



# courgette

The Cambridge Organic Gazette

We deliver veg boxes to homes in and around Cambridge

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**definition: (proverb)** if you use a commodity or resource carefully and without extravagance you will never be in need.

**Introducing our new  
'Waste Not' mini-box**

**You'll love our 'least popular'  
soup**

**Our survey results are in!**

**Hummus without the food miles**

If you want to reduce your impact on the environment, then regular deliveries of organic veg from a local company are a good place to start. Food grown organically is not only better for the wildlife in and around the land on which the food is produced, but is also better for the planet as a whole. At Cambridge Organic, we also try our best to minimise the carbon emissions of our own deliveries: just before Christmas, we took possession of our fourth electric van, making four-fifths of our veg-box delivery fleet emission-free.

We still think that there's more that we can do, and in this issue of the 'Courgette', we'll be exploring ways we might all do our bit for the environment by further reducing food and packaging waste, as well as food miles.



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# Duncan writes ...



In recent years, I've found myself being invited to speak at all sorts of events, but the one that has always eluded me – and the one I have coveted more than any other – is the Oxford

Real Farming Conference, the highlight of the sustainable farming calendar. Well, these things are like buses aren't they? This year I was asked to give two talks at the conference: one in a session on box schemes and one in a session about food hubs. Preparing and memorising two talks was going to be a bit of a tall order, so I handed the baton over to Food Hub Project Manager, Alice, and I did the box scheme one. My fellow panellists were Guy Singh-Watson, founder of Riverford Organics, Julie Brown of Growing Communities, and Gareth Davies, who is a founding member of a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) scheme in Warwickshire. Both Alice's and my talks are available to watch on the Cambridge Food Hub website.

distribution service begins this month, a significant milestone in the Food Hub project.

During 2018, we worked with Dr Lili Jia of the Institute for Manufacturing, who is conducting research into sustainable lifestyles, with a particular focus on encouraging the re-use of veg boxes. Almost a third of our box scheme members took part in her survey, which is astounding. Thank you ever so much to all of you who participated; it's people like you who help effective research to take place that points towards a better and more sustainable future. You can read the conclusions of her research later in the magazine.



Many thanks also to all the box scheme customers who made a contribution to our 'Jimmies fund' just before Christmas. We call it the Jimmies fund, but the money is actually split evenly between Jimmies Nightshelter and Winter Comfort, and is delivered along with a van full of veg donated by ourselves. This year a total of £335 was collected. That's really something for a fairly small business like us: the generosity of our members each year never ceases to amaze me.

One of the points I made in my talk was that there are certain elements of the box scheme business model, which work extremely well in terms of effective supply chain management, and that perhaps we should explore how these methods might be applied to other food supply chains. For example, through our system of offering a range of boxes, some of which are tailorable and others which are not, we are able to find a good home for all of the produce that we source from local farms and drastically reduce waste. Applying this theory to more mainstream supply chains is just one of the novel concepts that make up the Food Hub project. The pilot phase for the Food Hub



# Waste not WANT NOT

*Do you want a Waste-Not box?*

We're introducing a new mini-box to try to further reduce the amount of food waste we create. We try to make sure that everything that goes into our veg boxes is of good quality and discard anything that we don't think is up to scratch. What we grade out doesn't go completely to waste, as we donate it to some local pig owners. However, it would be great if more of the food we throw away could be consumed by humans! After all the care that's been taken to grow the produce organically, and then to transport and store it, it's a shame if people don't get to eat it.

We're therefore introducing the Waste-Not mini-box as an experiment to see if there are members who'd like to add a small box of below-par produce to their usual veg box. Often, the items we throw away are affected by a small area of rot, that many would be happy to cut out and use the rest. Or they are a little bit wrinkled or shrivelled, but again, many of us would welcome cooking with them.

So, if you'd like to do your bit to reduce food waste – and bag a bit of a bargain at the same time – then add the Waste-Not box to your order for just £3.00.

