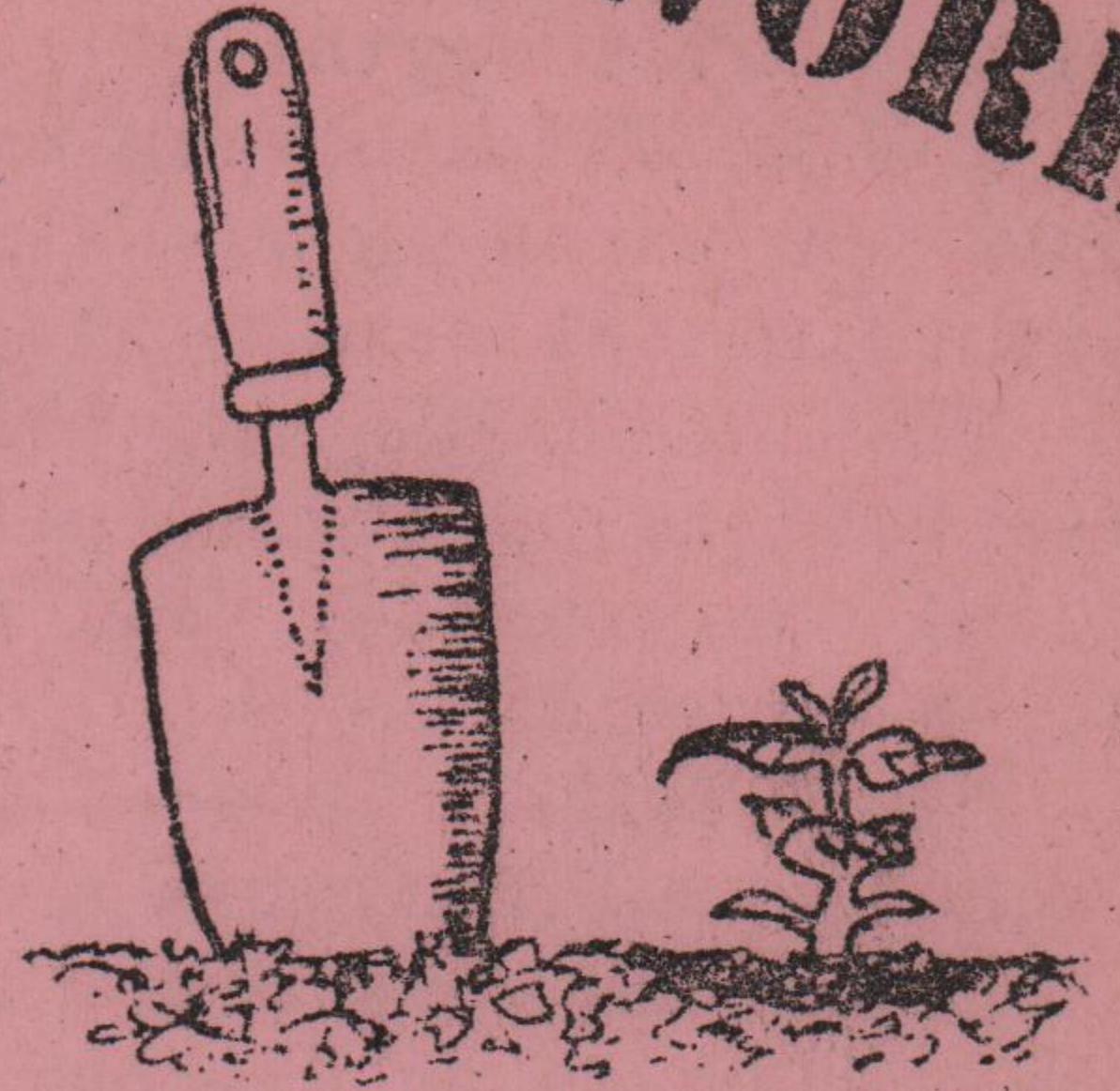
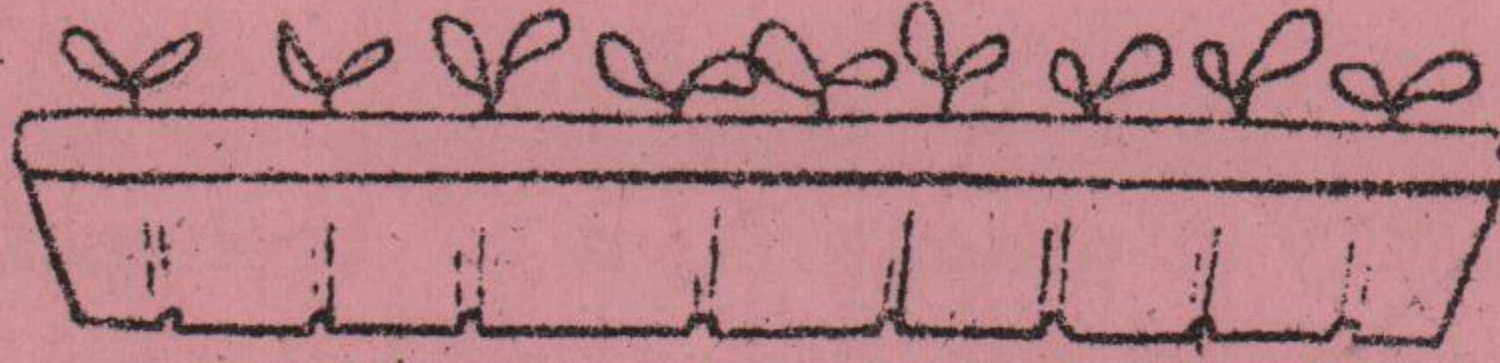


THE
VEGAN SELF-SUFFICIENCY NETWORK
Spring
NEWSLETTER



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Hello friends!

Now that your 'snowpeople' have all melted, you can still enjoy yourselves out in the garden - there'll be lots to do and spring is perhaps the most beautiful season to be working outside with nature - especially when you are aware that, by using vegan methods of cultivation, you can be safeguarding the environment instead of contributing to its destruction. Happy gardening!

Love from

Eaine + alan

MAKING SUCCESSIONAL SOWINGS

Successional sowings can prevent gluts - i.e. large quantities of one vegetable becoming ready for use all at the same time. This is especially important for crops that will not stand ready for use for very long before deteriorating, becoming over-ripe or tough, or bolting. Lettuces, radish, peas, turnips, early carrots and dwarf French beans are some of the vegetables suitable for successional sowing.

Instead of sowing all your row or bed at one go, make several smaller sowings two or three weeks apart. In this way, as the plants come to maturity, you can use up the crop from one sowing before starting on that from the next.

It's also worthwhile to incorporate into your sowing rota early, mid-season and late varieties to guarantee as long a season of continuous use as possible. Early varieties usually become ready for use more quickly than later ones sown at the same time.

Try sowing some of the early varieties late in the season too to grab a last minute crop before the good weather is over.

There are now available certain dwarf varieties of tomato that are very quick to produce fruit - some, such as 'Pipo' and 'Minibel' taking only about 10 weeks from seedling to fruiting stage. By starting these in a warm place and making use of cloches or a greenhouse, you can have very early crops of home-grown toms! Successional sowings of these dwarf varieties can provide you with fresh fruits for over 6 months of the year - and that isn't counting those picked green at the end of the year and ripened indoors!

MEMBERS' REPORT - RESOURCEFUL LIVING IN ESSEX

As always, we look forward to every issue of the VSSN Newsletter and it seems to us that the only thing lacking is by way of a contribution from us - so, I think maybe it's time we told everyone out there something about ourselves. We are interested in most everything!

THE GARDEN has been under veganic cultivation for 3 years. Seaweed is available just 100 yards away. We're very interested in winter crops and are quite sure sea plants assist hardiness.

THE GREENHOUSE is still under construction and is being made from recycled bottles. The base is of bricks all collected from the shoreline (there are many thousands all round our coasts). Used bricks are also sold for, on average, £30 per 100 - roof tiles as well!

THE WHEELS - lots of bicycles at different stages of construction. Pre-1930's 28inch wheel bicycles are a truly glorious form of transport, though we've recently found 28inch wheels are hard to come by. Our wooden handcarts are used on a regular basis. One is an ex-pony trap, the other was a burnt out Clacton ice cream cart. They now both transport wood, scrap metal and seaweed. They can carry 10cwt easily over long distances (10 miles +). Our other wheels amount to one Honda motorcycle and a 1953 short wheelbase Land Rover with a Harvey Frost crane on the back. Neither of these petroly puffers has been of much use up to now - we're willing to try though! Lots of work for our little wheelbarrow as well.

THE SEA supplies scrap metal, seaweed, bricks, driftwood (for fuel and building), containers of all kinds, nails and screws (all brass and copper), lovely soft mists and the sound that's music to us.

THE PLANTS - we try very hard with potatoes, and we do have successes (obviously) with leeks, winter onions, etc. Our main methods for plants that won't winter are to grow as late into winter as possible, and early for spring. In the past this has proved costly in time, with little result due mostly to the change in the winter weather pattern and our own observations. Also our raised beds were unsettled on the Essex clay. We do grow a vast range of vegetables, from kohlrabi to garlic and the very marvellous black radish (very goodly for the liver and the easing of the jaundis it is said). We have supplied some produce to a vegan/vegetarian restaurant, 'Acorn', 7 miles away in Maldon. We also locally supply organic grains, flours and soy drinks.

WOOD - old boat and barge timbers, especially those that have been covered by sediments which turns them black as ebony, can be dried and used to make fine items of woodwork. The local churches have many carvings on furniture said to be made from timber buried for 100 years. We have just started to use such wood to build handcarts (very ornate). Used as fuel, it burns very hot with a degree of economy. Holly, sea buckthorn and blackthorn have the same virtue (only used when the bulldozers and so-called farmers alter the landscape for their faceless horizons).

