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The HERB GROWER

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

RED CLOVER
Growing notes
Page 10

A PEASANT'S LUNCH
Lolo's story
Page 11

HERB PILLOWS
For sleeping, dreaming, babies ...
Page 12

HERBS AND HANDMADE SOAP
Page 13

REVISED FINANCIALS
The auditor's version
Page 17

Howard Rubin and Doug Haas meet the minister in Canberra

On September 23 Howard, with Doug Haas of the BFA, met with Warren Truss, the Minister for Primary Industries. They attended the meeting as representatives of the entire organic certification industry.

Minister Truss' portfolio includes overseeing AQIS. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the minister on the current increases in AQIS charges and to submit a request for some type of relief from these charges.

Doug had already compiled an in depth briefing paper and the minister and his staff were well informed of the situation.

The government policy regarding AQIS is 100% cost recovery. During the discussions, we have been able to find some common ground where we hope to either have accrued payments deferred to a later stage in the industry's development or have a portion of the non-operational fees subsidised.

The meeting was very positive and left both Howard and Doug optimistic that a compromise solution can be found.

We await an early decision from the minister.

ALSO INSIDE:

Playdough for Young and Old, Making Kipsies, Gardening by the Moon, Chocolate Oranges for Christmas, Your Wonderful Letters, Lots of GM News Stories and Other Interesting Items

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EDITORIAL



I hope you're into do-it-yourself Xmas gifts as this issue has turned into one full of ideas, most of which I collected during the year. It's going to be an interesting end of year and century, if we can believe

all the Y2K predictions. Just to be on the safe side, Howard and I will stay in Oz during the holidays. We'll be in Europe during most of October though, and I will even have to miss the AGM for the first time ever, as I'm going a week ahead of Howard to be able to spend some more time with my parents.

Lots of GE news items keep coming in, quite a few of them encouraging. I'll give you the very short version of some of the cheery ones:

- * The world's biggest life science companies and grain processors will face a multi-billion dollar antitrust action to be launched in up to 30 countries later this year. The lawsuits will claim that companies such as Monsanto, DuPont and Novartis are exploiting bioengineering techniques to gain a stranglehold on agricultural markets. The action is being brought jointly by the Foundation on Economic Trends, run by Washington-based biotech activist Jeremy Rifkin, and the US-based National Family Farm Coalition, together with individual farmers across Latin America, Asia, Europe and North America.
- * The amount of genetically engineered corn planted in the U.S. next year could be down by as much as 25 percent as farmers face growing rejection of so-called "Frankenfoods."
- * Nissin Food Products (Japan) noted September 10 that it intends to stop using genetically engineered US-grown soybeans. In so doing, it is joining the likes of Kirin Brewery in shunning genetic technology out of respect for consumer fears, but it is the first instant noodle manufacturer to do so.
- * A newly-formed consortium of key industry players, consisting of 10 to 12 companies, plans to launch its own GM-free label and certification process for food throughout Australia.
- * Organic farming could produce enough food to feed large populations, according to British scientists at the Festival of Science in Sheffield.
- * Health Ministers agree on mandatory and clear labelling of ALL GM foods and ALL GM ingredients in food items within a year!
- * Australian farmers are unconvinced about the value and safety of genetically modified (GM) crops and foods, a survey by Australia's leading rural press group shows.
- * Europe's leading dry dog food producer, Royal Canin (France), vowed yesterday not to include genetically modified (GM) ingredients in any of its pet food lines.
- * Drugs firm Novartis last night said it was considering spinning off its ailing agribusiness division which includes the company's controversial research into genetically modified foods. The Swiss company's decision to rethink its involvement in GM foods comes just one month after Britain's AstraZeneca warned that it too might sell its agrichemicals business. At the same time Monsanto has seen its share price fall from \$62 to \$40 in the past 12 months (\$37 dollars today). (haha!)
- * U.S. consumers want more labeling and stricter regulation of genetically modified food.
- * Southeast Asian nations were urged Friday to join forces to prevent global trade agreements being used to force countries to open their markets to genetically modified crops.

Unfortunately there are also very sad stories, from organic farmers in the US in particular, whose crops are contaminated by the GE crops of neighbours. Bees and wind spread GE pollen, and in random tests of organic food and organic products, GE organisms have been detected. What a heart break! In the US state Dakota, organic farmers who used to plant canola as a good rotational crop, are becoming limited in what they can grow. They're also complaining about new pesticides and herbicides being applied to the GMO crops, which do great damage to the environment and spread to their crops. They say that farmers are now spraying all year round instead of a few times a year. And here the Federal Government is allocating 17.5 million of our tax dollars to set up two gene technology bureaucracies!

Also the Australian Medical Association (AMA) seems to be waging a new campaign against alternative medicine. What's new?

I hope you have a great Christmas holiday in spite of all these nasties!

Absolute copy deadline (for letters, ads, articles etc) for the Jan/Feb 2000 issue is Nov. 20

All material for The Herb Grower should be sent to Elle Fikke-Rubin,
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Report on the AGM, October 1999

The AGM on October 2nd was held at the
peaceful sunny Cellulose Valley Technology
Park, where the current OHGA head office is
located. It was a lovely warm spring day.

The formalities of the day were devoted to the
business of the AGM: approving last years
financial statement, receiving the presidents
report, and the election of this years
executive committee.

Two new members of the committee were
elected and we welcome them on board. They
will replace two of our current members who
have retired from the committee and we wish
both Pam and Robyn all the best for the
future.

The day was then spent gathered round the
BBQ where everyone thoroughly enjoyed
themselves, discussing informally the herb
growing industry. Manfred contributed his
OHGA certified organic Sunset Ridge BBQ
sauce, which was a big hit.

STOP PRESS - STOP PRESS

News, just in from the OHGA office,
says that you can now pay for all
OHGA services and merchandise
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BankCard, MasterCard or VISA.
Handy that!

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me with your details at
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fax 02 6629 1057
email herbs@lis.net.au

-Elle





OHGA's mail

Dear Elle,

My husband and I enjoy your Herb Growers magazine. I would like to help you with a great Christmas present idea for your magazine readers. We live near Mildura and grow organic citrus and herbs, and run a Bed & Breakfast as well. My chocolate oranges are a real hit with our guests.

All the best, Diana Goldup, Merbein 3505.
You'll find this yummy recipe on page 14.

Dear Elle, Howard and team at OHGA,

A wet day forces us to stay inside and do some paperwork! Having had two glorious spring-like weeks. Down here in the deep south-west, we celebrate as the next phase of our rather large herb-dryer begins, hopefully in action in time to take our ever increasing herb crops.

There is a good organic growers network becoming established down here, with value adding already happening - drying, salsas, sauces etc. A big motivating force for us is to become more self-reliant, avoid imports into the region by meeting our needs within the region.

This is a beautiful part of the world, and if any of you can get over here, get in touch!

Really enjoy your magazine - good source of info. Keep up the good work in the organic industry. All the best, Claire, Denmark W.A.

Dear Elle and Howard,

Please find enclosed our cheque for renewal of membership.

Nan & I are pensioners and not active in the growing of herbs for market. Nan grows for her own interests and our own requirements.

However, we think that it is important that the OHGA, through Howard and the committee, continue to pursue the cause to promote the organic way of food production against the aims of the multinationals whose only aim seems to be to take over the commercial interests of all other growers. In our opinion the multinationals are dangerous, and with their push for G.M. foods more organisations such as OHGA need to promote their opposition.

We read "The Herb Grower" with great interest and applaud your efforts.

Yours faithfully, David & Nan Martin, Mt. Colah, NSW.

Dear OHGA,

Please find enclosed a cheque for inspection.

Thanks for all the work you put into OHGA. We always look forward to the magazine and enjoy the philosophy of organics etc. Hope our gratitude (even so small) helps to make it all worthwhile, and you feel your hard work is acknowledged and appreciated.

Regards, Pam Dodsworth.

Dear Editor,

Some words of praise for you and your helpers for all the hard work you're putting into the organisation and the publication which arrives promptly every couple of months.

You asked for suggestions to improve, or ideas about articles to feature in the magazine. How about some words on the best ways to avoid, or I guess minimise, weed infestation in a commercial or even small garden situation?

I've tried newspaper which is good for keeping weeds down, but it can take sometime to rot down, and since we're only receiving about 100mm of rain a year, mainly in summer and autumn, it tends to keep the water from the soil and has a drying effect on it. Lucerne hay is very good but rots down a bit too fast for my liking especially as I do apply all mulch over a layer of compost, with all its microbial activity and insect life going to work on it straight away! Straw has also been tried, but I find its left over seedheads with the growth of shoots are also fairly labour intensive to remove. I've even tried casuarina needles which seem to be matting down not allowing water penetration!

I can hear you all laugh and say join the club but maybe some people out there in OHGA-land have a better solution. Get a busload of Wwoofers in. I've not tried flame weeding either. I look forward to a possible article on the subject.

Keep your feet dry and stop that mould from growing Elle, and most of all keep weeding!
Hugo Brändli.

Ah Hugo, yes, the weeds. I've asked Paul Kristiansen, who conducted the weed survey, for an article. His reply follows.

My own method is layers of: compost - wet newspaper - fresh mulch (at least 10 cm thick), made from putting all the debris in my garden like dead wood, prunings (especially of elder which grows like a weed and lantana), comfrey leaves, homegrown lucerne etc. through my little mulcher. The thick mulch stops the soil from drying out. I manage to do about three beds a week, and keep at it constantly, weather permitting.

And then plucking the blasted things out as soon as they come up or else they get out of hand, as you well know.