*- Typically, 4 items, but sizes will vary depending on how much waste there is.*

*- We'll only try to give you items which we think are useable, but we know that different people have different attitudes to what can be used, so forgive us if you receive something you think is beyond use. Sometimes something that looks promising when we pack the box might deteriorate on the journey.*

*- If we don't have enough waste produce, then we'll treat the Waste-Not box as an out of stock item and take the charge off your account. We don't want to use perfectly good produce to make up orders if there's not enough waste! When other additional items are out of stock, we like to try to contact you in advance to let you know, but we won't do that with the Waste-Not box.*

*- Like the other Mini-boxes, the Waste-Not box is only available as an add-on to a veg-box delivery.*

*- This is a bit of an experiment, so we might have to modify things as time goes on.*

## Some veg-box prices set to rise

In November of last year, the Living Wage Foundation announced that the real Living Wage for workers outside London would rise to £9 per hour. As Living Wage accredited employers, we're increasing our colleagues' wages accordingly. We are therefore going to increase the price of some of our vegetable boxes for the first time in two years. The Original Vegetable Box will go up to £11. Favourites boxes will have a similar price rise across the range. Choice boxes will not be affected.

In July 2007 we raised the price of what was then called the Regular Vegetable Box to £10.50. When we reorganised our line-up of veg boxes, this box became the Original Vegetable Box, so over the past twelve years, there has been very little increase in the price of our best-selling box.

The price changes will take effect on the week commencing 11 February.



## The least loved ...

As members of our veg-box service know, we offer a range of different types of box that provide different levels of control over what you get. Our Choice box members can pick exactly what they get in their box from the online list of what's available for the coming week. For our other boxes, we make the selection ourselves. With most types of box, what we put in is tailored by preferences that the member has set up. Our Original Vegetable Box, on the other hand, doesn't allow preferences. It's the veg box in its purest form: great value, but what you get is what you're given!

While we're very proud of our Choice boxes (we think we're the only veg-box company that allows its members to pick what they get), we also recognise that for people who prefer the other types of boxes, the element of surprise is a key ingredient in every veg box. For them, part of the fun of having a veg box is the challenge of deciding what to do with the different items that have turned up.

There are inevitably some vegetables that are easier to use than others. Making the most of your veg box means finding a use for those vegetables that tend to get left in the bottom of the fridge at the end of the week. We therefore thought we'd come up with a recipe that's delicious, easy – and features some of the least popular members of the vegetable family. From our members' lists of dislikes, we think we have a pretty good idea of who the least loved are ... Do you agree?



Cut down food miles by substituting haricot beans for Hodmedod's fava beans. Search 'Whole Fava Beans' at the top left of our site to add them to your order for 99p per tin.



Britain's original bean, fava beans are delicious, nutritious and good for the soil. Hodmedod's Whole Fava Beans in Water are cooked and ready to use. They're perfect for spicy Egyptian ful medames, truly British baked beans, stews, curries, salads and more.

# The 'least popular' soup

We hope you'll love this soup made from some of the least loved vegetables! It's a hearty, Tuscan-style dish, featuring three vegetables that often appear on people's lists of things to exclude from their veg box: swede, fennel and celery. You can, of course, vary the ingredients, depending on what you find lurking in your own fridge. The soup can be made vegan by leaving out the parmesan, or you could add a little meat, such as cubed pancetta, chorizo or a skinned British sausage. If you're doing a meaty version, then start by frying the meat to release the fats.