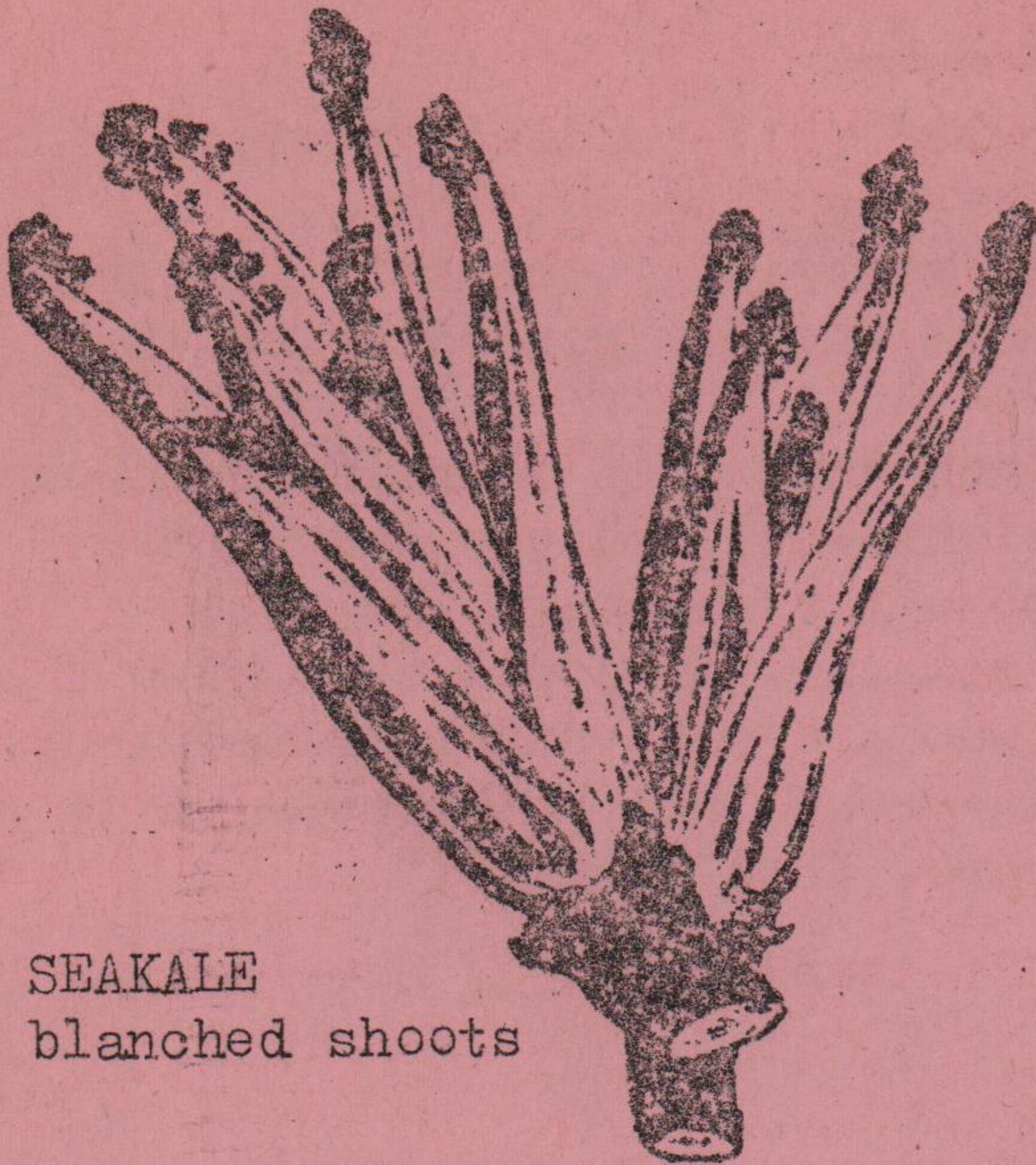
WORK AND INCOME - we both work 24 hour days and our income is mostly pleasure and love. Recently we decided not to accept money from the state any more. I am of the opinion that the money they supposedly give to people is the ill-gotten gains from the exploitation of our lovely planet.

SNOWMEN - children love to build them, I love to build sledges: a new form of winter transport for some?

LAMPS - although I have bought carbide powder from chemists more than 7 years ago, I have found it no longer available. Whatever happened to the carbide lamp?

CAR TYRES - place one tyre on the ground, set three seed potatoes - when first shoots appear, add another tyre. When shoots are sufficient, earth up. Continue to six tyres high, filled with soil. I intend to try this in the greenhouse in winter (hmm, perhaps a use for the Land Rover tyres!).

SEAKALE - we have grown seakale for one season. Plant in light soil in March or April. The seedlings should be allowed to stand where sown for two seasons, then planted in permanent beds or to produce crowns for forcing. Seakale likes heavy compost material about it. When crowns have formed, plant out during March so as to be just beneath the surface. After growth has finished in the autumn and all foliage has died back, the bed should be cleared of leaf material and preparations made for inducing growth (forcing). Have in readiness a supply of wooden boxes - these are used to cover the crowns at intervals of 10 days, commencing late December to early January. When the boxes are in place, they are covered with a one-foot layer of composting material (seaweed?). Examine the crowns from time to time, taking any of the blanched shoots that are sufficiently advanced.



SEAKALE
blanched shoots

Crowns not covered should be thinned. Flower spikes, if allowed to develop, may be used for seed.

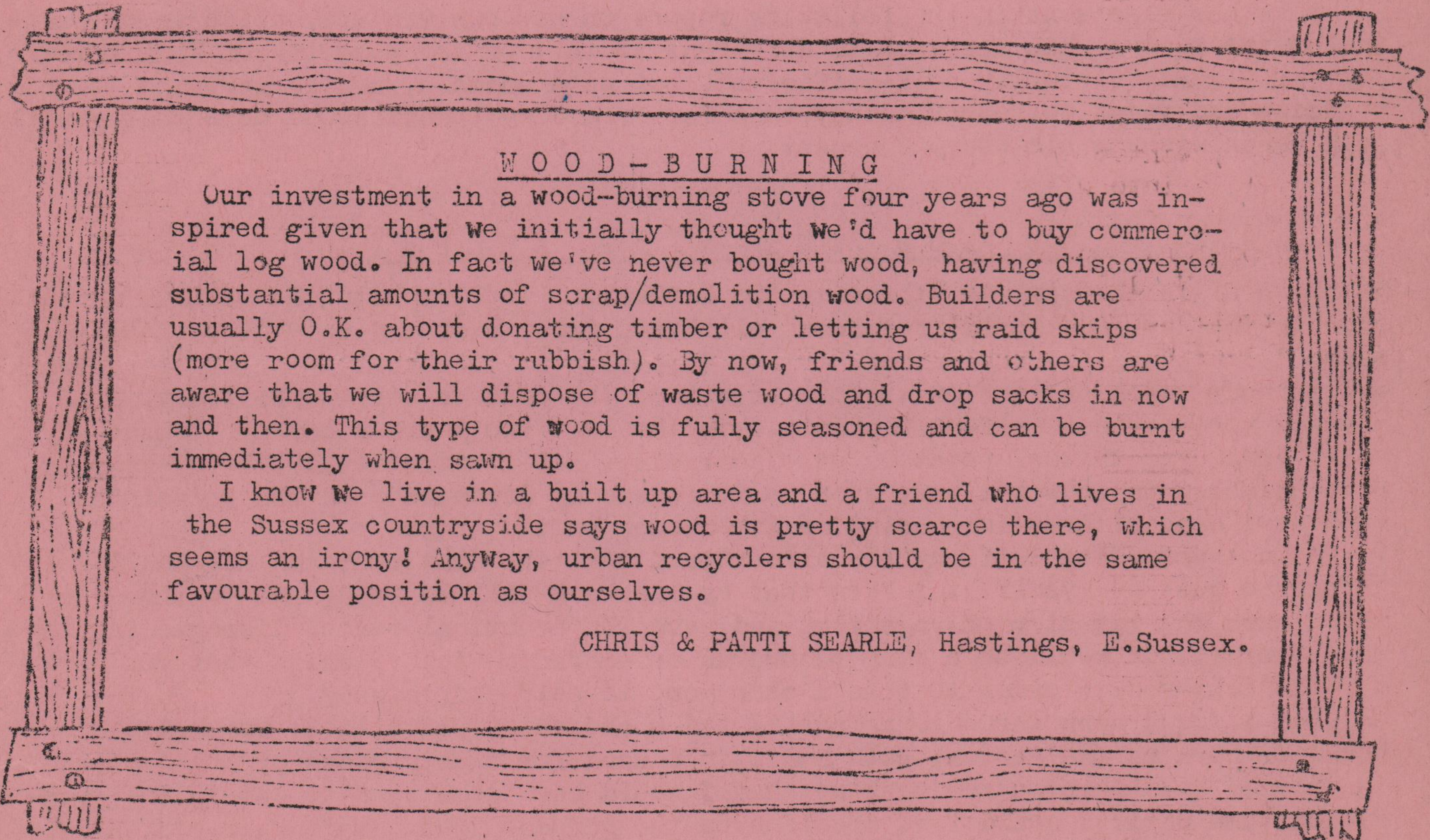
In November-December, lift the roots carefully, trim off all leaves and sideshoots, then store the prepared crowns in moist sand. The smaller roots should be cut into pieces 6 to 8 inches long for making sets, then also stored in sand till ready for planting. The sets are planted in greenhouse conditions during January, 5 or 6 to an 8 inch pot. Cover with another pot and the shoots will be ready for use in 14 to 21 days. Use boiled or stir-fried.

Could we ask if anyone who knows of or has any 28 inch cycle wheels or parts of 28 inch wheeled cycles could phone 0621-740-131 or write to us please.