Lately I've discovered another secret weapon if all else fails: some big blokes from the local Jim's



Mowing! -Elle

Hi Elle & Co.

It's Pat and Sue from Coolangubra farm. We're still out here and we're still herb farming. In fact, we're even keener than when we started. We like to pass on some positive news to fellow organic farmers and herbies, as in these uncertain times, which so much negative, its nice to pop up with some positive now and again.

We've slogged away now for 3-4 years and the learning curve would fill an encyclopedia already. That's the best part through being open to new ideas, adapting old ones and harmonising it all into sustainable farming practice.

Our soils have gone from pH4 native forest soil with very little nutrient to pH6-7 and an ever increasing humus and worm count. I don't know how many tonnes of compost we've made since we started and it really is the foundation stone of the farm and the business the farm generates.

We mostly specialise in fresh culinaries direct to Sydney and Melbourne, with some local restaurant trade. Our dry culinaries and tea lines are doing well also. Our customers contantly comment on the quality and high standard of our organic products. We used the time we invested in building up our soils over the first two seasons to do all our horticultural and market research and this homework definitely paid off for us.

We've found that being "certified" organic is well understood in organic marketing circles, but the general public on the whole don't understand enough yet that it's a government accredited National scheme - you can trust "certified" organic, but anyone using the word "organic" only are not necessarily abiding by the rules.

With the GE food labelling debate: it would be great if the organic industry could afford a national advertising campaign to clearly explain in general public English what the scheme is and why you can trust it. Perhaps it would help to balance the GE debate if the public understood they can trust certified organic and learn to recognise the labelling and what it stands for.

Regards, Susie Cole, Coolangubra farm, Rocky Hall, NSW 2550.

P.S. Elle, some of our dry culinary products are now available from "Organic by Choice" in Johnston St, Byron Bay. Andrew, the owner, is a lovely guy and we find it funny that we market herbs back to the heartland, the area where our knowledge originally came to us from!

Hey Sue, excellent news all that. I'll go look for your herbs in the Bay. A publicity campaign would indeed be great. Originally the brief to the OFA was for publicity and education of the public , the only

reason OHGA might have cooperated with them. Unfortunately they 'd rather sit around with government suits. -Elle

A big thank you to Diana, Claire, David & Nan, Pam, Hugo, Stan and Susie for writing in. I'm very grateful for the encouragement, even after doing The Herb Grower for ten years . I'll keep going a bit longer then, shall I? Elle



If you're looking for Xmas presents, may we suggest you consider the following items?

- ☐ **OHGA polo shirt @ \$25** - unbleached cotton, dark green collar matching the embroidered logo on left side chest
quantity: ...
- ☐ **OHGA cap @ \$15** - green with embroidered logo, excellent quality
quantity: ...
- ☐ **'Organic Property - No Spraying' sign @ \$10**
quantity: ...
- ☐ **'An Introduction to Herb Growing' by Howard and Elle Rubin @ \$10**
quantity: ...
- ☐ **'Developing an Approved Supplier Program for Fresh Produce' based on the HACCP method @ \$10**
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Dear Doug,

Please find enclosed a cheque for certification and soil sample analysis.

Also, just to let you know something which might be of interest, Bob Phelps from the GeneEthics network wrote a very readable supplement on gene technology and its applications in the June issue of Habitat Australia, the magazine of the Australian Conservation Foundation. You can get hold of a copy by phoning the ACF on 03 9926 6732 or GeneEthics on 03 9416 2222. It may come in useful as the basis of a future article in The Herb Grower.

Yours sincerely, Stan Newman, Yeppoon Qld 4703.

Hi Elle,

Sorry, I'd like to help but I'm flat out with:

- * Aust Weeds Conf in Hobart in mid-Sept ... into the Lion's Den of herbicide lovers to preach the message of choice

- * Organic Produce Conf at Mackay, Qld in late Sept. (don't know much about this one ... any OHGA reps going?)

- * preparing ground, sowing my cover crops which will be followed by lettuces towards the end of the year, running some glasshouse trials to do stuff I can't manage in the field (land, labour and time limitations)

- * writing section on weeds for manual being put together by Kondonin Group (publishers from WA) for growers wanting to convert to organics, being organised by ORGAA (Chris Alenson) and them I think.....?

I hope I can get another article to you towards the end of the year though. Thanks for printing the first survey article. Hope it raises some interest. As for the \$25, I'm easy. Given that our Federal govt is slaughtering the nation's research and university capabilities in the name of commercialisation, we scientists need all "external" money we can get. But if you can find a better home for the \$25 ... the "OHGA Subsidy Fund for Unemployed Members", Seed-Savers Network or something, then fine.

What did your correspondent want to know specifically regarding minimising weed infestations? .. what weed(s), where, what cropping system (eg. vege, orchard, grains), etc? I may be able to offer some suggestions.

In the latest Herb Grower there was a request for help with the web page. I can help out with that if it doesn't take too much time. I have been creating & maintaining several web sites over the past 2 years. Let me know what is required and I'll see if it is manageable.

I also noted your comment regarding researchers wanting money for their work on Lemon Geranium. I believe that the public, through taxes, *should* support researchers, assuming that research will benefit the public. (I do admit lots of stuff is a prop for unsustainability.) The government and various key

research organisations have demanded that researchers seek funds from industry and that reliance on govt money be minimised. Who then will do the uneconomic research for public good (e.g. herbs, generic weeding methods, generic fertilisers) which can't be copyrighted and monopolised. Who then will look for the long term solutions and mechanisms rather than the 1, 2, 3 yr maximum studies which can hardly yield any meaningful info, especially in a complex ecological system such as organics and BD.

Cutting the purse strings of government money will mean more reliance on seed monopolies, chemical companies, etc. to fund "research" (is it then true research if the money is given with expectations). So please don't be too surprised when scientists ask for commerial compensation for their efforts, they have been told/ordered to do so.

Cheers, Paul Kristiansen <pkristia@metz.une.edu.au>

(Paul still has \$25 coming to him for the article. That's the fee you get if you contribute an article to our mag and it gets published. Anyone interested?)

Dear Elle,

In response to your Open Farm/Garden Scheme, we have had an "open garden" for our customers ever since beginning our home delivery service 4 years ago. And in the last year we have extended it to local tourism as well.

We sell direct from the garden (seasonal), eggs, honey, jams and also produce (certified organic) we buy in from the market for our regular customers. We have signs at the end of our road and outside our gate, and it works well. A slow but steady buildup of customers and they are always so interesting to talk to.

Our open garden name is Vegies with a view, as we sit atop a hill with a spectacular view across to the Warburton Ranges.

We try to be available Wednesday to Sunday (incl) for visitors, but they also turn up even when we're supposed to be closed!

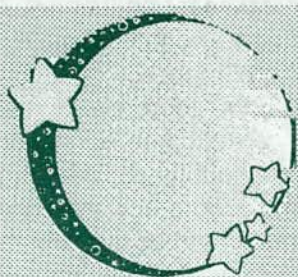
I hope in the long run to be able to build up the tourism aspect and eventually sell the delivery run as a small family business.

We are also this year working with other local small organic growers, holding regular support meetings, helping them with certification etc. We're looking at tourism with them too, and currently looking at the prospects of setting up a farm tour which will incorporate visits to a number of our farms.

If anybody is interested in visiting, or in talking about our progress, we would be more than happy to either see or hear from them.

Regards, Pam Tucker, Stranges Rd, Macclesfield 3782
Ph. (03) 5964 8243





GARDENING BY THE MOON

with
Elle Fikke-Rubin

© 1999



DECEMBER

1-7 Time for feeding and weeding and checking on bugs.

Make a durable garlic spray, if needed, by chopping up about 100 grs of garlic cloves. Soak them in 50 ml kerosine for 48 hrs. Dissolve 10 grs of pure soap (Castille soap is good) into 700 ml of water, and add that slowly to the garlic and kerosine. Stir and strain.

To use, dilute 1 part to 50 parts of water. Store in a glass or plastic container.

If you want to do a one off, blend two bulbs with a litre of water. Stand overnight, dilute a bit (no more than 5x) and spray or pour over the affected plants.

Garlic will not only get rid of aphids, snails, caterpillars and other pests, but will also arrest fungal diseases like downy mildew and damping off.

8 New Moon.

9-15 Days to plant or sow leafy annuals like silverbeet, celery, lettuces, parsley, basil and others you fancy. They'll need a lot of nitrogen for good leaf development, which you can apply in the form of compost, blood and bone, liquid manure made of comfrey, nettles, leaves of nitrogenous plants like lupins, acacias, beans, all sorts of peas, or liquid seaweed fertilisers and composted manures.

Interplanting with peas and beans will also supply nitrogen to the soil. Rotating your crops is of course the very best way of letting nature provide the appropriate food, in which case you will plant lettuces where before you grew peas or beans.

16 First Quarter.

17-22 Time for seedbearing and flowering annuals like tomatoes, zucchini's, sweet corn etc.

23 Full Moon.

24-29 I doubt many of you will be thinking of garden or farm work during this period, but should you find yourself yearning to get your hands dirty, it's rootcrop and perennial time.

30/31 Last Quarter.

JANUARY 2000

1-6 Happy New Millennium!

As luck would have it, these are the days of the lunar month when we're not planting.

You could weed, if you insist and do other chores around the place.

7 New Moon.

8-13 Days to sow or plant leafy annuals. Still time for greens like basil, parsley, alfalfa (the whole plant makes a healthy tea), leeks, lettuces or celery.

