



FRESH ORGANIC NEWS

Truly Fresh ORGANIC produce straight from the grower to your table



Week commencing 16th February 2004

Sprouts keep fresh all on their own!

Brett from Skysprouts in Totnes grew the mung sprouts in our boxes this week. Brett started out growing vegetables for just his family twenty years ago. Clearly he is a natural, though, because his harvests were so big that he ended up selling to his local farmers' co-operative as well! A few years later, Brett noticed a gap in the market – no one in the UK was growing bean sprouts, and they were all imported from abroad. Brett could see no reason why we couldn't grow them in the UK, so he set up Skysprouts to do just that, and he's been growing bean sprouts ever since.

Bean sprouts need to be grown in water rather than soil – imagine trying to harvest these little things from a field! Brett lays the beans in shallow trays, and feeds them fresh water at regular intervals. They like the water temperature to be just so, and Brett takes care to get it right. Brett has found that by running the water through copper spirals before giving it to the sprouts, he gets much better results. He first tried the spirals out about ten years ago; they worked wonders on the trial sprouts so he checked it was all right with the Soil Association and then bought some more!

For such tiny things, bean sprouts manage to pack an impressive punch, at least nutritionally speaking. They are among the most concentrated sources of minerals and vitamins – particularly protein and B vitamins. B vitamins are essential for the conversion of energy in the body's cells. Proteins are essential for building the cells in the first place. Together, they're pretty useful!

The mung beans take around 3-4 days to grow their sprouts. As they grow, they produce ethylene. Ethylene is the gas produced by ripening fruit, and smells slightly of socks! Don't worry though, this gas is perfectly natural, and is even helping to keep your beansprouts fresh and crisp. Ethylene inhibits their growth, and stops the sprouts turning into actual plants. Toughening and growing as plants makes them a great source of new mung beans, but the plants themselves are entirely inedible!

Rudolph the purple-nosed PSB

This week, we have purple sprouting broccoli in several of our boxes. Purple sprouting broccoli is actually an older variety of broccoli than the best-known broccoli (which some farmers call Calabrese). Sprouting broccolis were eaten by the Romans, and were very popular until Victorian times, when they disappeared for some time. It's only in recent years that it has re-emerged as a great hardy winter vegetable, and a change from the root vegetables and winter cabbages that make up much of the British winter harvest.

This week, our PSB (as it is affectionately known) comes from Jim Skevington, at Lowerwashbourne Farm in Devon. Planted back in May, it has been growing for most of the year to be ready for your boxes. It was grown from seed in greenhouses, and planted out into the fields in July. Jim would normally have planted his PSB out in June, but the heavy rain last June made it impossible. When he finally planted them there was a long period with no rain at all! Immediately after planting, crops are at their most vulnerable, as they need to lay down roots to supply them with nutrients and water, and harsh conditions can kill them much more easily before they are established. Jim had to keep a close eye on them, and make sure that they were properly watered in the all-important early stages of their life.

When the rain finally came, the PSB was ready for it, and it has been thriving ever since. Plants always prefer being watered by the rain rather than by hand, and the PSB was no exception. Luckily, there was plenty of time for the PSB to enjoy the rain through the Autumn and into the new year.

This particular variety of PSB is called Rudolph, and is chosen for its bright, appealing colour, much like the famous reindeer of the same name! It's a little more sensitive to the cold than some varieties of PSB, but Jim has chosen the perfect year to plant it, since the weather has been mild with very few harsh frosts. In the end, these great conditions have more than made up for a slightly shaky start, and have made this one of the best PSB crops Jim has had.

Order cut off times:

- Meat and fish – close of business three working days before your delivery day.
- All other goods – close of business two working days before your delivery day.



