

# LOG

April 2012

Welcome to the LOG Newsletter for April 2012. This newsletter contains the programme of events for the summer. We had hoped to visit Ull-esthorpe Mill, following the talk we had, but there will be building work going on, so we will have to save this for another time.

The committee is already beginning to think about events for the Winter programme 2012/13. If you have any ideas for speakers then please let us know.

## **Circassian Chicken (recipe submitted by Nadia Hussein)**

This is a Turkish dish which came to Egypt with the Turks.

Ingredients:

1 chicken, 1 small onion, 1 small carrot, ½ tablespoon salt  
Sauce:

1/5 kilo walnuts, 3 thin slices of dry bread (without crusts), 1 teaspoon ground red pepper sauce, 2-3 cloves of garlic, 3 glasses of chicken stock.

Place the whole onion, grated carrot, the chicken and salt into a saucepan. Cover with water. Cook on low heat until tender. Let cool.

Take the chicken out of its stock. Remove the skin and bone, then tear the chicken into small pieces.

Grind the walnuts. Soak the bread in water and squeeze to extract the water. Crumble and add the ground walnuts together with the crushed garlic and red pepper.

Place the mixture through a food mill and add the chicken broth to make a creamy sauce that should not be too thick. (May also be done with an electric blender)

Pour half of the sauce over the chicken. Mix well. Arrange on serving dish over cooked rice. Spread the rest of the sauce over. Decorate with thin lines of ground red pepper sauce. Serve warm.

# **SUMMER PROGRAMME**

## **Saturday June 9th**

Visit to Ryton Organic Gardens  
(Garden Organic/HDRA Headquarters).

We will meet in the reception (entrance to the shop) at 2pm for a walk round the gardens and visitor centre. It would be useful if you could contact us if you intend to come so that we know who to expect. There is a cafe for a drink and a snack later in the afternoon.

Postcode for Satnav: CV8 3LG

## **Friday July 13th**

A Walk

Meet at Houghton-on-the-Hill at 6.45 for a 7pm start.

There is parking round about the church area so the walk will start from there.

## **Saturday August 4th**

Visit to Val and Arthur Needham

You are invited to an afternoon at Val and Arthur Needham's.

The address is 131 Cropston Road, Anstey, LE7 7BR.

Meet from 2pm.

The afternoon may include a short walk for those who wish to partake.

There is a garden centre next door.

### **Send a Cow**

At our March meeting, we had a talk from the Organisation "Send a Cow", whose mission is to enable poor families in rural Africa to attain food and livelihood security by developing strong community groups and sustainable agriculture systems which integrate crops and livestock.

LOG made a donation and there was also a collection which resulted in a sum of £40.40p for this worthy cause.

## Herbaceous Edible Perennials

It is one of the trends and themes of our times to value and promote diversity. From urban integration to equality and diversity policies, and from 'five-a-day' dietary recommendations to Biodiversity Action Plans. In the realm of food diversity, our diets tend to have a very narrow species base. In a good vegetable garden you will find: brassicas; legumes (such as peas and beans); cucurbits (including courgettes, marrows and pumpkins); alliums (onions, leeks and garlic); umbellifers (carrots, parsnips and celery); and potato family (which also covers tomatoes). Beet/spinach family and compositae such as lettuce and chichory would take us up to eight plant families that account for a major part of what we grow. In terms of habitats, it is even more mono-cultural. Apart from a few fruit trees and bushes, it will invariably be beds that are cleared of vegetation annually, to start again each spring. Of course many gardens do have another ecological niche – and one which is pretty unique to gardens, namely the herbaceous border. The perennial plants provide a continuity of life that benefits all sorts of helpful organisms, and the root systems can tap deep into subsoil to an extent not possible with annual planting. Also, we are suddenly dealing with a much broader range of plant families. So, can our herbaceous borders provide not just ecological diversity but also add to our dietary diversity? Are there attractive and hardy perennials that we can eat? The answer would appear to be yes ... but don't expect it to transform your diet.

At the March group meeting we shared some ideas about what an edible herbaceous border might contain. First there are some familiar and some widely grown examples, many from the same plant families as standard vegetables:-

Chives, Welsh onions and Babbington leeks.

Rhubarb

Globe artichoke and cardoon

Fennel, lovage and a range of other herbs

Good King Henry (leaves can be used like spinach, to which it is related, but you may need to soak them in salty water to reduce the bitterness. Young shoots and flower buds are also edible)

Sorrell (for salad leaves – some types are more tender than others)

Horse-radish (Roots for sauce. Also, young shoots can be eaten in moderation)

Nettles and ground-elder (both are found in plenty of herbaceous borders, and the young leaves of both can be eaten)

Then there some that are less common as food items, although some will be familiar as ornamental plants:--

Scorzonera (Marketed for its rather unproductive roots, but it is perennial, and you can eat the shoots, buds and petals)

Oca (small red edible tubors with attractive trefoil foliage)

Marsh mallow (also musk mallow) (leaves, flowers, and roots are edible. If you boil the roots, the 'boiling water' can be reduced down to produce a substance like eggwhite)

Malva Alcea (edible leaves, seeds, etc)

Sweet violet (leaves and flowers are edible. Extract can flavour sweets and icecream)

Physalis (goldenberry) (bears fruit, each in its own paper bag – like chinses lanterns)

Day lily (tubers, very young leaves, flowers and flower-buds are all edible)

Perrenial sweet pea (has edible root tubers)

It will be apparent from this list that it is not likely to replace annual planting for food production. However, as a complementary habitat and a way to widen the plant base and nutrition in our diets, the herbaceous border has much to offer.

*This is an abbreviated version of an article written by Robin Stevenson. The full version with more background information and further plant details appears on the Group Website on the Newsletters Page.*

---

## Group Web Site

We have now produced a simple web site at:

[www.leicsorganicgroup.org.uk](http://www.leicsorganicgroup.org.uk)

This will contain latest information about the programme and our newsletters. Please take a look and if you have any suggestions then contact us below or email [info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk)

The next Newsletter will be produced to give notice of the AGM in September. Articles can be sent to [info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@leicsorganicgroup.org.uk)

**Leicestershire Organic Group is a joint local group of  
The Soil Association and Henry Doubleday Research Association  
(Garden Organic)**

For further details contact group secretary, Bob Haskins, 01509 842449, or publicity officer, Leon Marvell, 0116 269 4978.