14 First Quarter.

15-20 Time for annual flowers and vegetables. Plant some calendulas in poor soil, as they will improve it. Marigolds will chase away soil-inhabiting pests and sunflowers will look stunning while they will do wonders for your soil condition. Their seeds are very nutritious, and can also be used ground up and mixed with milk (for dry skin) or yoghurt (for oily skin) to make an excellent face pack.

21 Full Moon.

22-27 Days for perennials, rootcrops and trees and shrubs.

There are some beautiful, and useful, perennial herbs you could plant. Tansy, for instance, has long lasting yellow button flowers. It also has a little known cosmetic use: tea made of the leaves and flowers and applied externally is excellent for skin blemishes and pimples. Rue looks lovely with its delicate blue-ish leaves. The juice of rue was once used in cases of earache, and rue tea, sprinkled in flea infested spots, will kill them all. Fresh rue leaves on the temples will relieve headaches, and compresses made with a strong decoction of rue and applied to the chest were used to ease chronic bronchitis, all according to Mrs. Grieve. Grow some wormwood too, to make a spray against caterpillars and other pests.

28 Last Quarter.

29-31 Days for weeding, and a good time to prepare a new planting area by staking out new beds, applying some organic fertiliser and lime, watering and covering the lot with black plastic. The summerheat will quickly make all the weeds die and the earthworms will move in. In 4-6 weeks you'll have a weedfree area to work with!

HAVE FUN!

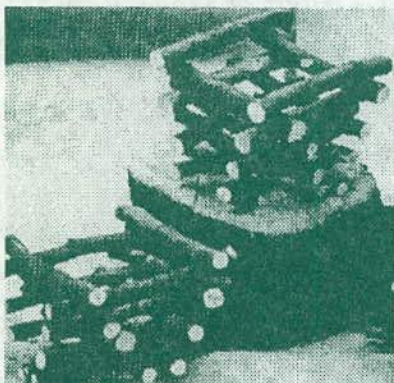


MAKING KIPSIES

This article is an adaptation from one found in June's Grass Roots magazine. A great idea for Christmas gifts.

Originally Kipsies were Gypsy baskets, made from hazelwood prunings gathered from the country hedgerows in Europe. Australian made kipsies could be made from eucalypt or various other tree prunings, as long as they're still green. If your prunings are no longer green, you'll need a fine drill and candle wax lubricant to nail the basket together.

To make the kipsies, the following tools are used: small saw to cut the branches, measuring device, sharp knife or hatchet to cut the wood to length, mallet to strike the back of the knife, hammer and pincers for nailing the wood together and pulling out the bent nails, and a variety of panel pins.



The kipsie is constructed by laying pairs of prunings of approx. 23 cm lengths in a criss cross fashion and fixing them with panel pins (keep a selection of various sizes handy).

Start with the top and build pyramid fashion until

the base is reached.

The handles (new growth from wattle trees, sturdy vines or tree suckers for instance) are cut to the appropriate length and one end is fixed with panel pins. These must be attached at opposing angles to resist the stress imposed when bending them around for fixing to the other side of the kipsie. Tease the rod by carefully bending it over the knee, using the thumbs and fingers to manipulate it into a supple state.



The kipsie can be lined with peatmoss or coconut fibre or the like and filled with lavender, gum leaves, fresh or dried herbs, or even with a selection of herb plants.

Original article by Keith Upward in Grass Roots



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Name:

Trifolium pratense

Other names:

Trefoil, purple clover

Its native habitat is Europe, Central and Northern Asia, from the Mediterranean to the Arctic circle. From there it has spread to many parts of the world. Red clover is a perennial plant and a great addition to any garden, especially if you need to build up your soil. As it is a leguminous plant, it fixes

nitrogen in the soil, and the leaves can be a very useful addition to the compost heap. The plant can be either erect or sprawling; the leaves are long stalked and, as the name says, divided into 3 leaflets or lobes. The stems are slightly hairy, the leaves pretty smooth. The flowers grow in globular heads and are pink to purple in colour and have a lovely fragrance.

Even if you don't want to grow red clover for commercial purposes, you should consider using it as a green manure crop, or even as a lawn as it has no problems being mowed.

Uses:

Red clover is a sweet and cooling herb. It is used as a tea or liquid extract as an alternative, which means that its use produces gradual beneficial changes in the body, (especially in cases of skin disease like eczema and psoriasis). It is also a diuretic, relaxes spasms and cramps, and the tea made from the flowering tops is used for coughs and bronchitis. Fomentations and poultices of the herb have also been applied with success to cancerous growths. Recently scientists have discovered that red clover is extremely beneficial for menopausal problems and the herb is now in great demand. It is also taken by men who feel that they need a restorative remedy as they get older. The brands on the market are quite expensive, and making a tea from your home grown red clover flowers will work just as well, if not better.

Climate, soil type & position:

Red clover is easy to grow. It's hardy and doesn't need a rich soil. It grows equally well in the mountains as on river flats, but can be affected by powdery mildew if it sits in water for too long. It does need sun for flowering, but produces more flowers in a mild climate than in a hot one. It also flowers better in a poor soil with little

nitrogen to start off with. It produces its own after all! It does spread, so don't plant it where you don't want an invasion.

In a dry climate, it needs weekly watering.

Propagation:

by seed, in spring or autumn, when it's not too hot. The seeds need plenty of moisture to germinate;

by division, in late winter, spring or early autumn.

Spacing:

Close together. The seeds can be broad cast by hand.

Pests & diseases:

Powdery mildew on the leaves if the soil is too wet for too long.

Parts used:

Flowering tops for the medicinal market.

Leaves for the compost heap or to make liquid manure.

Harvesting:

The plant usually flowers half the year, from spring to late autumn.

The flowers should be picked as soon as most of the heads on a stalk show red, before some of them fully open and turn brown. Harvesting methods depend on your market.

Hand picking or combing is required if your buyer wants only the flowers; if flowering tops are wanted, you can mow on a high setting, or for a larger

operation, a tractor can of course be used.

Wait until the morning dew is off the flowers, and then get your flowers to your drying set up as soon as possible.

You should be able to harvest the flowers continually during the period.

Drying:

At a constant temperature of between 35 and 40C, the flowers should not take longer than 36 hours to dry.

Yield:

This is always depending on the climate, growing conditions and diligence in harvesting, but an estimate is from 300 to 500 kg per acre per year.

Ref.:

A Modern Herbal, by Mrs. M. Grieve.

Encyclopedia of Herbs & Their Uses, by Deni Bown.

RED CLOVER

Growing Notes



A PEASANT'S LUNCH

by Lolo Houbein

There was a time I cooked for multitudes, even when a mere six people came to dinner. 'Feeding an orphanage?' relatives asked in despair, knowing the leftovers would take days to dwindle. I was happiest when throwing a party for an unknown number, stirring pots until an hour before the first guest arrived, just in case food ran out.

But depleting energy has forced me to modify my feeding instincts. Since we came to this fertile soil, where vegetables and fruits grow so profusely, I have reinvented the peasant lunch.

Peasants eat frugal lunches because they are poor. But peasant lunches have one aspect that, applied to present conditions, can give rise to a modern Australian peasant's lunch that makes a three course dinner in a good restaurant look pallid.

Peasant lunches usually incorporate anything that is ripe in the garden. In artichoke time, European peasants took cooked artichokes to the field, sprinkling them with oil and vinegar. They ate home-baked breads with slabs of day-old goat's cheese or a duck's egg. They only ever ate the fruits of the season.

Two years ago I reinvented the peasant lunch for friends with whom I used to go camping. We shared memories of the most revolting stews concocted when everyone around the campfire emptied their favourite tinned food into the same pot. Sweetcorn, peas and carrots, sausages, chilly beans and Spam swam together. We used to eat the result with gusto, but interestingly enough have all developed into food connoisseurs since.

My peasant lunches now aim to bring to the table mostly food from garden and orchard, eggs from my flock, home-made pickles and preserves, salads of a dozen different leaves, fresh herbs and flowers. Only the minimum of shop food appears - usually a cheese, sometimes no more than a loaf of good bread.

This means friends can come with just an hour's notice. I quickly take stock of garden, pantry and freezer, dive into the local shop for bread, cheese

and milk, then start peeling, simmering and tossing.

We have enjoyed peasant lunches of as many as six dishes in the season of plenitude. We have had peasant lunches of just a vegetable soup with a tray of cheese, lettuce, pickles, herbs, chutneys, chives and onions to pile on lightly toasted bread and rinse away with coffee or wine.

I introduced friends to the delights of duck and goose eggs and relentlessly experiment to make new dishes from vegetables in over supply. Apart from collecting one hundred zucchini recipes I embarked on ways to serve up radish. Mine cross happily with daikon to become big and mild or giant and hot. I found them great to make kofta, those spicy Indian vegetable fritters, and pickle them in the brew I make for my olives.

But a quicker way is to make a batter of rice flour and chickpea flour, spice it to taste, slice radish into julienne strips, toss them into the batter, scoop them out and cook five minutes in hot olive oil. The batter separates into a tasty crisp garnish and the radish loses its sting, revealing quite another taste when cooked.

At a recent peasant's lunch I served these fried radishes with toast and a tray of selectables. We had pumpkin soup from the freezer, a hardboiled goose egg and home-pickled olives. There was fresh coriander and chives. The meal took less than an hour to assemble.

Having arrived at last at this wonderful way of eating and feeding my friends, I am now besieged by nightmares. Living in an agricultural district I have already had asthma attacks after crop dusters sprayed close to us while I was working in my plot. A friend lost a year's work when all her newly planted trees died from spray put on an adjoining canola crop.

