

FREE! Carrot seeds to sow now!

The BEST value kitchen garden magazine

Grow it!

MAY 2009

No-dig growing:

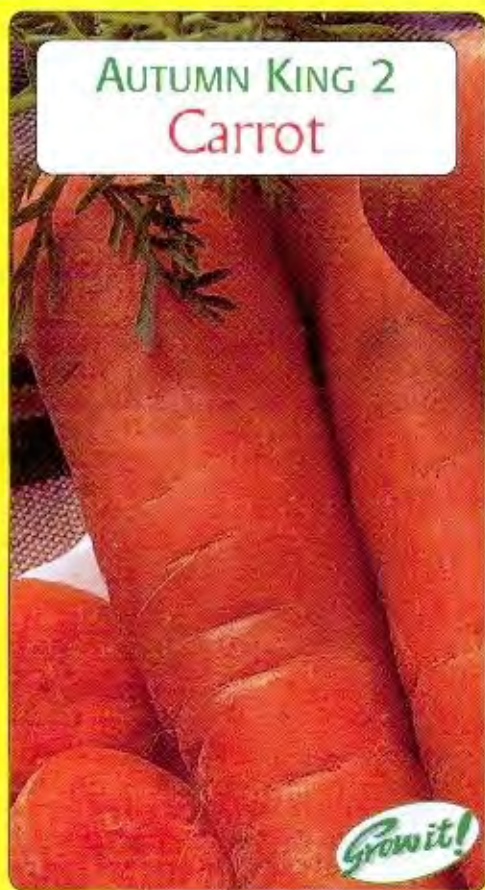


IT REALLY WORKS!

Beans beans

What to grow and how to succeed

AUTUMN KING 2
Carrot



Average sowing conditions provide 700 plants

- Foil packed for extra long life
- Quality Controlled Seed

Potted plots

Ingenious solutions for **SPACE-STARVED** growers

Carrot crunch

The lowdown on **CARROTS** from seed to plate



Christine Walkden • Grow hedgerow fruits • Propagating herbs • Home composting

Land-to-mouth

Farmers from some of the world's poorest countries are coming to the rescue of credit crunch Britain, offering expert advice to those turning to kitchen gardening to beat the budget blues. Small-scale farmers who rely on their land to keep their communities fed are helping the new breed of gardeners and allotment holders take their first steps. Their tips have been collected by international development agency Progressio as part of a drive to highlight the crucial role played by small-scale farmers across the globe.

Small-scale tips

- Always water with a light sprinkle rather than heavy tipping so as not to unseat seeds (from Roger Diaz, Honduras)
- Collect and save water by investing in a water butt (from Mary Gerald, Malawi)
- Grow different varieties of plant in a small area. The variety of aromas confuses pests (from Faustino Reyes Matute, Honduras)
- Garlic is very easy to grow. Simply take a clove, plant it in soil and watch! (from Jose Ramos, Honduras)

Coming from countries as far as Honduras and Malawi, these 'land-to-mouth' farmers use organic farming methods that have been finely tuned by centuries of reliance on the land. Their tips are being launched as more than 100,000 credit-crunched Britons queue up for allotments, vegetable plots are created in gardens, and as sales of fruit and veg seeds have jumped by 28%. The tips have been given the thumbs up by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and include advice on ways to tackle pests organically and maximise crop yields. Not all of the farmer's suggestions made it on to the RHS hit list though. Tips on where to dig your own well would have been unlikely to improve allotment holders' relations with their council-planning department!

Guy Barter, head of advice at the RHS says: "Growing your own food is seen as an enjoyable activity in Britain, but elsewhere it can be a matter of life and death. The ingenuity of people in this position can be inspiring and their advice helpful." For the full list of tips and further information on Progressio's drive to highlight the situation facing land-to-mouth farmers, visit: www.progressio.org.uk



Wholly herbs

West Dean Gardens in West Sussex is kicking off its summer season with a Wholly Herb Show on 16 and 17 May. The show will promote the many and varied qualities of herbs, with demonstrations on growing and cooking them, plus information on the therapeutic properties of medicinal herbs. There will be guided tours of the gardens with trained herbalists explaining uses of common garden plants. Other events planned for the summer include the annual Chill! Fiesta on 8-9 August and the Totally Tomato Show on 5-6 September.

Entry to the garden events costs £7.25, with concessions available. The shows will

run between 10.30am and 5pm. More information on the gardens can be found at www.westdean.org.uk or by calling 01243 811301.



FRESHLY PREPARED

The Chelsea Flower Show has been showcasing all that's new in horticulture for almost a century and this year's no exception. The show will play host to its first ever living wall of edible crops, courtesy of a courtyard kitchen garden by garden designer Pat Fox.

The show garden, entitled 'Freshly Prepped', will be planted up with only edible plants, so that absolutely every plant can be eaten. The concept behind the design sees the garden as an extension of the kitchen and will feature raised beds of salad and fruit crops such as lemons, strawberries, baby leaves and runner beans. But the centrepiece of the garden is its living wall, featuring the latest in hydroponics, which uses mineral nutrient solutions in rock wool rather than soil.

Green walling is relatively under-developed in the UK and Pat hopes that her garden can demonstrate its advantages: a reduction of thermal loading on buildings and the heat island effect, noise reduction, urban ecology, air purification and, with Pat's garden, the opportunity to produce food.

NEW WEBSITE

Grow it's very own Under Cover Grower, Steve Bradley, has launched a new gardening website with wife Val. The website aims to provide new and experienced gardeners alike with down-to-earth advice all year round, and practical know-how presented in a jargon-free manner by the green-fingered couple. Among the short video presentations are pieces on the greenhouse, planting containers, propagation, tools, plants for places and seasonal advice. Val and Steve plan to add to these weekly to maintain topicality. Presentations are currently filmed in the couple's suburban garden, with a plan to expand this to other sites of interest to gardeners. Visit the website at www.thegardeningchannel.net