1 onion, finely chopped  
1 carrot, finely chopped  
2-3 sticks of celery, finely sliced (or  
200g celeriac finely cubed)  
1 fennel, finely sliced  
300g swede, peeled and cut into 1 cm  
cubes  
2 garlic cloves, sliced  
Pinch of chilli flakes

Fresh herbs: parsley, sage, rosemary  
or thyme or a combination  
A bay leaf  
400g tin of haricot beans  
150g of dark green leafy veg (e.g.  
cavolo nero or curly kale, spring  
greens or the outer leaves of a savoy  
cabbage)  
Olive oil  
Grated parmesan

In a heavy-based pan or casserole with a lid, gently sweat the onion, carrot, celery/celeriac and fennel in a little olive oil for about 15 minutes until everything is soft and lightly coloured. Add the garlic, chilli flakes, herbs, swede and a little salt, and cook for another five minutes. Drain and rinse the tin of beans and add to the vegetables. Add boiling water to cover everything and simmer for 20 minutes until the swede is cooked through.



Meanwhile, remove the tough central stalks from the kale or other greens. Blanch in a pan of boiling water for two minutes for the kales or one minute for cabbage or greens. Drain and refresh under the cold tap. Squeeze as much water out of the leaves as possible and finely chop. Add them to the soup and simmer for a few more minutes.

Serve the soup in deep bowls with a drizzle of olive oil and the grated parmesan.



## How to live an environmentally sustainable life?

Becoming a Cambridge Organic member is a big step towards living a more environmentally sustainable life. Is there anything else we can do for the natural environment? The ESRC IAA project that we have been working with Dr Lili Jia's team at the University of Cambridge over the past year seeks to answer this question.

In the past few months, we have conducted a two-round survey to learn more about our veg-box members' opinions about living an environmentally sustainable life, along with the actions they take and the barriers they face in achieving that goal. We received 341 completed questionnaires for the first round and 251 completed questionnaires for the second round (only the participants in the first round were invited to participate in the second round). That's a wonderful response rate: we would like to give a big 'thank you' to everyone who took part.

Green activities	Average adoption rate
Maintain correct tire pressure on my car	29%
Only run the dishwasher when there's a full load	51%
Use a clothesline instead of a tumble dryer, when drying wet clothes	54%
Alter my driving (i.e. avoiding sudden accelerations and stops)	34%
Unplug (or shut down) electronics completely when not using them	45%
Replace ordinary (non-saving) light bulbs with energy-saving (CFC) bulbs	29%
Use energy-efficiency as a selection criterion when buying new appliances	30%
Turn off my car when idle for longer than 30 seconds (except in traffic)	39%
Turn down my heating/thermostat by 2 degrees	33%
Reduce my shower time to 5 minutes maximum	39%
Buy more locally grown and produced foods	62%
Reduce my driving by walking or biking more	43%
Use more public transportation (e.g. train, bus) instead of driving	27%
Reduce the number of miles that I fly	14%
Insulate my home or apartment	55%
Buy/consume less meat	51%
Buy carbon offsets when booking an airline ticket (whenever possible)	5%
Reduce my driving, by sharing car rides	9%
Replace single glazed with double glazed windows	31%
Purchase home energy from a green source (e.g. wind or solar power)	48%
Purchase a more fuel-efficient car	20%
Recycle veg-box	60%*
Avoid using single-use paper cup	69%

Note: We considered a green activity as 'adopted' if 'Somewhat frequently', 'Frequently' or 'Very frequently' was ticked. \*It should be noted that there were some members who couldn't return their veg box during our survey week, as a Cambridge Organic van was stolen.

**82%** of Cambridge Organic members feel good about returning veg box

**80%** of Cambridge Organic members feel good about doing green activities

**One of the key ways that Dr Jia's survey indicates how our members could further reduce their negative impact on the environment is to make sure that they return their empty vegetable box for us to re-use. 93% of people who took part stated that they intended to return their veg box, but only 60% said that they managed to do so frequently. There are therefore quite a few people who would like to return their box, but don't manage to do it. Because 82% of people said that they feel good about returning their box, if we can help those who would like to return their box to do so, then we hope they'll feel good about it!**

**A few respondents very helpfully left comments explaining that although they would like to return their veg boxes, they couldn't, because there just isn't anywhere that they could store a box until the following week's delivery. If there are genuine reasons why you can't return your veg box, we don't want you to feel bad about it! But we hope you'll forgive our repeated requests to return your box, as we really need everyone who can return their box to do so.**