I wonder how long it will be before pollen from genetically modified crops will drift on the wind and cross with my open-pollinated food plants, rendering the seed impotent or modified. How long before pollen from pesticide-resistant crops crosses with genuine weeds, producing new weeds that cannot be controlled in the absence of natural restraints? How long before birds and insects become modified from feeding on these weeds and foodplants?

If my garden and orchard become impotent or genetically polluted, my lifestyle and health will be



at stake. If I cannot produce my own food anymore, I lose control of the only part of my life that I ever controlled. Life is a constant reckoning with others, caring and giving in to the needs of others, or opposing them when we feel threatened. But tending our own vegetable garden, as Voltaire knew, brings peace and wisdom, provides a place and time for contemplation, sets us free temporarily from the society's demands.

It is time for a peasant revolution of another kind. All those wishing to be in control of their own food supply, wanting to tend their own garden, are in dangers of having that privilege destroyed. If we want to ensure the simple joys of having our peasant's lunches, we must rise up against the powers out to destroy our only form of true independence.

There is a difference between peasants of the past and peasants today. Today's peasants are literate. We must start writing letters of protest to the powers that be. The garden can wait. The garden needs us to write letters to stop the ultimate demise of our free choice of food, our wonderful peasant lunch.

Lolo.



Herb Pillows made with dried herbs

Sleep pillows: 30 grs lavender, 15 grs lemon thyme, 30 grs lemon verbena, 15 grs sweet woodruff, 30 grs rosemary.

or: 1 cup rosepetals, 1 cup lavender, 1 cup hops, 1 teasp dried cloves, 1 teasp cinnamon, 2 cups rose geranium leaves, 1/2 cup orris root. According to Marg Finney in *Herb Thymes*, these pillows are also good for headaches.

To ease melancholy: 50 grs rosepetals, 25 grs mint, 8 grs crushed cloves.

Sensual pillow: 75 grs rosepetals, 40 grs mint, 40 grs rosemary, 25 grs patchouli, 1 tblsp each of clove, storax and musk.

Dream pillow: 200 grs of mugwort.

This is supposedly the herb of choice of witches which gave them flying dreams.

Baby pillow: 100 grs of crushed dill seed and leaf, stuffed into four or five layers of flannel and placed near the baby, is helpful to get it to sleep.

As these herbs can get very dusty, they should be sewn into quite tightly woven material like calico, with preferably two thicknesses. They work fantastically well.

Ref. Herbs & Things, Jeanne Rose's Herbal.



PLAYDOUGH FOR YOUNG AND OLD

An article I read recently in an American herb magazine reminded me of the fun that can be had with old fashioned playdough. Of course nowadays there are quite a few fancy playdough-like substances on the market, but nothing beats the good old stuff. And on a rainy day most of us have the simple ingredients in the kitchen for some hours of serious fun for young and old.

Encourage the kids to make their own Christmas ornaments, it's so easy. Or make a string of scented beads by adding some vanilla essence or rosewater or essential oils to the dough. You can incorporate flower petals or scented leaves too.

Basic Recipe

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup water or other liquid
- 1/2 cup table salt
- 1 tbs vegetable oil
- 2 teasps cream of tartar

Mix the ingredients together in a pot and cook the mix over medium heat until bubbles form.

Take off the heat and stir really well. The dough will now hang together. Turn it out of the pot onto a floured surface and knead until smooth, for about five minutes.

The dough is now ready for use.

For a coloured dough you can use some drops of food colouring in the water, or even a plain or a herbal tea. For a scented dough, you can add rosewater or mint tea instead of the plain water. If you're going to use essential oils, it's best to mix those in after the dough has been cooked, so as not to have the oils evaporate on you.

When you make Christmas tree ornaments, you could roll them in cinnamon or cloves or lavender flowers once they're shaped. Stick some wire in the top to hang them up with.

When you've made your playdough objects, all you have to do is let them airdry. Don't sit them in the sun though, as the outside may dry too quickly and your artwork may crack. The drying may take several days. Any leftover dough can be stored for a while in an airtight container.

Source: Janice Cox, The Herb Quarterly, Summer 1999





HERBS AND HANDMADE SOAP

by Alison Romeo

I love handmade soap. I love the fresh genuine smell of homemade soap that comes from the natural ingredients that go into each bar. Homemade soap has character that no mass-produced bar can match. Its weight, its earthy colour, the rich lather it produces, the soothing effect it has on tired skin all contribute to making homemade soap something special.

Apparently I'm not alone in my love for homemade soap. In the last decade, soap making has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity, more than 6000 home soap makers practice the craft, and at least 150 small commercial soap makers operate in the United States. During this same decade, interest in growing and using herbs has also blossomed. It's a natural progression to use herbs in homemade soap.

Many different herbs can be successfully incorporated into soap. Calendula, for instance, is a wonderful addition to a mild bar of soap intended for baby. Peppermint added to soap makes for an invigorating bar. Lavender is a classic soap fragrance, and the properties it brings to soap - antiseptic and anti-inflammatory, among others - makes it an ideal addition.

The process of making soap is called saponification. Soap forms when an acid and a base react with one another. For the home soap maker, the acid in fats and oils (like olive oil and coconut oil), and the base sodium hydroxide (like Red Devil brand Lye) is dissolved in water. Making soap this way, with no chemical additives and no external heat source, is called cold-process method, and is the way relied upon by all home soap makers.

There are different ways to incorporate herbs into homemade soap. One simple way is to make a tea from the herb you want to use in your soap, and replace the water in the recipe with the tea. This method also subtly colours your soap, usually various shades of earth tones. The drawback to

using tea is that it adds no fragrance, and whatever properties you were hoping to introduce into your soap will have to compete with the lye. Generally, the later in the process that you can add your herbs, the more beneficial properties will be retained.

Another way is to simmer in the oils whatever herb you wanted to add to your soap, strain out the pieces, and then proceed with the rest of the process of soap making. This method too, adds colours to your soap, but again, the lye is a fierce competitor for any botanical addition to soap.

The last way of adding herbs to homemade soap is by using essential oils. This method adds fragrance and since it is added at the end of the soap making process, most of the beneficial properties of the herbs are retained. The drawback is the expensive and the relative volatility of the essential oils. Too much can throw the whole chemical process out of whack, and too little will result with very little fragrance.

When at last you have the finished product in your hand, homemade herbal soap that you made yourself, you'll be as convinced as I that no other soap can quite compare to that which you made in your own kitchen.

Via: HerbEZine email from The Herb Network

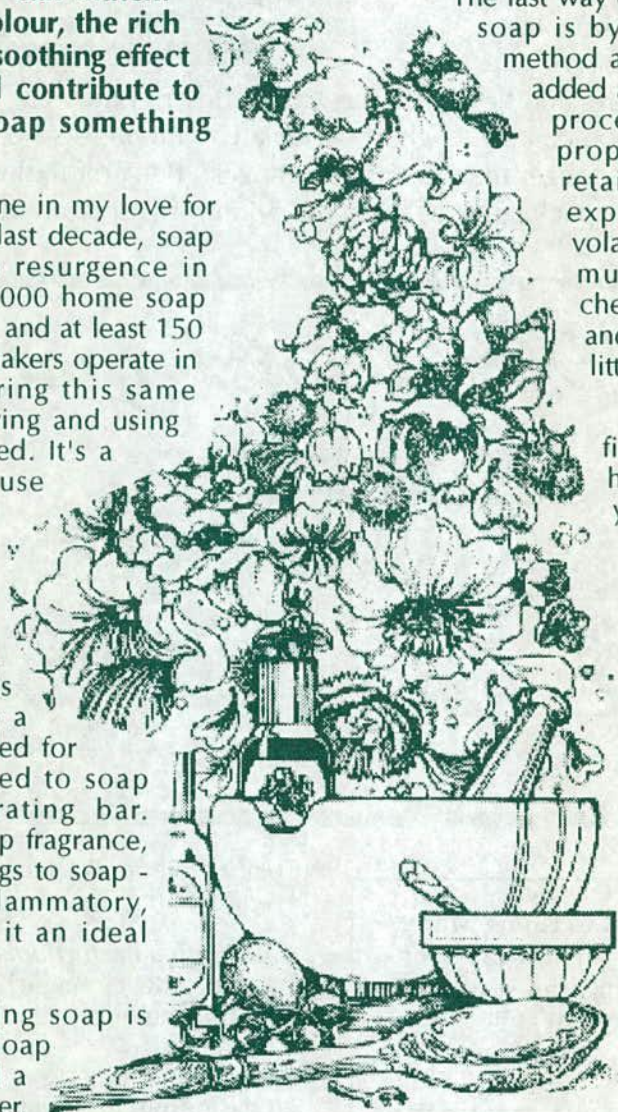


The actual soap making process is quite complicated and involves poisonous fumes and the like. It's much easier to start off with a soap base or unperfumed plain castille soap, which you melt down. You can then add

honey, clay, oats, luffabits, herbs (lavender, lemongrass, rosemary, mint, roses), spices (cloves, cinnamon), nuts & seeds (almonds, sesame seeds, wheatgerm), beeswax, essential oils, vanilla essence, almost anything from garden and kitchen.

Stir well, until the mix is quite thick and falls off a spoon in thick sheets, then turn into moulds, which could be soap dishes, milk cartons or fancy shapes, or form balls by hand. Make sure there are no airbubbles, smooth top, freeze for 5-6 hrs and let dry in a warm dry place. This curing process can take from 4-6 weeks. Great fun. Great gifts!