Love from

JIMMY NYHAN & CHRISTINE WESTON,
154a West Avenue, Maylandsea, Essex, CM3 6AE.

* * * * *



WOOD - BURNING

Our investment in a wood-burning stove four years ago was inspired given that we initially thought we'd have to buy commercial log wood. In fact we've never bought wood, having discovered substantial amounts of scrap/demolition wood. Builders are usually O.K. about donating timber or letting us raid skips (more room for their rubbish). By now, friends and others are aware that we will dispose of waste wood and drop sacks in now and then. This type of wood is fully seasoned and can be burnt immediately when sawn up.

I know we live in a built up area and a friend who lives in the Sussex countryside says wood is pretty scarce there, which seems an irony! Anyway, urban recyclers should be in the same favourable position as ourselves.

CHRIS & PATTI SEARLE, Hastings, E.Sussex.

* * * * *

SKILLS EXCHANGE NETWORK FOR A STABLE ECONOMY (S.E.N.S.E.).

S.E.N.S.E. is a skills exchange network for people interested in learning skills suitable for a more self-reliant and practical way of life. It provides opportunities for informally learning useful practical skills and produces a number of publications, including:

- * a list of organisations and groups needing practical help (10p + s.a.e.)
- * a list of country/folk museums where tools and demonstrations of techniques can be seen (30p + large s.a.e.)
- * contacts lists of people willing to exchange skills and knowledge -- List A, Agriculture (warning: this includes things like poultry, dairy, etc.); List B, Wood and Wood Products (Carpentry and other related crafts); List C, Textiles (crochet, weaving, dyeing, etc.); List D, Building & Construction; List E, Miscellaneous (wide variety of things from bikes to solar heating to medicine). (25p each list + s.a.e. -- free if your name is on the list.)

If you are interested in any of the lists, or have a skill that you'd like to exchange, contact S.E.N.S.E. at 1 MERSTOW COTTAGES, MERSTOW PLACE, EVESHAM, WORCS. (3)

A P O S I T I V E C R I T I C I S M

"It took several re-readings of the VSSN Newsletter before I suddenly noticed exactly why I like it so much... the complete absence of any 'in-fighting'.

I read a lot of small magazines, of what is called 'minority interest', and many of them expend quite a lot of energy on criticising those who are generally on the right lines but not quite perfect.

It seems to be a natural evolution of small magazines that they identify somebody who they have a lot in common with, then proceed to relentlessly chivvy and harass them to try to make them take the correct line. I suppose a vegan magazine could legitimately point out some flaws in 'ordinary' vegetarianism. Or could criticise those who are vegan-but-not-self-sufficient. Or those who are self-sufficient-but-not-vegan. It's funny, I hadn't started thinking of the in-groups and out-groups until I noticed how totally POSITIVE the Newsletter is. It's rare. Keep it up!!!"

JAKE WILLIAMS, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

* * *

In response to Jake's comment above, we'd just like to say that the Newsletter reflects the practical and positive attitudes of those VSSN members who contribute to its pages. Our thanks go out to them all, along with the thanks received in correspondence from the many members who haven't (yet!!) manifested themselves in print!

Jake has also sent in the following report on his own venture, which is of particular interest as his approach is different to that of the majority of VSSN members. Jake is already virtually self-sufficient, but with animals, and is striving towards veganism and vegan self-sufficiency in a far from easy location. We hope that you'll join us in wishing him every success!

* * *

A N D N O W T H E N E X T S T E P . . .

My goal is the same as others in the Network... to live with the minimum dependence on the 'outside world' for food, clothing, fuel, etc. And to achieve a state where I don't exploit any animal. But my direction is different. Most of the Network are already vegan and are at various stages on the road to self-sufficiency. I am already more-or-less self-sufficient... in the last two years I haven't bought any meat, eggs, vegetables, potatoes or electricity. But I've achieved that by keeping some animals, and now the next step is to reduce my dependence on the animals as much as I can, without increasing my dependence on the shops.

I'm not proposing that anybody else should take the same route as me. And I'm not trying to justify myself... I know that my approach will be repugnant to those who have taken the big step of veganism. And, even in practical terms, disregarding the morals of it, it would be a step backwards to sacrifice the veganism that you have already achieved in order to take a short-cut to self-sufficiency.

When I moved here three years ago, I had a choice of priorities: work on the house or work on the garden. Both had lain unused for twenty years or so. I worked on the house, and bought a few hens so that I would have some eggs to eat in the transition time until I could feed myself from the garden. I have made fairly steady progress, with a few setbacks, but it's quite difficult: at 1,000 feet above sea level in west Aberdeenshire there is an awful lot of winter. Snow lay into the beginning of April last year, and the first snowfall of this winter was in the first week of November. So a lot of food has either to be stored, or bought, for the five months of winter.

This year I took part in the Henry Doubleday Research Association's experiment to find a variety of pea that can be grown to make into dried peas to store for the winter. The growing season here wasn't long enough: the peapods were still flat, with tiny peas in them, when the first hard frost killed the lot. But this was a particularly bad year: I'll try again next year, when the weather will be better, I hope.

Some of the garden was quite easy to get into shape, but one part was a gardener's nightmare. It had been used at one time to store logs: a lot of twiggy spruce branches had been left, and in time the turf had grown up round them, so that it was very difficult to dig. Then the Forestry Commission had bulldozed a road up behind the house and pushed stony subsoil down over part of the garden. I made some half-hearted attempts to start a garden here, then, considering the need for some storable protein for the winter, I made what seemed to be the only practical decision and kept pigs in that area. But if I was faced with the same decision again, I would probably make a

different choice: the book "Permaculture Vol.2" by Bill Mollison contains some wonderful advice on making garden out of the roughest ground by using very deep mulch. I tried it on a small scale last year, and intend to use it this year on the remaining bits of rough ground here. With a bigger garden, and a greenhouse, I hope to have something to keep me eating all through next winter, without animals. My plan is a bit vague: I will probably keep the hens for as long as they live - as their egg production declines with age, my other sources of protein should be getting more reliable. In the meantime, they are on free range for most of the year, and in a grassy yard with trees in the spring, when they would scratch up the seedbeds in the garden.

JAKE WILLIAMS.

* * * * *

"THE SELF-SUFFICIENT HOUSE"

(Brenda & Robert Vale, Macmillan - 1980)

book

I found this book in the local library and I've found it quite interesting and potentially useful to anyone interested in becoming more self-reliant energywise, or in saving "monergy".

Written by two practicing architects, it shows how a house can be made to use less energy in heating and how one can get energy from the sun and wind. It is divided into sections on the theory and practice of this.

Under 'Theory', the book tells about the effect of a house's orientation on energy loss and conservation, and different heating fuels are compared for efficiency. Also the theoretical sides of insulation, heat loss and ventilation are covered in some detail, including advice - with plenty of data - on how to estimate heat loss through the walls, windows, roof and floor of a house, and possible savings with this or that thermal insulation. It could be a bit 'heavy' for the non-technically minded, but it is handy for finding out how much heating you will need after insulating the house, and whether the savings gained by a particular insulation measure will be worth the expenditure.

The 'theory' section also covers the theory behind solar heating, wind power, and collecting your own rain water (becoming more desirable with threats to possibly fluoridise water supplies!).

In the 'Practice' section, the authors give practical advice, with illustrations, on how to insulate the walls, loft, floor, etc., and how to deal with condensation. There is a chapter on wood-burning stoves, their installation and use. There are also instructions on how to make a solar panel for water heating (from an old radiator), a 'solar roof' (also for heating water), a conservatory, a solar oven, a haybox, and even a small Cretan-style windmill for electricity generation.

I think that one should read around a bit more about solar and wind energy before diving into making a solar panel or a wind generator, and check out the situation as regards planning permission too, to save trouble later on.

It would have been nice if the book had also covered other ways of saving energy in the home, apart from insulating. At least the largest area of heat loss was tackled.

I recommend this book for a read or a browse through. It is a little pricey though (my library copy was £7.95 in 1980), however it should be available through a library.

GRAHAM HOOPER, Oxford.

* * * * *

THE YARMER TRUST - COURSES AT WELCOMBE BARTON, 1986

Welcombe Barton is an organically-farmed, mixed smallholding, set on the North Devon coast, one mile from the sea. A range of courses are offered for 1986, though some of these are not applicable to vegan self-sufficiency. Those that may be of interest either wholly or partly include: ORGANIC GARDENING (April 11 - 13), SMALL-SCALE CEREAL GROWING & BREADMAKING (August 29 - 31), and THE HARVEST (September 26 - 29). Course fees are £40 to £50, fully inclusive of meals, accommodation and tuition - reductions according to need. Further details are available from: NICK & PAM RODWAY, WELCOMBE BARTON, WELCOMBE, BIDEFORD, NORTH DEVON.

The Marrow Family



Apart from a few traditional exceptions, the cucurbit family remains generally unappreciated in the British Isles. These vegetable fruits are mostly easier to grow, more versatile in use, have a longer storage life, and are just as nutritious as many of our more-finicky vegetable staples.

These plants are grown as half-hardy annuals in our temperate climate, though in their native tropics they are usually perennials. Most have a vining (i.e. trailing or climbing) habit of growth, but there are a few varieties which have a restricted form commonly referred to as 'bush'.

The Cucurbitaceae is a large and diverse family which not only includes the marrows, pumpkins, squash and gourds with which this article deals, but also other food plants such as cucumbers, melons, watermelons, and the chayote or choko. Seed for many varieties is currently available, and we will take a closer look at those here...

We must all be familiar with the marrow and pumpkin, both of which have become well-established with gardeners and allotmenters during the past few centuries. Courgettes - immature marrows, usually from 'bush' type plants - have gained popularity in recent years too. Marrows and most pumpkins are varieties of *Cucurbita pepo* - the so-called 'summer squash'. Also included among the many varieties within this group is the custard marrow.