**As regular members know, we try to utilise only boxes that originally contained organic produce delivered to us. A lot of our produce comes directly from local farms, who use re-useable crates that we return. The boxes we use as veg boxes are ones that less local produce has come in, whether that's from elsewhere in the UK or from Europe. That means that each week, we acquire many fewer boxes than we send out.**

**We've made the very deliberate decision not to use brand-new packaging, so that no trees are cut down, and no other resources consumed, to pack our boxes. The boxes we would use would add 50p to the price of each box. We therefore try to re-use our boxes as many times as we can, even if that means that they become a bit more tatty than we'd like ideally like them to be!**

## *A local dip: Carlin Pea hummus*

**Where do chickpeas come from? We've tried to answer this question without much success. We've learned that chickpeas have been cultivated by humans for many millennia, with archaeological evidence of chickpeas being consumed 7,500 years ago in the Middle East. But we've not been able to find where the chickpeas found in tins in our kitchen cupboards are grown. Labelling rules mean that tins of chickpeas have to state which country they were packed in, but not which country they were grown in. India is the biggest producer of chickpeas in the world, with Myanmar, Pakistan and Turkey following behind.**

**Wherever your chickpeas may have come from, they've probably travelled quite a long way. We therefore thought we'd experiment with making hummus with a bean we know hasn't travelled very far: Hodmedods tinned Carlin Peas are grown by Mike Lea at Green Acres Farm in Shropshire.**

**1 tin of Hodmedods Carlin Peas, drained and rinsed  
2 cloves of garlic (or 3 smaller ones)  
2 tablespoons of lemon juice  
1 tablespoon of light tahini  
2 tablespoons of water  
salt to taste  
olive oil**

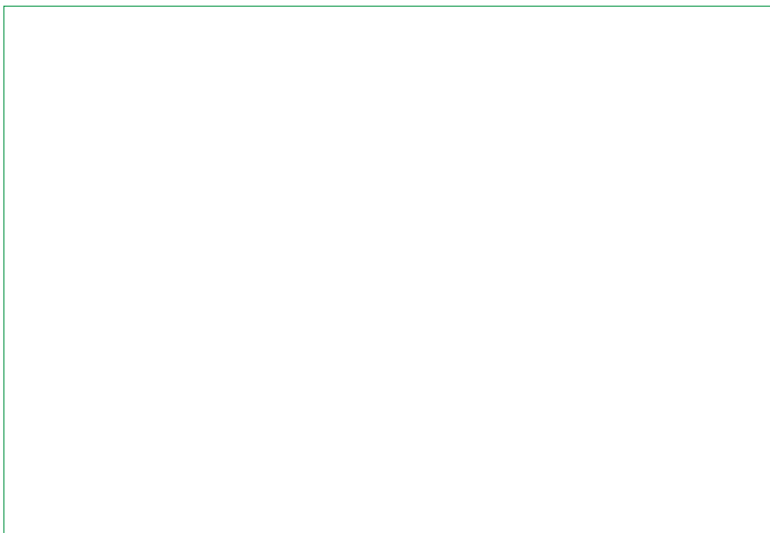
**Whizz everything apart from the olive oil in a food processor or blender. Taste and add more salt, tahini or lemon juice if necessary. Transfer to a bowl and drizzle with a little olive oil.**

**Search 'Tinned carlin' at the top left of our site to add them to your order for 99p per tin**



# DESIGN A 'REDUCE WASTE' POSTER

One of the joys of parenthood are the drawings they create. If their craft time can also plant a seed about how to live their lives, that's even better. In this issue, we're asking kids of all ages to design us a poster encouraging us to reduce waste. We've included a few ideas of our own to get their recycling minds whirring. Return your drawing either in your empty veg box or upload to our Facebook page. The best one wins a goody bag.



compost more  
waste less

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 'NOWASTE50' 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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