-Elle





Chocolate Oranges for Christmas

by Diana Goldup

Slice oranges thinly, discard end of citrus; cut in half and place in a dehydrator. Leave until dried, which will take about eight hours.

When cool, dip in melted chocolate.

Place on waxed paper until dry.

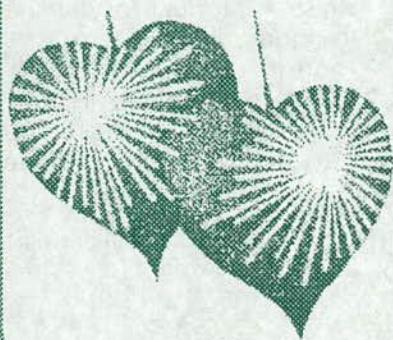
Package into cellophane bags and tie with some Xmas curly ribbon.

(Instead of the chocolate, you can use yoghurt chocolate, which is also great.)

Valencia oranges keep a bit longer than the navel oranges. Be careful that the dried oranges don't reabsorb moisture. A 100 gr package goes for about \$4.50, if you're interested in selling them.



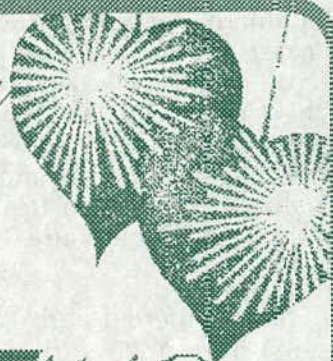
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Two summer recipes found in an old issue of WellBeing magazine.

Cold stuffed nasturtiums

1/2 cup cottage cheese

1/4 cup pine nuts

2 tblsp basil

salt & pepper to taste

20 nasturtium flrs, centres removed

Blend the first four ingredients together, roll into balls and tuck into flowers.

Zucchini blossoms

12 squash or zucchini blossoms, just opening

1 egg

flour

salt & pepper to taste, tarragon to taste

oil to fry

Mix together the flour, egg, salt, pepper & tarragon to make a batter. Add a little water if necessary. Dip blossoms in batter, let excess drip off. Drop a few blossoms at a time in the heated oil, fry until golden and serve with some sesame seeds if liked.



From the Kitchen of Brian & Lyn Bagnall

BBQ Prawns on Lemon Grass Skewers

(serves 4)

- 16 green king prawns
- 2 tblsp Extra Virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp fish sauce
- 1 tsp crushed garlic
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tblsp dark brown sugar

1/2 orange

1 lemon

1 lime

8 lemon grass stalks

Couscous or boiled rice to serve (optional).

Shell prawns, leaving tails intact. Combine 1 tblsp oil, fish sauce, crushed garlic and pepper in a bowl. Add prawns, toss until coated with mixture, then leave to marinate for 30 minutes.

Peel orange, lemon and lime thinly, then cut rind into very thin strips. Juice citrus fruit, then place juice in a saucepan with rinds, brown sugar and water. Bring mixture to the boil, reduce heat and simmer until mixture forms a light syrup. Remove from heat and set aside.

Remove tough outer layer from lemon grass stems and cut green end of each stalk to a point with scissors.

Cut a slit in each prawn and thread 2 prawns onto each lemon grass stem.

Brush BBQ plate with remaining oil and barbecue prawns for 2-4 minutes each side.

While prawns are cooking, add remaining marinade to citrus syrup, bring to the boil. Simmer until syrup thickens (about 1 minute). Place skewered prawns over rice on platter, pour syrup over and serve.

** Chicken may be used instead of prawns.



Tuscany Green Beans

500 g fresh green beans

30 g butter

1 tblsp Extra Virgin olive oil

1 clove garlic (crushed)

1/2 tblsp chopped fresh sage leaves

freshly ground pepper and salt

good pinch nutmeg

2 tblsp grated parmesan cheese.

Top and tail beans. Steam until just tender and keep warm. Heat oil and butter in pan over medium heat. Stir in 1/2 sage and all garlic. Cook for 1 minute, stirring continually, taking care not to burn the garlic. Add beans, nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste. Continue stirring while beans heat through, then stir cheese through mixture.

Arrange on serving plate and sprinkle with remaining sage.

Summer lime drink with scented geranium leaves

1 cup lemon juice

1/4 cup lime juice

1/2 cup honey

4 cups cold water

ice cubes

1/2 cup lemon or lime or rose geranium leaves, washed well.

Mix juices, water and honey. Add ice cubes and bruised or torn geranium leaves. Chill.

Do you know what would have happened if it had been Three Wise Women instead of three Wise Men?

They would have asked directions,
arrived on time,
helped deliver the baby,
cleaned the stable,
made a casserole, and
brought practical gifts.

Thank you, Kenrick.

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ORGANIC HERB GROWERS

OF AUSTRALIA INC.

DETAILED PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

	1999 \$	1998 \$
INCOME		

Advertising Received	4,211	5,184
Farm Inspection Travel	14,034	10,120
Grant - Research & Development	35,000	-
Herbgrower Sales & Subscriptions	138	371
Interest Received	1,339	590
Members Subscriptions	27,515	22,313
Soil Certification	50,167	32,163
Soil Sampling & Tests	27,635	18,050
Product Sales	976	1,015
Sundry Income	-	60
	-----	-----
TOTAL INCOME	161,015	89,866

Less EXPENSES		

A.Q.I.S. Fees	3,980	-
A.Q.I.S. Meeting Expenses	1,477	-
Audit Fees	300	280
Advertising, Printing & Stationery	9,904	9,505
Bank Charges	517	297
Bookkeeping Fees	630	-
Depreciation	1,479	1,363
Electricity	150	85
Field Day Expenses	480	2,573
Farm Inspection Wages	23,449	19,393
Grant Expenses	8,616	-
Insurance	577	581
Licenses & Fees	155	1,343
Herb Grower Editor Costs	3,939	3,915
Office Rental	2,593	2,600
Postage	5,007	3,427
Product Purchases	1,540	1,194
Reimbursement - Inspection Travel	15,373	7,951
Repairs & Maintenance	-	75
Salaries & Wages	16,051	14,480
Soil Tests	23,380	16,129
Subscriptions	309	489
Sundry Certification Costs	2,367	303
Sundry Expenses	494	142
Sundry Telephones	1,539	1,061
Superannuation	1,086	224
	-----	-----
TOTAL EXPENSES	125,392	87,410

OPERATING PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	35,623	2,456
=====	=====	=====



	1999 \$	1998 \$
Operating Profit/(Loss)	35,623	2,456
Income Tax attributable to Operating Profit/(Loss)	-	-
Operating Profit/(Loss) after Income Tax	35,623	2,456
Retained Profits at the beginning of the Financial Year	19,906	17,450
Retained Profits at the end of the Financial Year	55,529	19,906
CURRENT ASSETS		

Cash at Bank - S.C.U. Cheque Account	7,930	5,886
Cash at Bank - S.C.U. Money Maker	35,992	242
Petty Cash On Hand	200	200
Term Deposit - Summerland Credit Union	11,098	10,611
Accrued Interest Receivable	147	145
Prepayments	1,934	1,006
Shares - Summerland Credit Union	10	10
Inventory	3,054	184
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	60,365	18,284

NON CURRENT ASSETS		

Plant & Equipment	9,936	5,877
Accumulated Depreciation	<4,756>	<3,277>
	5,180	2,600
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	5,180	2,600

TOTAL ASSETS	65,545	20,884

CURRENT LIABILITIES		

Sundry Creditors	5,566	978
Certification Received in Advance	4,450	-
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	10,016	978

TOTAL LIABILITIES	10,016	978

NET ASSETS	55,529	19,906
=====		
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		

Opening Balance	19,906	17,450
Net Profit	35,623	2,456
	55,529	19,906
	=====	=====



THIS AND THAT

KRAFT UNCERTAIN WHETHER VEGEMITE CONTAINS GM ORGANISMS

CANBERRA TIMES TUESDAY JULY 27 1999

The maker of Australian icon Vegemite conceded yesterday it did not know whether the spread contained genetically modified organisms.

Kraft said while it was certain the main ingredient, yeast, did not contain GMOs, it could not say the same for minor ingredients.

"In relation to minor ingredients there are not always systems in place to track the identity and origin back to identifiable crops," Kraft spokeswoman Julia Banks said. "We have no evidence either way - we have no evidence that even the minor ingredients in Vegemite contain GM materials or not."

Ms Banks said Kraft was auditing all its products for GM ingredients, and its products complied with all legislation and safety requirements.

As Kraft faced questions over its most famous Australian product yesterday, adventurer Dick Smith declared that his planned Vegemite rival - Ozemite - would be "GM free".

Mr Smith, who recently declared war on foreign-owned companies, by announcing plans to launch the wholly Australian-owned Vegemite competitor, promised every ingredient would be accounted for.

"There were still too many safety doubts about genetically modified food to risk it", he said.

"I don't know anything about the Vegemite claim, but I do know Ozemite will not use genetically modified ingredients," he said.

"Vegemite; it's my staple diet, I have it every day - there's a bottle here and from time to time I just stick my finger in it."

U.S. FTC LAUNCHES "OPERATION CURE ALL" FOUR WEB SITES CHARGED

WASHINGTON, June 24, FTC -- Internet health fraud is the target of a comprehensive law enforcement and consumer education campaign announced today by the Federal Trade Commission at a press conference in Washington, D.C.

The campaign, "Operation Cure All", uses the Internet both as a law enforcement tool to stop bogus claims for products and treatments touted as cures for various diseases and as a communication tool to provide consumers with good quality health information.