This Week's Boxes

Deluxe Veg

Broccoli
Cauliflower
Flat Beans
Green Batavia Lettuce
Hass Avocado
Mung Sprouts
Purple Sprouting Broccoli
Trimmed Leeks
White Cabbage

Small Deluxe Veg

Broccoli
Flat Beans
Hass Avocado
Mung Sprouts
Red Onions
Trimmed Leeks
White Cabbage
Yellow Pepper

Essential Veg

Beetroot
Broccoli
Chinese Leaf
Sweet Potato
Trimmed Leeks
Washed Carrots
White Mushrooms
White Onions

Small Mixed Box

Purple Sprouting Broccoli
Sweet Potato
Trimmed Leeks
Yellow Pepper
Sante Potatoes
Gala Apples
Blood Oranges
William Pears

Family Box

Broccoli
Cauliflower
Flat Beans
Hass Avocado
Mung Sprouts
Sweet Potato
Trimmed Leeks
Washed Carrots
Sante Potatoes
Bananas
Gala Apples
Linda Rosa Plums
Blood Oranges
William Pears

Mixed Box

Broccoli
Chinese Leaf
Flat Beans
Green Batavia Lettuce
Swede
Washed Carrots
Sante Potatoes
Bananas
Linda Rosa Plums
Blood Oranges

Farmer's Choice

Combi Bag

Cauliflower
Washed Carrots
Yellow Pepper
Bananas
William Pears

Farmer's Choice

Vegetable Bag

Broccoli
Celery
Trimmed Leeks
Washed Carrots
Yellow Pepper

Seasonal Salad

Bag

Cherry Tomatoes (bagged)
Flat Lettuce
Garden Cress
Green Batavia Lettuce
Yellow Pepper
Red Onions
Short Cucumber

Essential Fruit

Bananas
Linda Rosa Plums
Mango
Blood Oranges
William Pears

Essential Fruit

Plus

Gala Apples, Kiwi Fruit
Red Grapes *Minus* Mango

Weaning Box

Bananas
Jerusalem Artichoke
Gala Apples
Parsnips
Sweet Potato
William Pears

Extras available: **Vegetable:** avocado, beetroot, broccoli, butternut squash, cabbage(green or red), carrots, cauliflower, celery, chard, cherry tomatoes, courgettes, cucumber, fennel, French beans, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnips, green and red peppers, potatoes (2kg, 5kg, x4 baking), spinach, sweet potatoes, tomatoes. **Mushrooms:** white, brown, gourmet selection. **Herbs:** Coriander, dill, mint, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme, garlic. **Fruit:** apples, bananas, clementines, cooking apples, dates, grapefruit, grapes, kiwis, lemons, mango, melon, oranges, pears, pineapple. **Juicing bags:** apples, carrots, celery, pears, oranges.

TIPS

Plums keep for about 3-4 days in an open paper bag in the fridge or 1-2 days at room temperature. They taste best at room temperature, so if they are in the fridge it's best to take them out for an hour or two before eating them.

Williams pears will need to be ripened before they are ready to eat. Just leave them in the fruit bowl for a few days. The pears remain quite firm even when ripe. It's best to press with your thumb when you receive them; once they've softened a little from this point they are ready to eat.

YOUR RECEIPT

GINGERY CHINESE LEAF

A quick and easy recipe, great as a main course or a side dish. Serves 4 as a main course

30g/1oz fresh coriander, finely chopped
1 tbsp sesame oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 onion, thinly sliced in rings
1 tsp salt
1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp grated ginger
1 head Chinese leaf

Rinse the Chinese leaf and slice it into approximately 1cm thick strips. Add the sesame oil to a hot wok or frying pan and stir fry the garlic, onion, coriander and Chinese leaf for about 5 minutes, until the leaf is tender. Add some salt, pepper and grated ginger. Stir fry for a further 2 minutes, until the aroma of the ginger is strong. Remove from the heat and serve hot on a bed of rice or noodles. You can also garnish the dish with coriander dipped in olive oil.

SPICY BEETROOT SOUP

Delicious with crusty bread, and beautifully coloured!
Serves 4.

450g/1lb firm raw beetroot, peeled and grated
1 medium potato, peeled and grated
2 carrots, peeled and grated
1 small onion
1.2l/2pts vegetable stock
Salt and pepper
A few drops of Tabasco sauce

Put all of the vegetables into a large pan and add the stock and seasoning. Bring it all to the boil. Simmer it gently for 20 minutes, until the beetroot and carrots have softened. Add a few drops of Tabasco, taste and adjust the seasoning as required. Serve hot.