The 'winter squash' - *Cucurbita maxima* - include the Hubbard, Turban and Buttercup squash. The terms 'summer' and 'winter' can be somewhat misleading due to the diversity of varieties within each group. As a general, but not hard and fast rule, summer squash are best used when immature, tending to become coarse and lose flavour as they ripen, and do not store well (though ripe marrows and pumpkins should keep till mid-winter). Winter squash are left to mature, when they will have a firmer and finer-textured flesh than summer varieties, and will store well - often until the following spring - without loss of flavour.

There is also another group of pumpkins and squash - *Cucurbita moschata*. Many of these are not recommended for regions any cooler than warm temperate, though some, such as the pumpkin "Triple Treat", are available and should be successful. Starting under glass is advised.

Among the useful gourds that we will examine later are the *Lagenaria* species, such as the bottle gourd, and the loofah (*Luffa cylindrica*). These have many practical, non-culinary uses.

CULTIVATION - General:

Cucurbits prefer a well-aerated soil that is rich in humus and has good drainage - around pH6 is best. Most varieties will need plenty of space, and all require a site that is in full sunshine and sheltered from wind - a sunny border against a S. or S.W. facing wall will give best results. Though requiring plenty of water, especially once the fruit is developing, damp soils - and shaded sites - should be avoided. Freshly dug, loose soil and, conversely, hardpan are also both unsuitable.

Planting sites should be prepared in advance - ideally during March. If a traditional cultivation system is followed,

dig holes 1ft deep and 1ft across -

trailing plants will be sited about

4ft apart, bush plants 2ft apart.

Half fill the hole with compost, then

replace the topsoil. There's no need

to make the holes any deeper as the

cucurbits are generally shallow rooting.

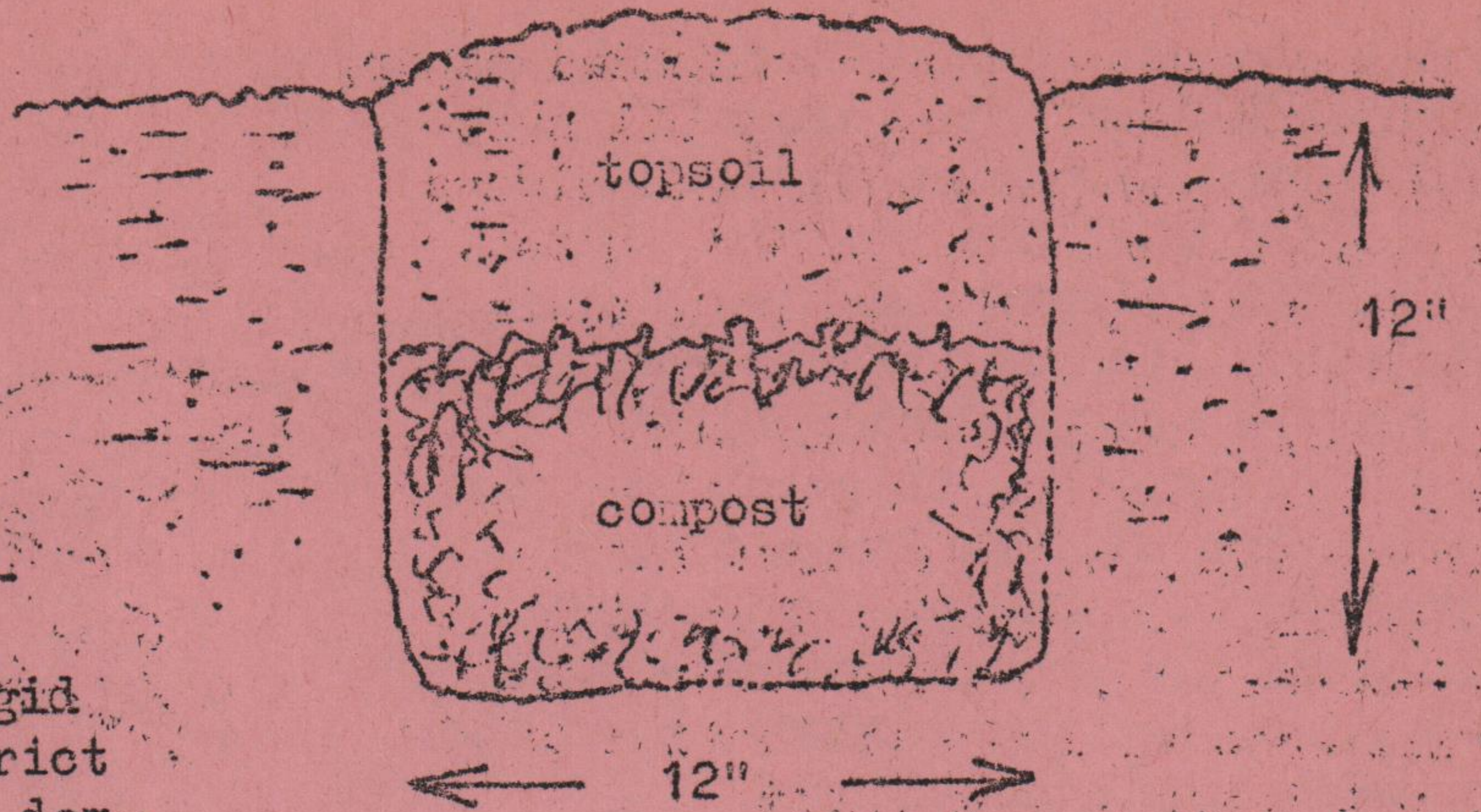
(See illustration on next page).

'No-dig' beds should simply be spread

with a layer of compost.

*
* C R O P R O T A T I O N *
*
* Do not grow cucurbits on ground that *
* was used for them, or for cucumbers *
* or melons, in the previous season. *
* A traditional rotation is to grow *
* cucurbits after brassicas and before *
* potatoes and other root vegetables. *
*

If you're intending to grow plants that will produce ripe fruits for storage, it is best to start them off in a greenhouse or on a sunny windowsill indoors (starting early under glass is considered essential for some varieties, particularly Cucurbita moschata). If possible, use 3" peat pots or similar sized home-made biodegradable alternatives (made from unglazed paper or papier-mâché). Rigid pots can be used, though these restrict root development and may cause root damage when the plants are turned out for planting, resulting in stunted or checked growth. If a peat or other 'plantable'



PREPARE PLANTING SITES IN MARCH.

pot is used - and kept moist! - the roots will grow through it and the whole lot, plant and pot, can be put carefully into the ground without damaging the roots.

The pots should be filled with sieved compost, lightly firmed down, and the seeds pushed in $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1" (depending on size - larger seeds deeper than small). Sow the seeds on edge - if you wish, you can soak them in lukewarm water for 12 hours before sowing to speed germination. It is common practice to sow two seeds in each pot and to remove the weakest seedling at an early stage. Alternatively, you can sow more pots than you need with a single seed in each pot, then plant out the strongest only. Stand the pots in a shallow tray of water until the compost is moist, then move to a warm situation. The pots can be covered with shaded glass or black polythene to maintain a consistent temperature and humidity until germination. The ideal temperature depends on the variety and ranges from 10°C/50°F upwards - though much warmer, 24°C/75°F, is the average.

Pots should be sown about four or five weeks before you expect to plant out, which should be no earlier than late spring. The young plants should be kept under protection until all danger of frost has passed, then hardened off over a week or so (place them outside during the warmest part of the day at first, then bring them back inside. Gradually extend the period outdoors daily until they can be left outside for 24 hours). They can then be planted out in their final sites. Soak the pots and planting holes well before setting out, and carefully make a couple of holes in the pot if the roots haven't yet penetrated. As far as possible avoid disturbing the roots of the young plants or planting out when conditions are unfavourable.

As cucurbits require regular watering, applied around and not over the plants, a shallow 'moat' can be scooped out around the planting site or a clay flowerpot can be recessed into the soil alongside the plant - water can then be poured into this and left to gradually filter through to the roots. The best time to water is early in the morning.

Seed can also be sown directly into open ground in late spring, after the last frosts. Pre-warming the soil for about a fortnight with cloches will be beneficial. Once again, it is customary to sow two or three seeds at each 'station', to be thinned later to the strongest single seedling. Direct sowing under cloches can be made about two weeks before unprotected sowings.

If the weather becomes cold again, young seedlings can be protected temporarily with cloches or upturned glass jars. In open situations, twiggy brushwood can be laid around young plants to protect them from cold winds.

If space is limited select bush varieties. Alternatively small-fruited trailers can be grown up a trellis, fence or 'tepee' of canes. If such supports are too thick for the tendrils to grasp, interlace them with twine to help the plants along. Upright training is not recommended in windy situations however. The 'multi-storey' aspect of agroforestry systems can be adopted advantageously by allowing trailing plants to climb through strong-growing, non-thorny shrubs or hedges, much as wild cucurbits do in their natural habitats. Don't forget to plant them on the sunny side of the shrub though!

Never let the soil dry out, especially in hot weather, but also avoid creating a quagmire around the plants! Keep down weeds, preferably by hand pulling - be careful to not damage the stems and shallow roots of the plants if you use a hoe.

After about mid-June, when the soil has become well warmed, a mulch can be applied to conserve soil moisture and keep down weed growth. Lawn mowings, peat, leaf

mould, compost, straw, shredded paper, pulverised bark, etc. are all suitable options. Mulches should always be applied when the soil is moist.

Trailing plants can have their main stems stopped, if desired, or if they're not producing side shoots. Allow them to reach at least between 4ft and 8ft first though, depending on variety. Then simply pinch out the growing point - this will encourage the production of the fruit-bearing side shoots.