The FTC charges that the four web sites made deceptive and unsubstantiated health claims concerning "miracle cures" for serious illnesses: cancer, arthritis, heart disease, and liver disease, among others. Also unveiled at the press conference were valuable resources for consumers to use to obtain reliable health information on the Web.

"Quality, not quackery is the focus of our new campaign "Operation Cure All" said Jodie Bernstein, Director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

"As consumers become more assertive about making their own health care decisions, the Internet offers a powerful tool for finding health information. Our survey

of the web sites found that too many make deceptive, unproven and fraudulent claims. Miracle cures, once thought to be laughed out of existence, have found a new medium.

Consumers now spend millions on unproven, deceptively marketed products on the Web. Our law enforcement efforts will continue to focus on deceptive and unproven claims.

But limited resources cannot keep up with the proliferation of web sites promoting fraudulent products. Consumers must be provided with reliable resources so that they can use the Internet to find the support and health care information they need."

Richters' HerbLetter 30-7-99

CHINESE MEDICINAL HERB BANNED IN UK OVER KIDNEY PROBLEMS

By Maxine Frith

LONDON, July 28, PA News -- An emergency ban has been imposed on the import, sale and supply of a herb used in traditional Chinese herbal medicines after two users in the UK suffered kidney failure.

The Medicines Control Agency (MCA) imposed the immediate ban on Aristolochia on the advice of the Committee on Safety of Medicines.

Aristolochia is a herb used in Chinese medicine to treat fluid retention and rheumatic symptoms. But research has found the herb to be toxic and associated with kidney damage. Aristolochia has been a prescription-only medicine since 1997, but can be easily confused with two other harmless Chinese herbs, Stephania and Clematis, used to treat similar problems.

More than 70 people suffered kidney failure in Belgium in 1993 after taking a slimming preparation in which Aristolochia had been used instead of Stephania.

Both plants have the same Chinese name Fangji.

The two UK cases of kidney failure happened after people took medicines with the herbal ingredient "Mu Tong". Mu Tong is used to describe at least four different plants including Clematis and Aristolochia. In both cases, the toxic herb was mistakenly used instead of the harmless plants.

Organisations representing Chinese medicine suppliers have voluntarily suspended use of Mu Tong and Fangji in a bid to ensure there is no confusion. Officials are considering whether to impose a permanent ban on the herbs which can be confused with Aristolochia.

Dr Lee Lin, president of the Chinese Medical Practitioners' Association, said: "I have sent out a note to all our members informing them that Aristolochia is now banned.

"I fully support any move towards regulation as long it does not add another layer of bureaucracy and helps to educate and inform the public about the benefits of Chinese Medicine." He added: "Chinese Medicine is safe but people should ensure they go to a registered practitioner."

Richters' HerbLetter July 99

CUBA DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY IN MEDICAL CARE



By Andrew Webster - HAVANA, June 29, [Toronto] Globe and Mail --

A new revolution is unfolding in Cuba that has nothing to do with guerilla warfare.

In what amounts to a 180-degree turn back to centuries-old healing techniques, the Cuban government is actively promoting low-cost botanical medicines instead of manufactured drugs.

It is also encouraging doctors to re-educate themselves in the techniques of natural medicine.

Much of the credit for this revolution goes to the continuing U.S. trade embargo. The economic disaster that followed the withdrawal of Soviet aid in the early 1990s made it impossible to obtain many medicines. So the Cuban health-care system was forced to search for alternatives.

Cuban medical practitioners didn't have to look far because "medicina verde," green medicine, has been part of Cuban culture for centuries.

"For Cuba's common illnesses -- skin problems, fungal infections, parasites, and especially bronchial diseases -- green medicine usually

works at least as well as the drugs, without the side effects," said Leoncio Padron, director of traditional and natural medicine for the ministry of public health.

Patients treated with natural medicine (for example, acupuncture, homeopathy and herbal remedies) more than doubled to about three million in 1998 from 1996, Mr. Padron said.

Orlando Sanchez, a doctor just two years out of the University of Havana medical school, recalled that his interest in a medical career began during his army service. He was befriended by a medical-school dropout who taught him the traditional Chinese health practices of tai chi and quigong.

Unlike many of his medical peers in North America, he does not see a conflict between natural and conventional medicine.

"We are trying to develop some sort of synthesis, the best of natural and conventional medicine to heal without damaging the patient," said Dr. Sanchez, who works in a newly opened government clinic in the Havana suburb of Miramar.

The clinic is aggressively promoting self-healing techniques by holding free classes in yoga, tai chi and stress management -- even teaching acupuncture points.

Tough economic times forced the government to slash health-care expenditures to about half of what they were in 1979. But Cuba has more doctors now than then.

"Health care is better now because we can do more with less," Mr. Padron said.

Even if the U.S. embargo ended abruptly, he said, Cuba would continue paying attention to natural medicine in the interests of developing medical science.

The change in Cuban health care has not gone unnoticed by the country's neighbours to the north. Marta Perez, director of natural and traditional medicine for the ministry of public health in Havana province, told a dozen visiting health professionals from the United States that the Cuban government promotes natural medicine because it is sustainable and cost-effective.

"The special period has been a great teacher for Cuba," she said, "because in the midst of this difficult situation, we had to find a way to fight back."

In 1992, the government set up organizational responsibility for natural medicine within the public

health ministry. A resolution was introduced specifically sanctioning herbal medicines and infusions made from plants, acupuncture and related techniques, as well as homeopathy and thermotherapy (sulphur baths and mineral mud baths).

Adding such treatments to a system that was completely conventional has not been easy, Dr. Perez said. "We defended all of these treatments, saying we needed to have a wide range of treatment options. We looked mainly for techniques that we could defend scientifically."

The country's medical revolution also attracted the attention of Tracey Spack, a student in medical anthropology at the University of Alberta.

Ms. Spack is now in her ninth month of field work for her PhD thesis on how alternatives to conventional medicine are being integrated into Cuban health-care system.

An Ottawa native, she explained that before the 1959 revolution, the use of plants and herbs was relatively common and accepted in Cuba. The revolution brought in modern medicine, so natural medicine faded into the background.

Cubans who grew up in the Soviet-backed economy of the 1960s through the 1980s did not exactly embrace natural medicine with open arms. But Ms. Spack said they found out, to their surprise, that it actually works.

Rita Beretervide, a 1986 graduate of the University of Havana, was trained in the old school before natural medicine started making a comeback. Last year, she joined dozens of other neighbourhood clinics on natural medicine.

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"I now prescribe mostly herbal medicines, and I'm confident that they work," said Dr. Beretervide, a family-medicine specialist in the Havana suburb of Santos Suarez.

At Policlinico Docente Vedado, where Ms. Spack is doing her field work, natural-medicine techniques are used to treat as many as 100 to 125 patients a day.

A few blocks away, customers gather at the counter of an open-air pharmacy carved out of the ground floor of a crumbling apartment building. A large sign lists the most popular herbal remedies.

Pharmacists there report that the most common ailment among people over 50 in the neighbourhood is hypertension. It can be treated with a herbal medicine derived from sugar cane called "cana santa," which costs the equivalent of six cents.

Of course, not everybody is singing the praises of "medicina verde."

A Cuban woman whose skin problems didn't respond to herbal treatment said: "Frankly, I don't believe in green medicine. If it really worked, the doctors in the United States and other rich countries would be using it too. We only use it here because there's nothing else."

But natural medicine has gained a strong foothold in Cuba, propelled by economic necessity, unopposed by the medical establishment and with deep roots in the culture.

In her briefing to the visiting U.S. health professionals, Dr. Perez related an anecdote: The vice-minister of public health for Cuba came down with a large and ugly lesion on his mouth. He was told the best natural medicine treatment was a combination of aloe vera, rosemary and a special herbal cream. Within three days, the lesion was healed, she said, and now no one can say a bad word to him about natural medicine.

Richters HerbLetter July '99.

UK MINISTERS SHELVE GM CROP TESTING FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW

The GUARDIAN (London), August 26, 1999

Paul Brown, Environment Correspondent

The government has suspended large scale planting of genetically modified oilseed rape due to start today because it fears the High Court may order them dug up again. The decision was made by the treasury solicitor yesterday after studying papers which claim that civil servants used administrative short cuts to rush through licences for large new releases of oilseed rape.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE HERBICIDE ROUNDUP

by Joe Cummins, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Genetics, University of Western Ontario
e-mail: jcummins@julian.uwo.ca

"The Herbicide, Glufosinate, is used with millions of acres of crops on crops including corn, canola and soy. It causes birth defects on exposure of father alone as well as mother!"

I have written a number of previous notes on the danger of the herbicide used with GM and normal crops and false claims by officials of EU, US and Canada that the herbicide has no harmful side effects. The previous evidence showed that pregnant females fed food containing the herbicide gave birth to children with birth defects both traditional and defects in behavior and learning. Learning defects were also experienced by young children exposed to the herbicide.

Recent studies of humans exposed to pesticides

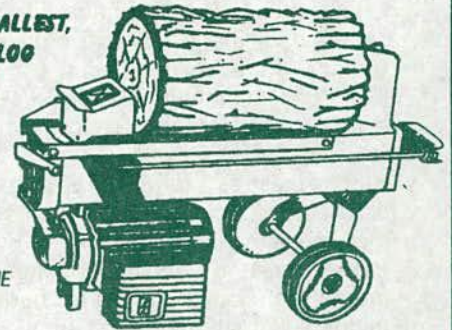
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showed that fathers exposed to glufosinate gave birth to children with birth defects while most other pesticides did not produce that impact (Garcia, A., Benavides, F., Fletcher, T. and Orts, E. "Paternal exposure to pesticides and congenital malformations" *Scand J Work Environ Health* 24, 473-80, 1998).

