

CAMBRIDGE ORGANIC GAZETTE

Winter 2026 ISSUE 176

# courgette



CAMBRIDGE  
organic



## Your 2026 Local Food Network

- Shopping Local & A FREE BOX
- Eat Like Your Nana
- Where Your £1 Goes



## A word from Duncan



### Founder and owner of Cambridge Organic

Turn the clock back two or three decades, right back to when I was only just starting out in business, and the very first shop I ever supplied was Daily Bread Co-operative in Kings Hedges. We have been supplying them with organic fruit and vegetables, week in week out ever since. So when Daily Bread closed its doors during the summer last year we weren't just losing an important wholesale customer, it really was the end of an era.

Daily Bread now adds its name to a roster of independent food shops, including lovely places like Radmore Farm Shop, Full Circle Shop and Meadows, which have now disappeared from our streets. Critically, these shops were all important outlets for the local growers and other small food enterprises that supplied them. It all adds up to a diminishment of Cambridge's local food economy.

On pages 3 & 4 of this newsletter you can read about the merits of buying from independent, local retailers compared to supermarkets, and the need to level the playing field between the two. A study by the New Economics Foundation alongside a veg-box company called Growing Communities calculated that for every £1 spent by customers of local organic vegetable box schemes a further £3.70 is generated in social, economic and environmental value. In other words, whenever you have a veg box delivered the impact of the money you are spending is felt many times over.

Perhaps your new years resolution for 2026 could be to support Cambridge's local food economy by joining our organic box scheme? If you've never tried veg box membership before please do take advantage of our free trial veg box offer, so you have a chance to experience what it is like and determine whether it would work for you.



### Local Heroes

Discovering new local producers and organic growers is always exciting! In 2025, we were delighted to welcome Peichin's Table, Cambridgeshire Honey Company, and Nikki's Homemade Preserves, along with fresh organic produce from Flourish and Dodnash Fruit Farm. We felt this was the ideal moment to reintroduce our local food network:

Audley End House & Gardens

Bagthorpe Farm

Brownfields farm

Dodnash Fruit Farm

James Foskett Farms

The Prospects Trust

Stort Valley Organics

G's Fresh

Flourish Farm

Sweetpea Market Garden

Waterland CSA

Waterland Organics

Wild Country Organics

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Arjuna Wholefoods  
Cambucha  
Cambridge Honey Bees  
The Cambridgeshire Honey Company  
Fitzbillies Bakery  
Hodmedod's  
Hot Numbers Roastery  
Nikki's Homemade Preserves  
Ombar Chocolate  
Pastificio Carleschi  
Peichin's Table  
Savoursmiths  
The Prior's Flour  
Totally Cultured

“can you see your house from here?!”



Hodmedods  
James Foskett Farm  
Dodnash Fruit Farm

## Veg boxes: food that gives back

### It lightens up the office, receiving positive customer feedback.

"We recently signed up for your box," writes a new customer, "and have been blown away by the quality and quantity. We regret not signing up years ago." What they go on to say strikes a chord:

"I guess I thought it would be quite expensive, but I think it's cheaper than the supermarket and we feel a lot happier eating it."

We might be biased when we say we agree, but there are reasons that could explain why buying your fruit and veg from a local box scheme kindles positive feelings you just don't get after a supermarket trip.

Let's begin with the fact that your veg box spend is much more likely to pay the producer fairly and to put money back into the local economy. According to research done by the charity Sustain, if you spend £1 at a supermarket around 8p of that will go to the farmer, compared to over 50p per £1 if you buy a veg box from us. Whilst farmers battle spiralling costs and wafer-thin margins, supermarkets continue to profit: a 2023 report by the Nature Friendly Farming Network states that in 2022 the UK's largest supermarkets made over £3 billion combined profit.

Paying fair prices to our local growers is a key principle for Cambridge Organic. Waterland Organics, one such grower, was at the forefront of the organic farming movement. For a time, they supplied large national supermarket chains with their organic produce. However, in recent years they have been outpriced by huge agricultural operations and the slashing of

prices paid by the large vendors. They have returned to supplying food directly to the customer, including local wholesale customers (such as us). We also believe in paying the true price of food, understanding that there's no such thing as 'cheap food', just food that has externalised its costs to our health, and the environment. When you see food that has been devalued – such as supermarket vegetables sold for pennies around holiday periods – consider who else might be paying, if indirectly, for this food.

Supporting our local growers is not a purely altruistic move. You're likely to find that the produce from local growers is some of the best quality you can get, including the best tasting. This is what one of our customers recently discovered, unknowing that the apples she described came from Waterland, less than 20km from us:

"I really enjoyed the apples that were in the box this week. Best apples I've had for years. Crisp, juicy, flavoursome without



***..if you spend £1 at a supermarket around 8p of that will go to the farmer, compared to over 50p per £1 if you buy a veg box from us. "***

being too sweet or too sour. Thanks to you and the producer!" She added, "It very much makes me appreciate your boxes over the supermarket, where everything's so standardised."

