas is coming up. And that means it's time for our Jimmy's collection. On Christmas Eve, I will be turning up at both Jimmy's Nightshelter and Wintercomfort with our usual donation of fresh organic veg for their Christmas dinner. This is always accompanied by an envelope of cash which has been donated by the members of our box scheme. This year we are making it possible to make a donation by GoCardless, which David explains in further detail on page 7. We hope that this, combined with the record number of box scheme members, might mean that we manage our best ever collection this year.

If you are looking for gifts that are not only lovely to receive, but which bring a little benefit to a great local project as well, may I draw your attention to the range of hampers being offered by the Cambridge Food Hub. Not only do they showcase some of the wonderful local products on offer through the Food Hub, the sale of these hampers really helps to get the Food Hub trading while in its critical infancy phase.

Farmer Christmas is back!

with a great range of local gifts

Last year, if you found muddy wellington-boot prints on your hearthrug on Christmas morning, you had probably been visited by Farmer Christmas. Farmer Christmas is the Main Man's specialist for rural seasonal gifts. As a local man, he helps out on Christmas night with deliveries in the area in and around Cambridge. His tractor-drawn sled was last sighted parked on top of King's College Chapel.

This year, Farmer Christmas has put together another collection of lovely gifts. Many of his gifts are made by his loyal band of helpers at Prospects Trust. The Trust is a charity that runs an organic care farm that provides adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, with employment and education. Alongside those gifts, Farmer Christmas also has a great range of environmentally responsible hampers – see page 7 for more details.

1. Prospects Trust Scented Candle-in-a-cup · 2. Hamper, see pages 6 and 7 · 3. Montezuma's organic chocolate 100g bars · 4. Prospects Trust Festive Candle-in-a-jar · 5. Booja-Booja Hazelnut Chocolate Truffles · 6. Prospects Trust decorations · 7. Beebee wraps · 8. Prospects Trust hand-crafted soaps · 9. Local cookbooks

Happy (Parsnip) Crispmas!

and other festive nibbles



This year, instead of concentrating on recipe ideas for the Christmas meal itself, we're thinking about the other social occasions that crop up at this time of year. If you have friends or family round, why not try these ideas for tasty homemade nibbles, made of course, from lovely local and organic ingredients? As we're delivering veg boxes on New Year's Eve (and Day!) for the first time this year, it's a good time to think about healthier party food.

One source of inspiration for our festive snacks is the very recent launch of the first ever UK-grown chickpeas. Hodmedods have just sent us the first batch, grown for them in Norfolk by farmer, Henry Raker. They aren't organic, but it's very exciting to have locally grown examples of this very popular pulse. Why not celebrate by making them into these crispy treats?

Spicy roasted chickpeas

If you're using dried chickpeas, cook 200g from a pack of Hodmedods chickpeas, following their instructions or drain a 400g tin of Biona chickpeas. Dry them with a clean towel. This will slough off most of their skins, so discard them. Toss the chickpeas with 2 tbsp sunflower oil. Spread on a baking tray and roast at 180°C for 20 minutes, stirring halfway, until they have shrunk in size and are crunchy and golden. Stir through 1 tsp cumin, ½ tsp coriander, ½ tsp garam masala, ¼ tsp of cayenne pepper and ½ tsp of salt and return to the oven for 5 minutes to toast the spices. Remove and allow to cool before storing in a sealed container.

Oven-baked parsnip crisps

Peel two medium-sized parsnips and discard their skins. Then use your peeler (Y-shaped preferred) to create long strips. Toss in a bowl with 1 tbsp sunflower oil and ground black pepper. Arrange on two baking trays, so they don't overlap too much and bake at 150°C for 12 minutes. Turn and arrange them so less cooked ones are moved to the edge and cook for another couple of minutes, until all are crispy and golden. Remove to a bowl and sprinkle with salt. Delicious hot or cold.

Miso-and-Maple-Roasted sprouts

Trim 300g Brussels sprouts, cutting in half if large. In a small bowl, mix 1 tbsp white miso paste, 1 tbsp Vermont Maple Syrup, 2 tbsp clementine juice, 1 tbsp sunflower oil, 2cm length of fresh ginger grated and ¼ tsp chilli flakes. Toss with the sprouts, spread on a baking sheet and roast at 180°C for 15 minutes, until cooked through and lightly charred. Serve hot with cocktail sticks as a snack (they are still rather moreish cold).

21st-century Melba toast

I thought Melba toast was the height of sophistication in the 1970s – and still do! This recipe updates the classic just a little. Toast two slices of bread, 1cm thick, on both sides. Allow to cool enough to handle, and then with a serrated knife, cut horizontally through the crusts to split each slice in two. Cut into strips, and brush their cut sides with 2 tbsp of olive oil mixed with 1 finely minced garlic clove. Bake at 200°C for 5-10 minutes, until crisp and golden.

Farmer Christmas Hampers



Our range of hampers:
A Fruit and Nut Case £15
(pictured top) · Classic Eco-
Hamper £20 (pictured bottom) ·
Chocolate-Fruit-and-Nut
Selection Box £15 · Chocolate
Orange Box £13.75 · A Very
Chilli Christmas Box £20

When we asked our rural gift consultant, Farmer Christmas, what he recommended we offer as Christmas gifts, he suggested hampers. 'You've got a great range of products to fill them with, but your problem is going to be packaging,' he said. 'Most hampers are an environmental nightmare, with yards of cellophane wrap and plasticky shred! Wicker looks rustic, but do you know – **DO YOU KNOW** – where those things are made?' The issue of hamper packaging had obviously struck a nerve with the usually mild-mannered, Farmer Christmas. Once he'd calmed down, he suggested we use Vegware's simple but stylish boxes: they are made from a high proportion of recycled board with plant-derived PLA compostable film windows. For packing material, he suggested we shred our own used potato sacks for the ultimate in environmentally responsible packaging.