The glufosinate birth defects suggest that the large chemical companies have undue influence over government bureaucrats. Such bureaucrats turn their backs on clear evidence of danger from pesticides and promote dangerous genetic engineering. We must alert the public and insure that the dangers are made public.

SAPPORO TO SHUN GM CORN, OTHERS MAY FOLLOW SUIT

TOKYO, August 26, 1999 Reuters [WN] via NewsEdge Corporation

Japan's third-largest beer maker Sapporo Breweries Ltd said on Wednesday it will stop using genetically modified (GM) corn to make beer, after industry leader Kirin Brewery Co took the same action the previous day.

FRENCH ATTACK ON GE FIRMS

August 26, 1999 LORIENT, France, Reuters [BR] via NewsEdge Corporation :

French Farm Minister Jean Glavany attacked U.S. corporations on Wednesday, accusing them of trying to monopolise the world's food supply and jeopardising French agricultural independence.

"Agriculture is at a historic turning point, the change from quantity to those of quality," Glavany told a gathering of Green Party members in this western French port city.

"We have many adversaries as we embark on this



revolution," the Socialist minister said. "First among them there are obviously the market liberals from across the Atlantic and their multinationals like Monsanto or DuPont, who have set themselves the challenge of feeding the world on their own."

He was referring to U.S. corporations DuPont Co and Monsanto Co, two of the world's largest seed manufacturers and leaders in the production of genetically modified grains.

They are trying "to flood the world with their products, genetically modified or not, and to spread their own agricultural and food model," he added.

BERKELEY CAFETERIAS GOING ORGANIC

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) -- Forget about mystery meat. Berkeley's school cafeterias are going organic.

The city's school board is expected to approve a plan today that would give students the option of munching on pesticide-free baby carrots and sandwiches made with organic bread.

The food would be grown in school gardens and purchased from local organic farmers. Milk would be certified clean of bovine growth hormones.

"That's pretty rare -- and pretty expensive -- but Berkeley is an unusual place," said Rick DeBurgh, who added that he has never heard of schools serving organic cafeteria fare in his 22 years with the California School Food Services Association.

Santa Monica has experimented with a farmer's market salad bar, but Berkeley wants to serve organic foods in the main dishes and after-school snacks. The plan also calls for removing irradiated and genetically altered foods.

FOOD IRRADIATION APPROVED

The Health Ministers Council meeting on 3rd August approved a standard for irradiation of food. This standard has now been gazetted as Standard A17. Radiation will be allowed for the purposes of * extending the shelf life of food;

* destroying bacteriological contamination; or
* disinfecting food contaminated by pests.

Some foods will be able to be irradiated twice.

Individual foods that are proposed to be irradiated will need to be approved on a case-by-case basis. Each application will be put out for public consultation before being decided on by the Ministers. All irradiated foods on sale will have to be labelled but current requirements for the label print size to be at least 3mm on packaged food and 9mm for unpackaged food will no longer apply. Labels will merely have to be legible.

There is no mention in the new standard of a previous requirement that there should be effective detection methods to enable Authorities in Australia to establish that a food has been irradiated. This is a critical omission because there are significant public health risks associated with the use of irradiation for the purpose of "destruction of bacterial contamination" on food, particularly if it is not known that the food has been irradiated.

Irradiation does not completely destroy all pathogenic bacteria at the permitted doses. It can only reduce, not eliminate, contamination by bacteria such as Salmonella, Staphylococcus, and Listeria, the common causes of food poisoning. It is most effective in reducing the bacteria and moulds that warn consumers, through visual changes and smell, that food is going "off". Remaining pathogenic

bacteria will continue to multiply more rapidly in the absence of the other competing bacteria and moulds.

Re-growth rates for some bacteria such as Clostridium can be 50 times that prior to irradiation.

Public health agencies will not be able to detect the presence of harmful bacteria using the normal plate count testing regime, which is used as a screening test for the presence of possibly pathogenic bacteria and as the primary indicator of wholesomeness and application of good manufacturing practice. Thus irradiation of food (to reduce bacterial contamination) will render obsolete the public health safeguards currently in place to prevent bacterial food poisoning.

Irradiation will not remove chemical toxins created by some bacteria such as Staphylococcus in the earlier stages of contamination prior to irradiation. These toxins are, however, much harder to detect in the absence of the bacteria that produced them.

Irradiation is also virtually ineffective in removing contamination by viruses such as Hepatitis, which can be a problem in seafood harvested from sewage contaminated water.

The first foods for which permission to irradiate is likely to be sought will be spices (to remove bacterial contamination) and tropical fruits for export (to kill fruit fly). Steritech is the company that apparently wishes to move into food irradiation. They have irradiation plants at Dandenong, Melbourne and Weatherill Park Sydney, and are proposing to build a plant at Caboolture near Brisbane.

From: "Dick Copeman" <eco-cons@bit.net.au>

(With thanks to Tony Webb and Frank Peters for input)

Action: Write to your state Health Minister opposing this dangerous and unnecessary technology.

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HEINZ GE FREE

In England, where Beanz meanz Heinz, the Pittsburgh-based food giant has moved swiftly to reassure consumers it doesn't use genetically modified foods in beans, soups and other products sold there.

Responding to public outcry against such ingredients, H.J. Heinz early this year announced it had eliminated genetically modified crops in products it sells throughout Europe.

HONDA UNIT TO BUILD U.S. PLANT FOR NON-GM SOYBEANS

TOKYO, Reuters [WN] via NewsEdge Corporation

Honda Trading Corp, a wholly owned unit of Japanese automaker Honda Motor Co Ltd said it will build a plant in the U.S. state of Ohio for sorting and bagging soybeans free of genetically modified organisms.

The company plans to spend 600 million yen for a plant that will start operation around October with an annual handling capacity of 20,000 tonnes of soybeans, a spokesman said. Soybeans to be sorted and bagged at the plant will come from U.S. farmers

with contracts with Honda Trading for production of non-GM soybeans. for sale to makers of "tofu" soybean curd.

This year, Honda Trading has contracts with 118 U.S. farmers, who are expected to supply 15,000 tonnes of non-GM soybeans to the company, the spokesman said.

GM INVESTORS TOLD TO SELL THEIR SHARES

Paul Brown and John Vidal GUARDIAN (London)
August 25, 1999

Europe's biggest bank has advised the world's largest investors to sell their shares in leading companies involved in the development of genetically modified organisms because consumers do not want to buy their products.

In a report sent to several thousand of the world's large institutional investors, including British pension funds, Deutsche Bank says that "growing negative sentiment" is creating problems for the leading companies, including Monsanto and Novartis. "We note that Monsanto has spent more than \$1.5m to persuade English consumers of the rectitude of their position, but alas, to no avail. Monsanto is little match for Prince Charles, an anti-GMO advocate, when it comes to sensitivity for the English people's desires," says the report.

"More broadly speaking, it appears the food companies, retailers, grain processors, and governments are sending a signal to the seed producers that 'we are not ready for GMOs'."

Since the report was circulated to investors, shares in companies named have fallen against a rising trend in stock markets generally and the frenzy to takeover seed companies has stopped. In the six months to yesterday Monsanto's stocks had fallen 11%, and Delta & Pine, a seed company that owns the terminator gene, which Monsanto is taking over, has lost 18% of its value.

The Deutsche Bank's Washington analysts, Frank Mitsch and Jennifer Mitchell, say it is nine months since they first voiced their concerns that the biotech industry was "going the way of the nuclear industry in this country, but we count ourselves surprised at how rapidly this forecast appears to be playing out. Domestic concerns regarding ag-biotechnology are clearly on the rise. For the most part, though, it has not gotten the attention of the ordinary US citizen, but when it does - look out."

Deutsche Bank's first research report, dated May 21 and entitled GMOs Are Dead, said: "We predict that GMOs, once perceived as a bull case for this sector, will now be perceived as a pariah. The message is a scary one - increasingly, GMOs are, or in our opinion, becoming a liability to farmers," it adds.

Non-GMO grains were already gaining a premium price which would, if the trend continued, far outweigh any economic benefit in growing GMOs.

The latest report, published last month under the heading Ag Biotech: Thanks, But No Thanks, says: "GMOs are being demonised by their opponents. What food manufacturer will 'take a bullet' for GMO corn in the face of such controversy?"

GM grains would have to be sold at a discount. "Farmers who planted (Monsanto's) Roundup Ready soya could end up regretting it."

It could become an "earnings nightmare" for Pioneer Hi-Bred (a company due to be taken over by the chemicals giant DuPont) and for Monsanto which is buying Delta & Pine, a stock, the bank says, not worth holding on to.

The concerns of European consumers are real, concludes the report. "European consumers have recently been through the mad cow crisis, the French Aids-tainted blood crisis, the Dutch pig plague crisis, the Belgium chicken dioxin crisis, the Belgian Coca-Cola crisis, etc. Therefore hearing from unsophisticated Americans that

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their fears are unfounded may not be the best way of proceeding."

MOTLEY GROUP PUSHES FOR FDA LABELS ON BIOFOODS

By Robert S. Greenberger
Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

What do three rabbis, a Roman Catholic priest, a Seventh-day Adventist minister, an Eastern Orthodox cleric and a Buddhist who converted from Judaism have in common?

The answer: They all are part of a lawsuit in federal court here against the Food and Drug Administration.

The suit charges that the lack of labelling of genetically engineered foods makes it impossible for religious people to observe dietary laws and customs. The religious plaintiffs are demanding mandatory safety testing and labelling. The lawsuit, filed in May 1998, adds a new and unusual twist to the debate over biofoods.