Which brings us to a further reason why your veg box might make you happy: knowing that you are supporting nature-friendly food systems that value diversity, whether it's in the crops grown or varieties cultivated. At Cambridge Organic, we enjoy introducing our members to new foods, and (for the most part!) this is happily received; ***"The veg box has encouraged us to try varieties we hadn't encountered before,"*** another customer tells us. The benefit is seen in the farms we source from. Returning to Waterland Organics, they explain the impact of moving away from specialising in a couple of crops for supermarkets, to a much more diverse mix of vegetables: ***"The farm has***

become more biologically diverse and therefore more ecologically stable. Our farm's wildlife has benefitted from this shift in our production."

Similarly, by buying unusual or heritage varieties – such as the apples and pears from Audley End Kitchen Gardens – we can support plant genetic diversity. This is at a time when, globally, food diversity is drastically declining. Over the past century, the shift towards high-yield, genetically uniform crops has resulted in the loss of about 75% of plant genetic diversity. Scientists have warned that this reliance on a narrow set of crops undermines food system resilience, leaving us vulnerable to pests, diseases, and climate extremes.

A study by the New Economics Foundation alongside Growing Communities, a London-based organic box scheme, found that every £1 spent with an organic vegetable scheme can generate over £3.70 worth of social, environmental and economic benefits. £3.46 of this value was for the customer and their household, including improvements in health and wellbeing. Further value was created for farmers and processors; the environment; and finally, the box schemes' employees.

So maybe the happy feeling you get when your veg box arrives is the knowledge that you're giving back: to your body, the farmers who grew your food, and the environment.

Plus, it will look and taste great.

**Written by Alice Guillaume**

## Eat Like Your Nana by Jools Abraham

Jools Abraham has been a customer with Cambridge Organic for many years. She founded Eat Like Your Nana in 2023 on a simple idea: most of us can live healthier, happier lives by returning to the kind of home cooking our grandparents knew. She learned to cook as a child by watching elderly relatives turn fresh vegetables, simple staples and a few herbs into delicious, healthy meals. Over the years, she has built on those skills and deepened her understanding of the science of healthy eating. Here she shares with us a favourite winter soup recipe to help you make the most of your seasonal winter veg.

Many people struggle with poor health without realising how much diet contributes. Ultra-processed foods now dominate many people's eating, and strong evidence links these factory-made products to chronic illness. At the same time, today's food environment is full of inaccurate information, leaving people unsure about what they should eat.

The science is clear: the healthiest meals are made at home from natural, unprocessed ingredients, just as our grandparents cooked. Jools has always eaten this way, and this traditional approach now aligns closely with the best nutritional evidence.

From early 2026, Jools will offer guided learning sessions in small, supportive groups to help people understand healthy eating, master basic recipes and create nourishing meals from fresh, real food. If you would like to register your interest, email Jools at [nana@eatlikeyournana.com](mailto:nana@eatlikeyournana.com).



Find out more about healthy cooking and eating at

[www.eatlikeyournana.com](http://www.eatlikeyournana.com)



## Winter Vegetable Soup

Serves 4 | Can be vegan | Make ahead | Versatile

Winter always makes me crave a warm bowl of soup. Root vegetables are perfect for this, and while this recipe uses the classic carrot and coriander combination, you can easily swap in parsnips, leeks, celeriac, or any mix of root vegetables you have. A potato adds welcome body, but it's optional.

Blend the soup smooth with a stick blender, liquidiser, mash it for a chunkier finish, or just leave it un-pureed. A little cream or coconut cream adds richness, and toasted pumpkin seeds or homemade croutons make a lovely topping.

- 50g butter
- 1 large onion, peeled and chopped small
- 4 large carrots, or a mixture, eg carrots, parsnips, celeriac, celery, swede, leeks, all chopped small
- 1 medium potato, peeled and chopped small
- 2 pints stock or water
- Salt and pepper
- Optional: a handful of washed and chopped fresh parsley or coriander, or 2 teaspoons of curry powder for parsnip soup
- Optional: 2 tablespoons of cream or coconut cream
- Optional: a handful of pumpkin seeds toasted in a dry pan

### Ingredients:

Melt the butter gently. Add the chopped onion and cook until transparent. Add the vegetables but not the potato. Fry gently for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. This brings out the flavour of the vegetables.

### Method:

If you're using curry powder add it now. Then, add the potato and stock or water. Bring to the boil and simmer gently until all the vegetables are soft – about 30 minutes. Then, puree the soup with a stick blender or liquidiser.

If you're adding cream or coconut cream, turn off the heat and add it now. Stir well. Add a little salt and pepper and taste it to check whether you have the right amount of salt. Finally, add the chopped herbs and sprinkle with pumpkin seeds, if you have some.





# YOUR LOCAL VEGETABLE PEOPLE...

... Since 1998 we have been delivering organic veg boxes to the Cambridge area, prioritising produce from local growers and makers.

Give us a try with a  
**\*FREE  
VEG-BOX**

[cambridgeorganic.co.uk](http://cambridgeorganic.co.uk)  
**CODE: HEALTHY2026**



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@camorganic

**\*We love our boxes and happily offer a free medium or small box for you to try. Sign-up through the website to claim or call: 01223873300 or email: [hello@cambridgeorganic.co.uk](mailto:hello@cambridgeorganic.co.uk). There is no set contract so you can cancel at anytime, or change the size and frequency of your box.**

Our new year offer is for new customers only. Use the code **HEALTHY2026** when you sign-up (returning customers contact us direct). Subsequent boxes will be charged at the normal price. This offer is valid until mid Feb 2026. Any additional groceries are not included in the offer.