When it comes to what to put in the hampers, Farmer Christmas said that we've got one thing which other hamper stockists don't have. 'Swede . . . ?' we suggested hesitantly. 'Well, that's not what I was thinking,' he replied, 'but you do have lots of lovely fresh produce which you could combine with your packaged goods. I'm thinking seasonal fruit and nuts rather than muddy roots.'

Following the Farmer's advice, our range of hampers includes some that are simple collections of groceries, one which is just fruits and nuts for the ultimate healthy gift, and others that combine both. It turns out that a sprinkling of organic nuts and the odd organic star anise make the hampers really zing, while being themselves edible!

Generous helpings

Updates on our Harvest and Christmas appeals

Thank you ever so much to all our veg-box members who donated groceries to our Harvest Festival Appeal for Cambridge's two homeless charities, Jimmy's and Wintercomfort. Your generosity has been absolutely amazing! At the time of writing, we're only just over half way through the two-month period covered by the Harvest issue of our magazine, yet we've already had 226 items donated.

As our many long-standing veg-members know, we've always organised a collection of cash for the homeless charities in the weeks leading up to Christmas. It was that well-established connection that inspired our Harvest Appeal. So as that appeal comes to an end, it's time to invite you to donate once again.

This year, we're hoping to make it easier to donate than it has been in the past. Now that nearly everyone pays for their veg box by direct debit, we wanted to make it possible to add a donation to your direct debit payment. To do that, just use the website to add a £1, £5 or £10 donation to your order. We'll pass on the total amount donated, split between Jimmy's and Wintercomfort in the new year.

As in previous years, we still welcome donations of cash returned to us via your delivery person. If you're donating cash, there's no need to add a donation product via the website: just make it clear on the envelope that it's for the appeal and not a tip for your driver.

We'll also be making our own donation of fresh produce on Christmas Eve. Last year, we were also able to give the two charities your donations of £335. With your help, this year, we might be able to raise a little more.

RECYCLE YOUR OLD CHRISTMAS TREE

When the big day is over and the decorations come down, get your Christmas Tree collected and recycled for a donation to the Arthur Rank Hospice. See the Arthur Rank Hospice website for more details.

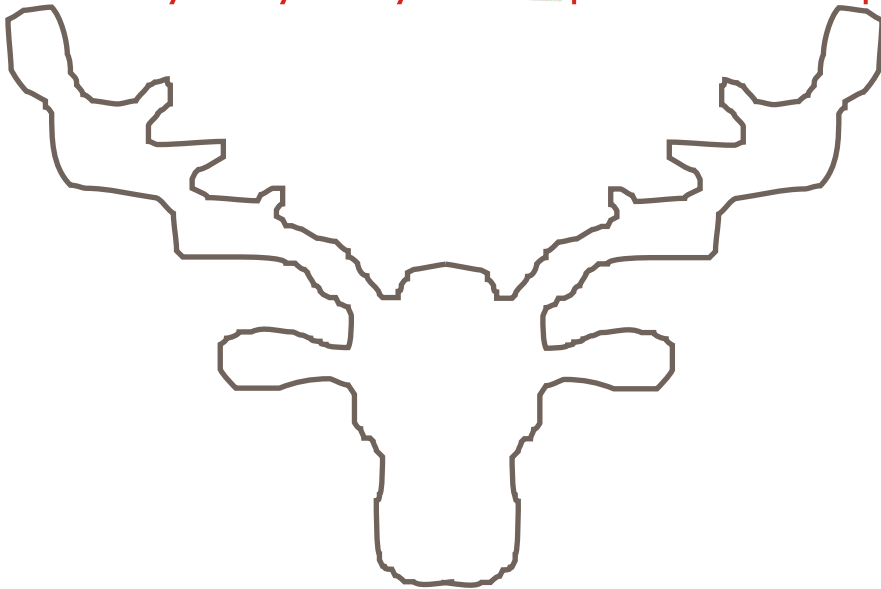
<https://www.arhc.org.uk/treerecycling>



10th Reindeer competition

Santa's reindeers are Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen. Rudolph's addition makes nine: can you add a tenth?

Draw, decorate and name Santa's 10th Reindeer. The best entry wins a goodie bag. Please return your entry back to your driver or post it on our Facebook page.



Reindeer's name

Name

Age

Veg-box member's name

50% off your first veg box

If you're not yet getting veg boxes delivered, why not join us? Just sign up on our website and enter the code 'CHRISTMAS19' to get 50% off your first veg box.

Joining Cambridge Organic is a great way to ensure a regular supply of fresh, locally grown, organic vegetables, delivered to your door (or left wherever you like, if you're not in). With our veg boxes, you can choose the contents yourself, if you prefer – or trust us to put together a great selection, based on any likes or dislikes.

This offer doesn't apply to existing loyal members: sorry! But if you know someone who might like to join, then please pass it on. If they join – and put your name in the 'How did you hear about us?' box when they sign up – we'll make your next veg box half-price as well.



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