Almost since such products started appearing on supermarket shelves a half-dozen years ago, critics worried that such experiments as splicing flounder genes into beets to make them resistant to cold could produce unpredictable results. In Europe, too, memories of mad-cow disease, along with old-fashioned protectionism, have stoked antipathy toward U.S. biofoods.

But the lawsuit filed by the religious officials charges, among other things, that genetically altered foods are sinful, unethical - and maybe not kosher. "The religious groups add a vital aspect," says Andrew Kimbrell, who heads the Center for Food Safety, a nonprofit group that is litigating the action. "It brings in a lot of the ethical questions that allow the public to better understand this."

STATE GOVT GRANT THE RIGHT MEDICINE FOR MEDIHERB

Warwick medicinal herbal medicine manufacturer Mediherb has received almost \$50,000 in State Government funding to improve production efficiency and dramatically boost sales, Qld. Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development and Trade, Jim Elder said today.

Mr Elder said Mediherb was using the grant to expand its information technology base to allow it to control many complex products and processes in an efficient manner. "The upgraded IT base will be used to assess production processes more closely and identify any efficiencies that can be made," the Deputy Premier said. "The project will allow Mediherb to control larger projects with its highly-skilled workforce and meet the challenge created by the great upsurge of interest in herbal medicines.

"Mediherb anticipates that the project will allow it to increase its sales by almost \$17 million over the next three years, including \$2 million in exports."

The grant is from the Queensland Industry Development Scheme, set up last year to help Queensland businesses tackle a rapidly changing and highly competitive global marketplace.

BAN EXPECTED ON IRRIGATION OF QLD'S COOPER BASIN

Wednesday, 8/09/99

Queensland's Minister for the Environment is expected to announce a ban on a proposed irrigation scheme in the Cooper Basin this afternoon. Graziers and conservation groups in Queensland and South Australia

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opposed the scheme, proposed by New South Wales Cotton Growers, on environmental grounds.

The Borbidge Government rejected the original proposal but the proponents revamped the concept.

Minister Rod Welford says it's vital to maintain the integrity of the organic beef industry and the unique ecology of the Basin. Rod Welford: "We've made an historic decision to protect the Cooper catchment and its unique ecological resources for the future. We want to encourage the clean and green organic beef production that is already occurring in that area."

AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE LIFESTYLE AT RISK

CSIRO Media Release

Today's Australians may be inflicting huge costs on future generations, says a senior CSIRO scientist. "Not only are we incurring costs for our children but we are missing out on opportunities for a better lifestyle, because we don't know about or ignore values and services coming from nature," says Dr Steve Cork of CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology,

"Biodiversity has real value for humans," says Dr Cork, speaking at the second of Biodiversity: the Big Picture seminar series in Canberra. "But we don't take the value and the benefits enough into account when managing natural resources."

According to Dr Cork, it is biodiversity in natural ecosystems that ultimately maintains human life. "It is the processes called 'ecosystems services' that are the real basis for our economic and social systems," Dr Cork says. 'Ecosystem services' include the provision of clean air and water, natural fertilization and nutrient cycling in soils, pollination, pest control, genetic resources, food, mitigation of climate, and cultural, aesthetic and social benefits. "Australia's natural resource accounting systems



are improving rapidly, but we still fail to account for many of the values of biodiversity, and the increasingly large economic costs of their repair or replacement," says Dr Cork. "This is placing us at risk of losing the very things that make life not only enjoyable, but possible," says Dr Cork.

With funding from the Myer Foundation as part of the Sidney Myer Centenary Celebration 1899-1999; CSIRO, Environment Australia, the National Farmer's Federation, the Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation and a range of other individuals and institutions are collaborating in a major new project to assess the values coming from nature in a range of ecosystems around Australia.

THYME FOR ULCERS

Over the past decade, stomach and duodenal ulcers have been shown to manifest less from emotional stress than by a bacteria, *Helicobacter pylori*. Today, antibiotics have replaced antacids as the treatment of choice.

Many herbs also have strong antibiotic activity, among them thyme. During the early 20th century, particularly during WW1, hospitals widely used thyme oil as a wound disinfectant. This practice is still with us. Thymoil is the active ingredient in Listerine mouthwash.

Recently Israeli scientists wondered if a thyme tea or tincture might inhibit the growth of *H. pylori*. They exposed the bacteria to the tea and tincture in the laboratory and discovered that the tea substantially inhibited the bacteria (and the tincture to a lesser degree). They also found, incidentally, that cinnamon tea inhibited *H. pylori* as well.

As yet there is no proof that this activity in the laboratory translates to benefits in the body. But scientists

say it's a good bet that thyme tea can help treat ulcers, particularly in cases complicated by oral *H. pylori*. Dental plaque can harbour these bacteria and reinfect those treated with antibiotics. If you're being treated for an ulcer, or have ever had one, the researchers suggest that you add thyme tea to your treatment regimen (several cups a day of a strong infusion) and swish it around your mouth before swallowing, to kill any *H. pylori* hiding there.

The Herb Quarterly, Fall 1999

GINKGO BILOBA BRINGS SLEEP IN DEPRESSION

In addition to improving bloodflow around the body, aiding in mental acuity, stroke recovery, treatment of Alzheimer's, tinnitus, eye problems and impotence, a new study shows that in people who are depressed, it also improves sleep. Sleep disturbances - either insomnia or excessive sleeping - are a major problem for many people suffering from depression, so this finding could make ginkgo, already one of the leading medicinal herbs, even more popular.

In addition to its beneficial effects on blood flow, ginkgo also apparently supports the nervous and endocrine systems, which govern stress hormone secretion and sleep regulation.

The Herb Quarterly, Fall 1999

MILLIONS FOR GENE TECHNOLOGY OFFICES

Two new offices, the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) and Biotechnology Australia have been set up by the Commonwealth Government. The OGTR, under the Minister for Health, will receive \$7.5 million over two years, and Biotechnology Australia has been allocated \$10 million of our taxpayers' money.

Food News Bulletin, September 1999

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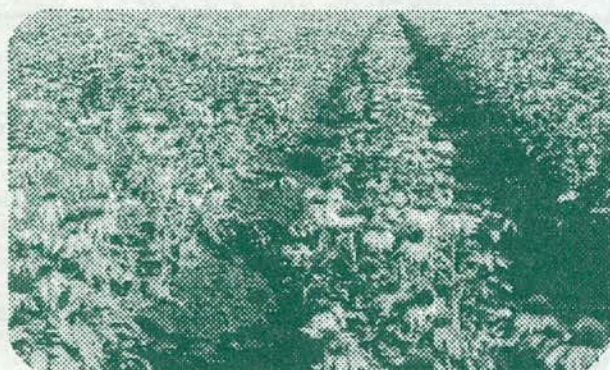
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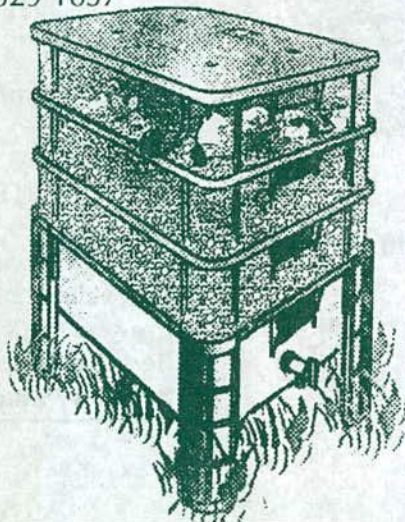
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SPIRAL FOODS

Discovering fine wholesome and Organic foods has been an adventure for us and we warmly invite you to join us, and in so doing, help us to have significant positive impact on farming practices and food processing techniques throughout the world.

Today Spiral Foods continues to address itself to quality basic foods. We process, package, import/export, store and EAT the quality foods found in our catalogue.

We would also like to introduce you to our friends.



BONSOY

....WAS THE FIRST of what is called the Modern Soymilks. The formulation used is unique in that it contains a delicate balance of WHOLE ingredients.

....these ingredients all compliment each other both nutritionally and flavour. Bonsoy stands as the most copied Soymilk in the world and still undisputed as the BEST.



SPECTRUM

Originally Spectrum was known as an Oil company. But they do more than make the BEST oil in the world they have a superior range of Vinegars, Salad Dressings & Sauces.

Spectrum is committed to making exceptional food, according to uncompromising quality standards.



EDEN FOODS

Is an uncompromising company when it comes to its Food standards. Edens path was carved out in the 60's and its reflected in their Statement of Goals.

- * Dissemination of highest quality, life supporting foodstuffs.
- * The creation and maintenance of a healthy, respectful, challenging and rewarding environment, and
- * To make a solid contribution to peaceful evolution on the planet earth.

The Eden range is known throughout the world for its quality and uniqueness.

KITCHEN GARDEN

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1980, Kitchen Garden has grown to employ over 200 Zimbabweans mostly farmers on their Certified Organic Farms. Their range now not only includes Fresh & Dried Herbs, But also Oils, Sauces and Meat substitutes. The company is a true success story.



MUSO

Has its roots with the pioneering forefathers of the Macrobiotic movement in Japan. Finest quality Traditional Food's has been their hallmark. Muso President has worked tirelessly with growers & manufacturers to supply the BEST quality 'Natural Foods from Japan', to the world. A true symbol of quality.



GOLDEN FIELDS

is a small New Zealand company which has been roasting Organic Malted Barley since 1987 to make a delicious Coffee Alternative. A wonderful dedicated company.

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