



October 2013 Newsletter Autumnal Changes

Blimey, that storm was a bit dramatic – although fortunately not quite as bad as some had feared. Because the weather has been so mild so far, there are still lots of leaves on the trees (fewer now after the gales!), so we were worried that they would catch the wind and cause some real damage. There is a definite change in the air this week though, as the temperatures are starting to dip a bit, and everything is looking a bit more bare. We're coming to the end of our summery crops too, such as tomatoes, cucumbers and courgettes, and our sweetcorn in particular has done really well this year, but we'll be picking the last lot this week. Our squashes and pumpkins have also enjoyed the warmth of summer, but they're now all picked and stored safely out of the cold damp weather. Come and see them at our **Bonfire & Hallowe'en Party this Saturday, from 4pm!**

We've been sowing green manure of vetch and rye on some patches to cover the ground over the winter and stop nutrients and soil washing away, as well as building organic matter in the soil, and adding fertility. We've also been clearing out the polytunnels and planting delicious spicy winter salads, chard and spinach, to bring some fresh healthy and exciting flavours in the depth of winter.

Egg Price Increase

Our egg prices will increase from 4th November, by **15p** per box (or 10 per box for larger wholesale orders of five dozen or more). We've been working very hard to keep the prices for our amazing free range organic eggs down, and they haven't gone up for over three years; but now the continued rise of feed prices and other costs have meant that we've finally had to put our prices up by a small amount. The eggs are still really excellent value (and super tasty!) as you can see from the comparisons below – and don't forget that we don't charge for delivery unlike supermarkets!



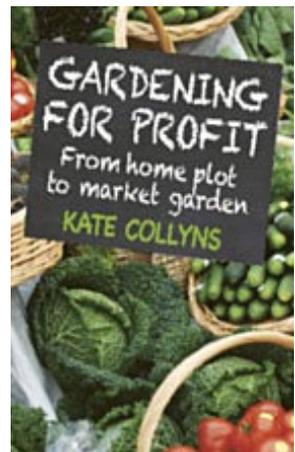
Purton House Organics M box 6 new price:	£1.75
Purton House Organics L box 6 new price:	£1.90
Purton House Organics XL box 6 new price:	£2.05
Sainsbury's Organic M box 6:	£1.90
Tesco Organic Mixed Size box 6:	£2.00
Asda Organic L box 6:	£2.15
Waitrose Duchy Originals Organic L box 6:	£2.36

Zero Food Waste

After Tesco's announcement that they wasted 30,000 tonnes of food in the first six months of this year, we are proud to announce that the amount of food we waste is... ZERO! No chucking out of 40% of apples for us – but then the big supermarkets don't have the advantage of owning their own waste-to-more-food plants as we do with our beautiful Berkshire pigs. They love apples that have just gone over, and also milk, yoghurt, bread, cheese and all kinds of fruit and veg (apart from onions, garlic and citrus fruits). They must be the best fed piggies in the county, although they are not at the top of our waste hierarchy. We try and manage our stock so that not too much waste is produced in the first place – we can't afford it for a start – but it also seems wrong to use all that energy to produce food and then let it go to waste. So we reduce prices for quick sales before the use-by date; and anything not good enough to sell gets snapped up by the staff – you may notice delicious aromas coming from the kitchen at lunch time, and see us enjoying lots of healthy juices! Only after that do the pigs get a look in; and if it's not even suitable for them, it goes on the compost heap.

Gardening For Profit: Out Now!

We are so proud of our ex-apprentice Kate Collyns for the publication this week of her new book *Gardening For Profit: From Home Plot to Market Garden* (Green Books, £9.99). It is a really informative guide for those wishing to expand their own veg gardens or allotments to make a living out of this very worthwhile venture. The book is now available for sale in our farm shop, and Kate is also around on Tuesdays and Wednesdays if you want to ask her any questions. If you do follow her advice and start your own small business, let us know if you grow anything unusual: as a farm shop selling local produce, we're always interested in expanding our ranges!



The farmer: Rowie Meers

Baked Squash

We thought about putting our pumpkins in the veg boxes this week for Hallowe'en – but they wouldn't fit because they are so huge! So we've gone one better: these delicious little orange and yellow squashes have a pumpkiny look about them, and you can still carve them if you want too: but they are so sweet and tasty, try and use the flesh up for some gorgeous Hallowe'eny flavours! They are great also baked in chunks or in halves; in pies and cakes; used instead of sweet potatoes; roasted with garlic and chillies for soups; in hearty stews... perfect for the chilly change in weather!

Serves 2 as a light lunch

- 1 whole squash**
- 1 tbsp butter**
- 2 tbsp brown sugar**
- 2 tsp maple syrup**
- pinch salt**



Cut the squash in half from the top down. Scoop out the seeds and stringy fibrous middle with a spoon, leaving the firm flesh. Score the insides of each half a few times with a sharp knife, and place each half in a roasting tin, cut side facing up. Add one or two centimetres of water to the bottom of the tin to prevent the skins from burning. Brush the insides of the squash halves with the butter, and a little salt. Sprinkle the sugar over the flesh, and drizzle the syrup over the sugar. Bake for 50 minutes to an hour or so, depending on the size of the squash. Make sure they are well cooked though: the flesh should be completely soft, and the tops browning. Leave to cool for five minutes, and serve with a light green salad.



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A New Venture: Purton House Opens for Weddings

As of next year, Purton House will be opening its doors to the public as a wedding venue.

The house has been the family home of the Barkers since the 70s, and now Mrs Barker's new venture promises to become one of the most impressive wedding venues in Wiltshire.

Among its greatest assets are the beautiful grounds surrounding the property, including a large lake and extensive lawns. Located minutes from the Pear Tree Hotel (which offers civil ceremonies) and St Mary's Church of Purton, the house is in an ideal position for wedding receptions.

Part of the unique appeal of the venue is that clients will have exclusive use of the inside of the house, which is elegantly furnished throughout. Forty guests can be seated in the Dining Room, or with an adjoining marquee up to 90. Larger parties of 250+ can be accommodated in a marquee on the lawns.



As a family the Barkers have always had a real love for good quality food. Rowie of course runs the farm, which is where Talia sources

most of her ingredients for her catering business, Cotswold Cooks. Talia will be the caterer for any weddings at Purton House bringing with her a wealth of experience and expertise.



Mrs Barker will be hosting an Open House event on Saturday 2nd November to show people around the house. With prices for the venue kept low for 2014 bookings, those looking to marry next summer might be particularly interested.

The Open House event coincides with : Bonfire Night / Halloween Party at the Farn Shop. There will be pumpkins galore, a roaring bonfire and a few child and animal-friendly fireworks; plus soups, hot drinks and food. Everyone is welcome to both events. Entry is free and the shop will be open late.

Saturday 2nd November

Open House Event
12noon - 4pm

Bonfire Night Party
4pm - late