Outdoors, the plants will usually be pollinated by insects, but in early summer, unseasonal weather, cool regions, or under glass, hand pollination is usually required. Male flowers are generally produced first by the plants, and can be distinguished from the females as shown in the diagram on the right.

For best pollination, pick a healthy-looking male flower from one plant and use it to fertilise one or more female flowers on another plant of the same named variety (if only one plant is grown, its flowers will still pollinate each other). Do this around mid-morning on a warm, bright day. Peel back the petals of the male flower to reveal the pollen-bearing anther, then gently brush this against the stigma of the female. Alternatively, a clean, soft artist's brush can be used to transfer the pollen.

Once the fruit has started to swell, regular applications of a liquid feed will help the development of the crop. A commercially available seaweed extract can be used, or you can make your own liquid feed by steeping fresh seaweed, nettles or comfrey leaves in water for several weeks, then filtering off the resultant brew and diluting before application. To avoid wasteful run off of the liquid feed, sprinkle it around the plants after rain or usual watering - pull mulch to one side if necessary.

As the fruits swell they should be protected from contact with the soil by resting them on pieces of tile, slate or smooth, flat stones. If growing on upright supports, damage can be caused to the stems if any fruits become especially large or heavy. If you don't want to pick the fruit, the stems near the base of the fruit can be carefully tied in with 1" wide strips of soft rag instead of string. Avoid tying tightly and crushing the stems.

From sowing to the first pickings of young summer squash takes about 11 weeks. From sowing to harvest of mature winter squash takes about 23 weeks.

COMPANION PLANTS:

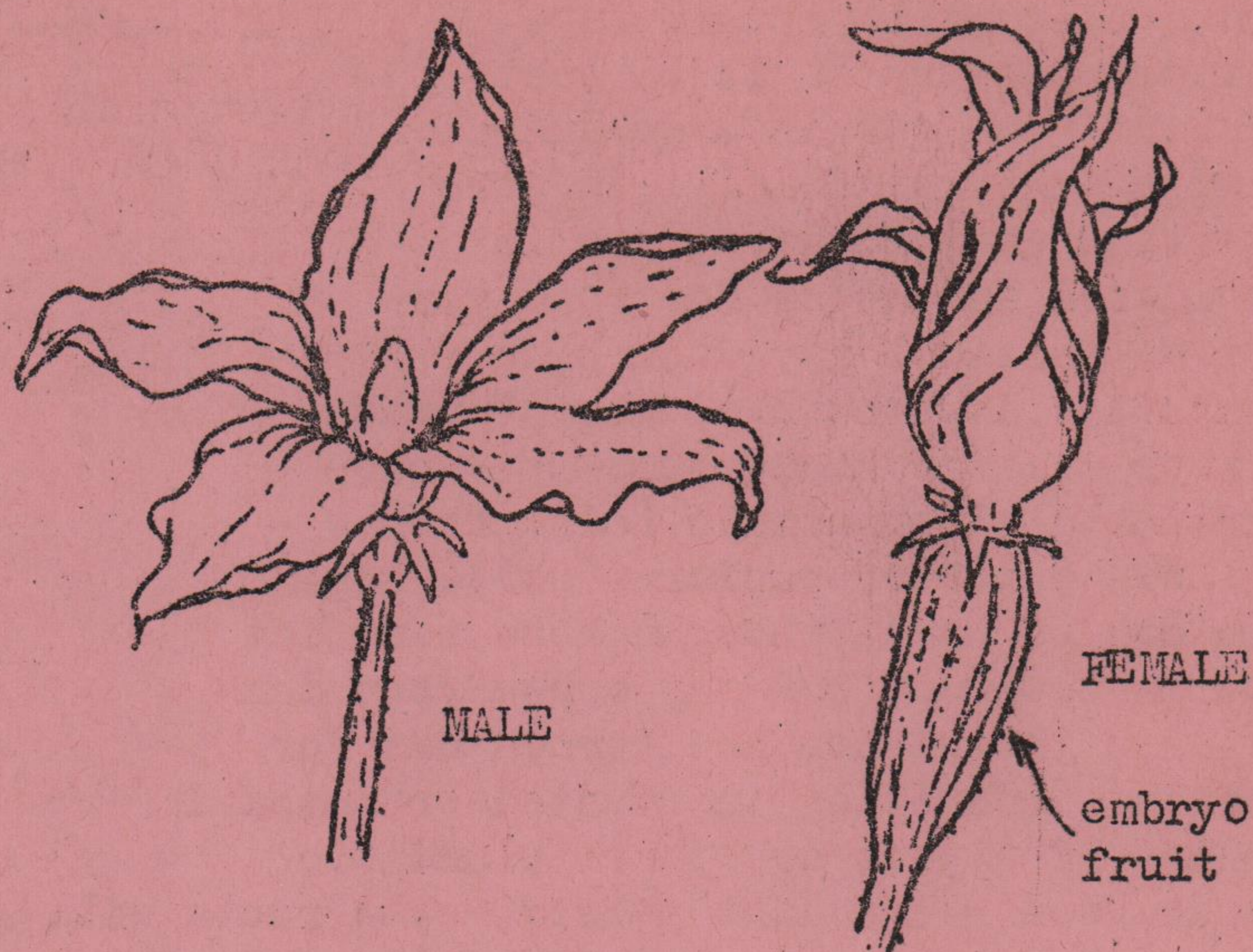
Good: other cucurbits, corn, sunflowers, radishes (especially when allowed to mature for edible pods or for seed saving), nasturtiums, sowthistle, fat hen and tansy.

Bad: potatoes.

PESTS & DISEASES:

Slugs and snails will eat young plants and seedlings. The methods outlined in Newsletter No.11 and reproduced on the 'Slugs & Snails' information sheet should help to keep them at bay. Aphids may attack plants that are grown in too-dry conditions - insufficient or irregular watering can also cause young fruit to fall off. Several mildews, moulds and rots may develop - these are usually caused by growing in conditions that are too cold, wet or shady, or if a suitable crop rotation has not been followed. Fruit that rots from the tip is generally a result of poor fertilisation or low temperatures. Cut off and burn any diseased leaves, and wash hands between handling infected and healthy plants.

Provided conditions as close to optimum are maintained and a recommended rotation is followed, cucurbits should remain trouble-free.



CUCURBIT FLOWERS

HARVESTING:

Summer squash and marrows: Small immature fruits can be eaten as 'courgettes' - baby pumpkins and squash are especially delicious! Cutting young fruits will stimulate further production. Larger marrows are best when the skin is still soft enough to pierce easily with your fingernail - once the skin becomes tough, the flesh will be past its best for use as a vegetable, though still fine for use in preserves and pickles.

Most sources advise that over-ripe pumpkins should not be eaten.

Winter squash: These can be used immature, but if required for long-term storage they must be allowed to ripen fully on the plant. If frost threatens before the squash are ready, cover them with clear polythene or cloches. They will be ready for cutting once the skin has hardened - cut them from the plants leaving about 2" of stem attached.

STORAGE:

Squash harvested when mature at the end of the growing season will store well if they are undamaged and kept in dry, airy conditions at a moderate temperature - 50° - 60° F / 10° - 15° C. They should be stored in such a way as to have minimum contact with each other, shelving or walls. Slatted shelves are preferable, or the fruits can be hung up in individual nets or old stockings.

To help guarantee an extra long storage life, if required, select the best of your crop and fill the depression at the flower end of the fruit with melted candle wax.

Examine squash in storage regularly. If you discover surface mould on the skins, rub the squash carefully all over with a little vegetable oil on a cloth. This will remove the mould and restore the fruit to a storable condition. Any fruit with soft spots or other signs of decay should be used immediately or, if too far gone, discarded (though the seeds should be salvagable).

USE:

Courgettes and tender young squash can be eaten raw, either whole or sliced into salads. The flesh of larger fruits can be eaten steamed or baked, or diced in stews, casseroles or curries. Fruits of any size can also be split, the seeds and pith removed, the cavity filled with a nut, bean or grain based stuffing, and the whole baked as a main course savoury.

Coarsely chopped courgettes or grated squash flesh can also be added to fruit cake mixtures, and pumpkin pie can be made either sweet, as is traditional, or as a savoury.

DRYING SQUASH & PUMPKIN FLESH:

Cut the fruit into pieces 1" thick, peel, then blanch in steam for 10 minutes. Dry the pieces slowly in warm air - this can be done on wooden skewers or racks of mesh or cloth, whichever is suitable, in an airing cupboard, over a stove or radiator, in a solar drier, or in a warm oven with the door slightly ajar to allow air currents to take away the moisture. When the pieces are 'leathery', sterilise them by spreading on trays and placing in a 200° F / 93° C / Gas Mark $\frac{1}{4}$ oven for 10-15 minutes. Store in open jars in a warm, dry place for 4 days, shaking occasionally. If satisfied that the pieces are then dry enough, transfer to sterilised, airtight containers for storage. Reconstitute for use when required by soaking overnight.

Alternatively, the pieces can be dried till hard, then ground into a flour. This can be used added to bread and other baking mixes. Store the flour in cool, dry conditions.

'PUMPKIN SEEDS':

The seeds of pumpkins, squash and marrows can be prepared as a snack or protein-rich wholefood. Separate the seeds from the stringy pith, wash them till clean and drain thoroughly. Prewarm your oven to 425° F / 218° C / Gas Mark 7. Pour 1 tablespoonful of vegetable oil into a baking tray, then add a cupful of the seeds and spread them until they are all coated with oil. Roast in the oven, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Season to taste if desired, leave to cool, then store in a sealed container.

Pumpkin varieties such as "Triple Treat" and "Lady Godiva" produce seeds that have no outer skin or hull. These seeds can be washed, drained, and dried in a warm airy place before storing for use in mueslis, snacks and baking, or for sprouting. (9)

In some countries an edible oil is expressed from the seeds of *Cucurbita maxima*.

SEED SAVING:

If more than one cultivar (i.e. named variety) is grown, there may be cross-pollination. Fruit of that season's crop will be normal, but if the seed is saved and planted the following year, hybrid plants will be produced. If fruit develops on these it may be misshapen but still edible. If it is at all bitter it should not be used for culinary purposes. The growing of ornamental and kitchen varieties together should particularly be avoided if the seed is going to be saved for propagation, unless you are careful to avoid cross-pollination.

Cucurbita pepo varieties will all cross with each other, but will not cross with any *Cucurbita maxima* variety. *Cucurbita maxima* varieties will all cross with each other, but will not cross with any *Cucurbita pepo* variety. *Cucurbita moschata* varieties will all cross with each other, and may, though rarely under natural conditions, cross with any *pepo* or *maxima* variety. No *cucurbita* variety will cross with related species, such as cucumbers or melons.

For home seed saving purposes then, self-pollination within each cultivar must be ensured. Even if you are only growing one type, insects may bring in pollen from other gardens or allotments in your locality. The simplest sure method to follow is to slip a small elastic band over the tip of each selected female flower just before it is expected to open for the first time. Leave this in place till the following morning, then fertilise the flower with male pollen from, if possible, another plant of the same cultivar. Experimental crossing within the species can be achieved by this method too, if wished. The best quality seed for propagation will be obtained from fruits that were pollinated in mid-summer.

Once the fruit is fully ripe, the seed can be scooped out, washed, drained and gently dried. Store in paper envelopes, clearly labelled with variety and date, in a cool, dry place.

GOURDS

The bottle gourd (*Lagenaria vulgaris*) is the most commonly available *Lagenaria*. These gourds cannot be expected to fruit well in cool summers or northern regions unless grown in a greenhouse. They are prolific growers, often having to be restricted by stopping or pruning, therefore making ideal screening plants when grown on an arbor or trellis (though, of course, they will be cut back with the arrival of the first frost). Cultivation is otherwise the same as for cucurbits, though *Lagenarias* should always be started under glass and not planted out too early in the season.

The loofah (*Luffa cylindrica*) grows like a trailing marrow. Best results are only obtained in a greenhouse.

The seed for ornamental gourds of various shapes and sizes is often available, usually in packeted mixtures of *Cucurbita* or *Lagenaria* species. The gourds can be grown in moulds or constricted in various ways if special shapes are required.

For use as ornaments or in craft work, gourds must be allowed to ripen fully and harden - do not cut them until the vines have died. Protect the fruits from frost with polythene or cloches if necessary. After cutting, the fruits should be kept in a warm place indoors to cure for a few weeks. Gourds for ornamental use should then be cleaned with a fine vegetable brush and soapy water, then wiped over and set to dry for a few hours. They can then be polished, lacquered or varnished, and should keep for several years.

Hard-shelled gourds for craft use should have the thin layer of skin removed by scalding, scraping and sanding. The shells can then be cleaned out and cut as required to make bowls, bottles, boxes, spoons, ladles, musical instruments, toys, bird-boxes, etc. The finished objects can be carved, stained, painted, decorated with a hot poker, or polished as desired. Inspiration may be found for designs and decorations in ethnic museums and books - gourdcraft has been of practical importance in many native cultures for thousands of years.

Loofahs should also be left on the vine for as long as possible, and completely dry conditions should be maintained once the fruit has stopped growing. When the vine dies, the loofahs can be cut and placed in a hot, dry, airy position - airing cupboard is suitable but somewhere hotter is better. The fruit should be completely dried out after between two and six months.

The part of the loofah used is the internal 'skeleton' of fibrous material. This can be removed from the dried fruit by breaking off the skin and picking out the seeds. The loofah material can then be washed in warm water to clean it. If required

flattened out, it should be clamped between two boards when still wet, then left to dry. Otherwise, just leave to drain after washing until dry.

The material can be used as a natural body brush in the bath or shower, cut into dish scourers for washing up, or in its compressed state to make indoor slipper soles and table mats. Compressed loofah will swell up to its original shape if soaked in water.

Both loofahs and gourd shells will readily accept natural dyes.

SOME CURRENTLY AVAILABLE CULTIVARS OF MARROWS, SQUASH, PUMPKINS & GOURDS:

Marrows: Long Green Trailing, Long White Trailing, Bush White, Custard White. (All varieties of Cucurbita pepo, having long, cylindrical fruits, except Custard White which has round, flattish, scallop-edged fruits.)

Courgettes: Green Bush, Gold Rush (yellow fruits), Zucchini F1, Diamond F1 (green and grey speckled fruits), Tondo Di Nizza (round fruits). (All are Cucurbita pepo and can be left to grow as marrows).

Winter Squash (Cucurbita maxima): Turk's Turban (green/orange trailer), Golden Hubbard, Buttercup (grey-green skin, sweet orange flesh), Bill Skinner's Suffolk Selection (medium size, green or orange skin, orange flesh), Golden Delicious (top shaped, orange skin, yellow flesh).

Butternut (Cucurbita moschata, orange flesh, small seed cavity).

Pumpkins: Mammoth, Hundredweight, Atlantic Giant. (All produce enormous fruits given ideal conditions and treatment, though smaller fruits are more practical!)

Pumpkin Nuts: Triple Treat, Lady Godiva. (Both produce hull-less seeds.)

Vegetable Spaghetti: Sometimes listed as Spaghetti Squash. This is a short-trailing variety of marrow that produces medium-sized, oval, pale green fruits. These fruits can be boiled whole in a large pan, then cut open and the central pith and seeds removed. The flesh can then be scooped out, whereupon it falls into spaghetti-like threads. Served immediately, the 'spaghetti' is sweet and delicious.

Gourds: Loofah (Luffa cylindrica), Bottle Gourd (Lagenaria vulgaris or siceraria), Fig-Leaved Gourd (Cucurbita ficifolia, dark green fruit with white flecks, edible young but usually grown as an ornamental), Ornamental Gourds (mixed varieties of Cucurbita).

SEED SUPPLIERS:

Most seed merchants list several varieties of cucurbit, the above list being just some of the many available through various suppliers. Check in the 'Unusual Vegetables' and 'Ornamental' sections of catalogues too.

The following suppliers are especially recommended:

HERITAGE SEEDS, H.D.R.A. (Sales) Ltd., RYTON ON DUNSMORE, COVENTRY, CV8 3LG.

SUFFOLK HERBS, SAWYERS FARM, LITTLE CORNARD, SUDBURY, SUFFOLK, CO10, ONY.

Send them 6" x 8 1/2" stamped addressed envelopes for catalogues.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

GOURDS, DECORATIVE & EDIBLE, FOR GARDEN, CRAFTWORK & TABLE - John Organ (Faber, 1963).

THE OXFORD BOOK OF FOOD PLANTS - B.E.Nicholson et al (Oxford University Press, 1969).

STOCKING UP - edited by Carol Huppung Stoner (Rodale Press, 1977).

CARROTS LOVE TOMATOES - Louise Riotte (Garden Way, 1975).

(Alan)

B O N V O Y A G E !

Good luck to Pete Davis and Steph Jewell who have now successfully negotiated their move to New Zealand. Old friends and anyone with their eyes set overseas or an interest in New Zealand can contact them in future at:

P.O. BOX 2892, CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND.

P U M P K I N S A G A I N !

A quick afterthought to the article on cucurbits - we're growing 'Triple Treat' pumpkins this year for the hull-less seeds, and we know other VSSN members may be too. If you're trying them too, or if you've grown them in the past, let's compare results at the end of the season to see how successful this protein-provider really is! The seed is available from both HDRA and Suffolk Herbs. Good growing!

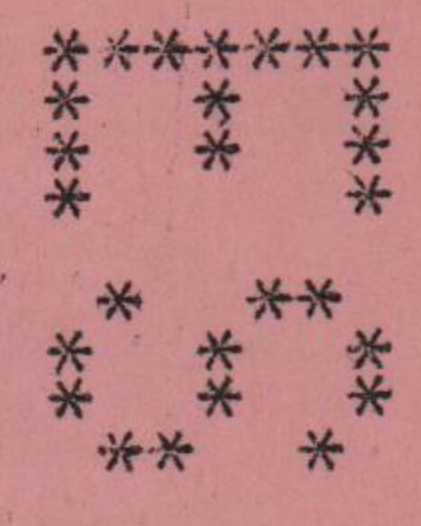
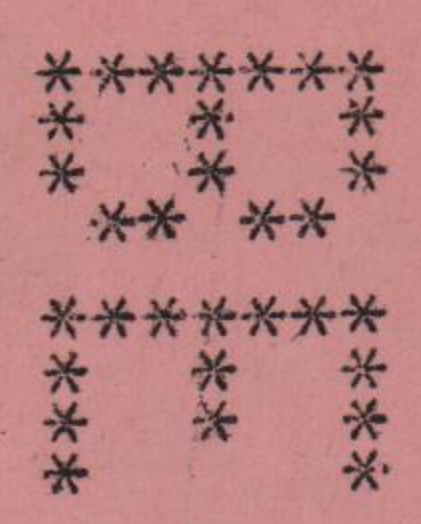
"THEY ARE AS SICK THAT SURFEIT WITH TOO MUCH, AS THEY THAT STARVE WITH NOTHING."

'The Merchant of Venice' - William Shakespeare.

'GROWING VEGANS'
for Young
VSSN members



THESE FLYING VISITORS TO THE GARDEN ARE BOTH VERY HELPFUL TO US, THOUGH IN DIFFERENT WAYS. BEES COLLECT NECTAR AND POLLEN FROM FLOWERS AS FOOD FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR THEIR LARVAE IN THEIR NESTS - THEY



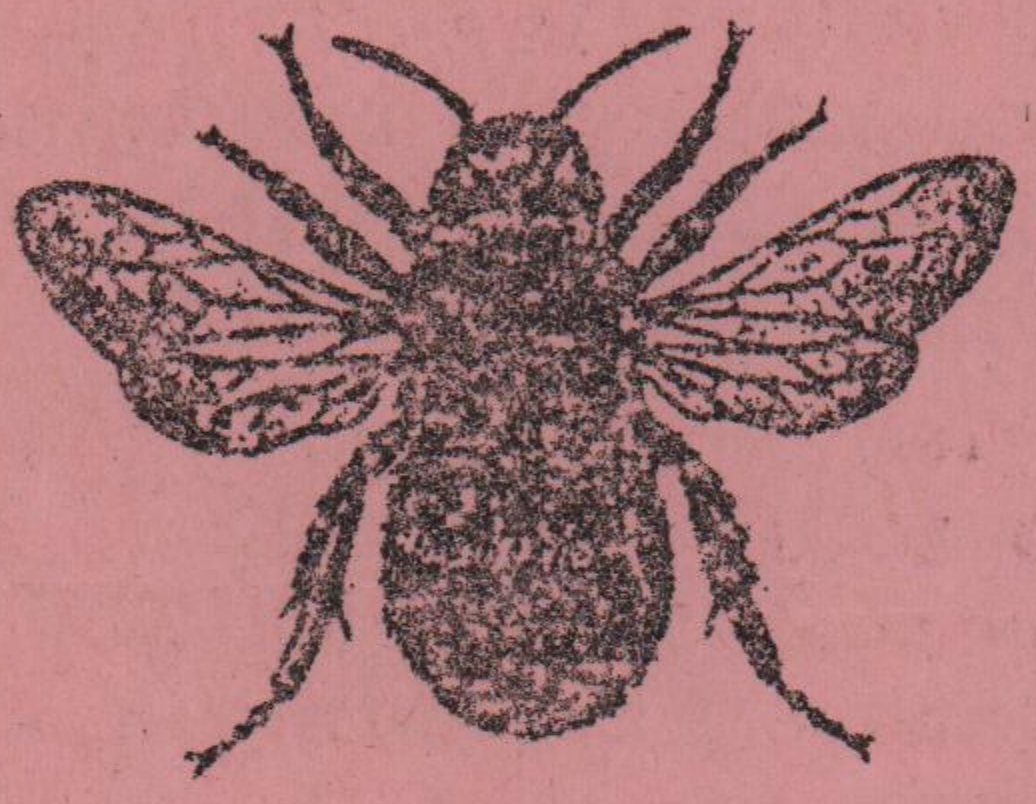
HELP TO POLLINATE THE FLOWERS AT THE SAME TIME: THIS MEANS THAT THE FLOWERS WILL THEN PRODUCE SEEDS OR FRUIT.

WASPS KILL MANY INSECTS THAT GARDENERS FIND TROUBLESOME, THEN TAKE THEM BACK TO THEIR NESTS AS FOOD FOR THEIR LARVAE. IN LATE SUMMER WHEN THERE ARE NO MORE YOUNG TO FEED, THE WASPS' ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO FRUIT AND OTHER SWEET SUBSTANCES FOR THEIR DIET.

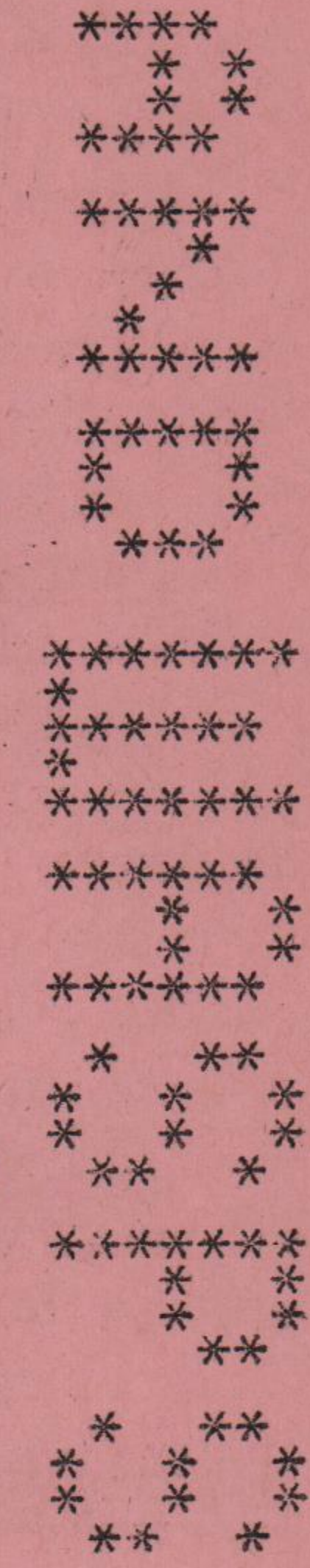
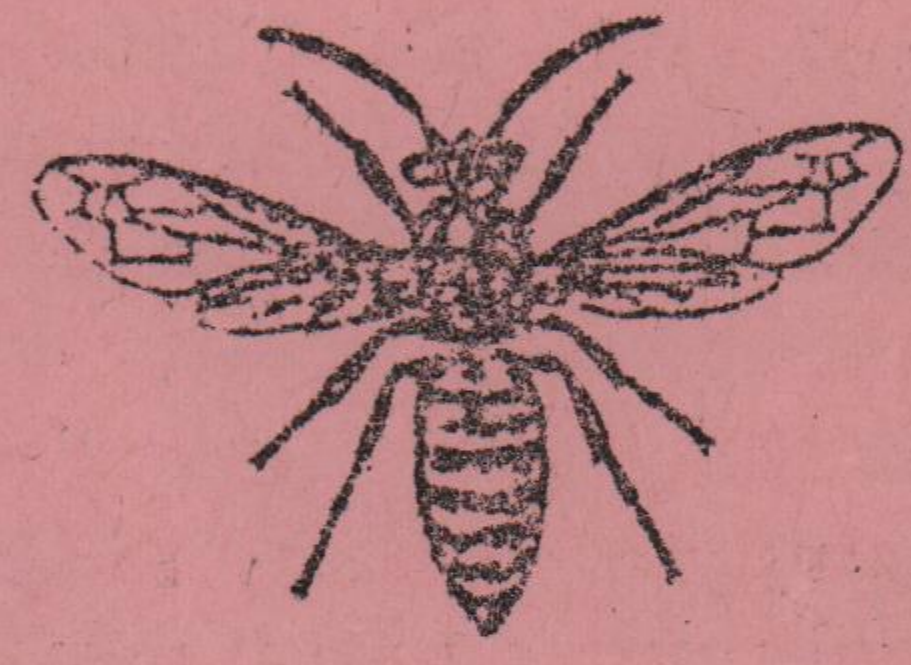
BEES ARE UNLIKELY TO STING UNLESS THEIR NEST IS BEING THREATENED, BUT WASPS MAY STING IF YOU ANNOY THEM. IF ONE BUZZES ROUND YOU OR LANDS ON YOU, STAY CALM AND QUIET AND KEEP STILL - IT WILL SOON FLY AWAY.

THERE'S NO NEED TO KILL THESE INSECTS AT ALL. KEEP FOOD COVERED OR PUT AWAY SO THAT WASPS AREN'T ATTRACTED TO IT.

IF YOU ARE STUNG BY A BEE, DON'T TRY TO SQUEEZE OUT THE STINGER - IT IS BEST TO SCRAPE AT IT WITH THE EDGE OF A KNIFE. A WASP DOESN'T LEAVE ITS STINGER IN AND DOESN'T DIE AFTER STINGING AS A BEE DOES.



STINGS CAN BE SOOTHED WITH A PASTE MADE FROM BICARBONATE OF SODA AND WATER, OR YOU CAN RUB ON THE JUICE OF PLANTAIN, MALLOW OR DOCK LEAVES.



YOU CAN ATTRACT BEES TO YOUR GARDEN WITH FLOWERS AND HERBS SUCH AS ALFALFA, BASIL, BERGAMOT, BORAGE, BUCKWHEAT, CLOVER, COMFREY, HYSSOP, LAVENDER, LEMON BALM, MINT, OREGANO, ROSEMARY, SAGE, SUNFLOWER AND THYME.

NEWSLETTER SUPPLEMENTS

VEGAN VOLUNTEERS: A new copy of the 'Guidance Notes for Hosts and Volunteers' is enclosed with this Newsletter. This is an updated version of the previous sheet that was supplied to you when you subscribed to VSSN. A few brief notes on safety have been included, and a cut-off form for use by any members who might wish to be included on the list of Hosts.

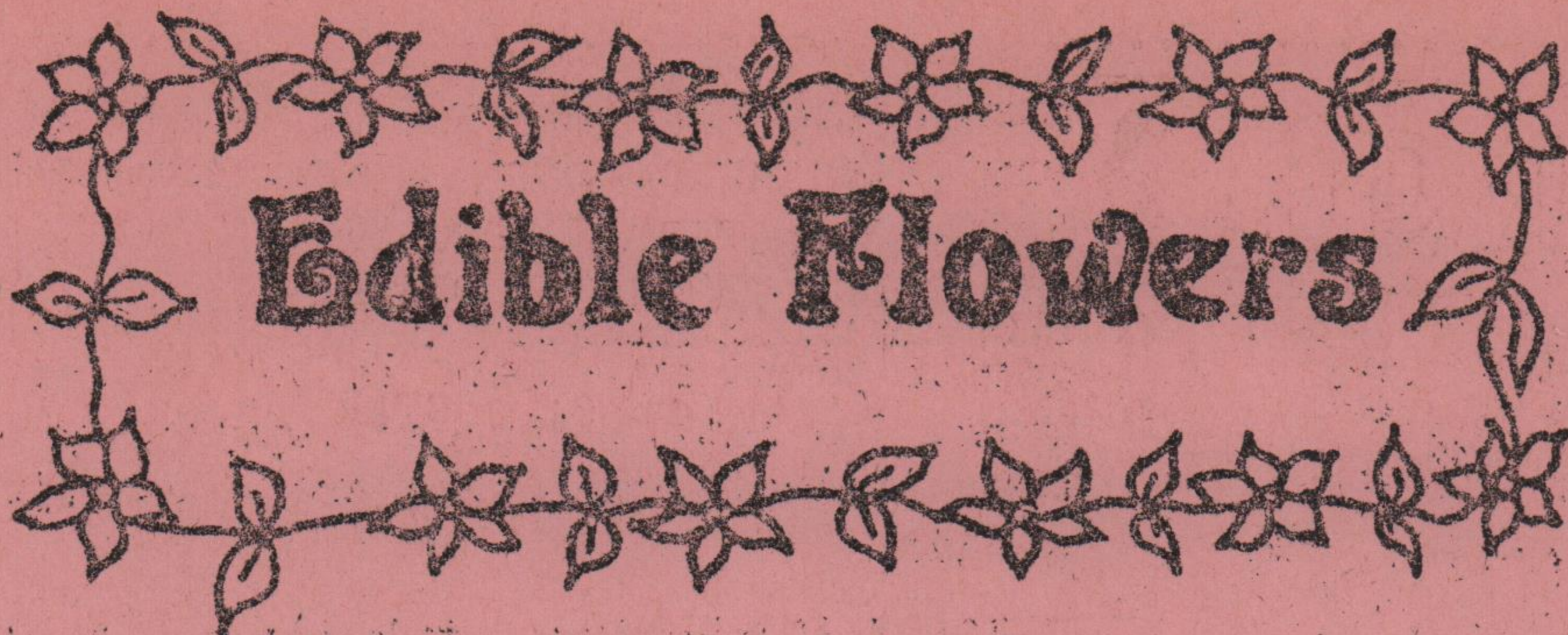
The list of Hosts dated December 1985 remains effective for the spring quarter, there being no additions or deletions.

CONTACT LIST: A second supplementary sheet to the current Contact List is enclosed with this Newsletter. Please note the deletion mentioned at the top of the supplement and the change of address that was just received in time to be squeezed in at the bottom!

RECOMMENDED READING LIST: At last we have got round to updating and reprinting the Reading List! We have thinned out the old list a little and added a few new books - our intention being to restrict the list to books that are especially useful, rather than end up with an unwieldy and confusing stack of paper recommending virtually every organic gardening and alternative technology book under the sun!

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

COULD WE REMIND MEMBERS TO LET US KNOW IF AND WHEN THEY CHANGE THEIR ADDRESSES - DON'T JUST DEPEND ON US HAPPENING TO NOTICE A DIFFERENT ADDRESS AT THE TOP OF YOUR LETTERS AND REALISING THAT IT DOESN'T TALLY WITH THE ONE ON OUR FILES - THANKS!!!



Edible Flowers

The history of eating certain flowers is ancient. Roman cookery incorporated roses, mallow flowers and violets into recipes. Flowers have found their way into items as diverse as sweet sauces, tarts, preserves, pickles, fritters and salads (making them more interesting than their modern day counterparts of tomato, lettuce and cucumber. Beautiful dishes, such as the salmagundies of the 16th century, included salad vegetables, herbs and flowers made into attractive and decorative centrepieces). A soup made from carnations was apparently an old remedy for depression, whilst Chinese cookery still uses chrysanthemums, jasmine flowers and lily buds.

Many of the flowers used liberally in historic recipes are rapidly disappearing from their wild habitats, but increasingly seed companies are including wild plants in their catalogues, and it is possible for them to be grown in amongst the fruit, vegetables and herbs of the food garden. Some varieties are also suitable for cultivation in window boxes and pots.

Some flowers have a very characteristic flavour, whilst others simply add colour to a dish. Smaller, more delicate flowers can be used whole, whilst larger varieties should be separated into petals. All green parts, stems and leaves should be removed, as well as any white 'heels' on petals as these have a tendency to be bitter.

There are a few general rules to be followed when collecting flowers for culinary purposes. Wild flowers should only be picked if they are really plentiful, and wild plants should never be uprooted. Never gather plants from road side sites where they may have been contaminated by exhaust fumes. Also avoid areas where there is any possibility of poisons having been sprayed.

The best time to gather the flowers is early in the day when the dew has just dried. Flowers should be handled very gently as they bruise easily and this ruins their appearance. Shake the blooms gently to remove all insects. The flowers should be placed one layer deep in the bottom of a basket. Wash them gently and pat dry - they can be stored for a few hours in a polythene bag in the refrigerator.

By far the best use for edible flowers is in salads. They can be used in their natural state with their colours at their most vibrant and beautiful. The following varieties are particularly suitable:

POT MARIGOLD (*Calendula officinalis*): Popular annual variety in beautiful shades of yellow and orange - an attractive addition to salads, with quite a definite flavour.

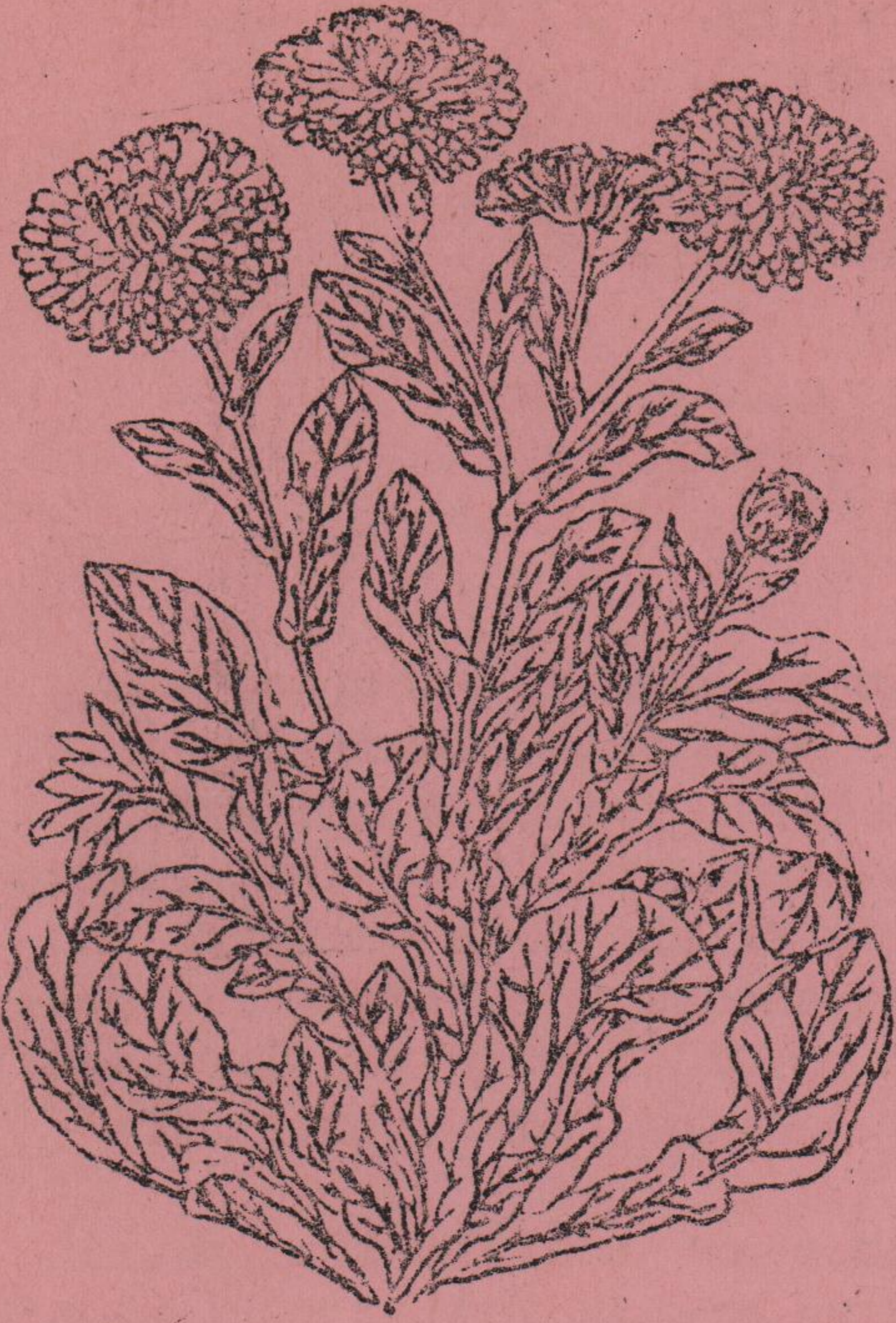
NASTURTIUM (*Tropaeolum majus*): A very useful annual plant available in many varieties with red, yellow and orange flowers, and some also with variegated leaves. Nasturtiums are a particularly worthwhile addition to the food garden because the leaves and seeds can be used in salads as well as the flowers.

BORAGE (*Borago officinalis*): The beautiful blue flowers of this annual herb have a sweet flavour. It is a good idea to sprinkle them over a salad rather than lose them by mixing in.

DAISY (*Bellis perennis*): A perennial wild flower, commonly found in garden lawns. Larger, cultivated varieties are also available. Smaller flowers can be used whole, while larger blooms should be separated into petals and sprinkled into salads. Daisies should be picked literally just before they are to be used, or the petals will close.

GERANIUMS (*Pelargonium* spp.): A common perennial houseplant available in a wide range of colours, ranging from whites and delicate pinks to vibrant reds and purples. Some varieties have scented leaves which can also be used in salads.

ROSE (*Rosa* spp.): Any type of rose is suitable for use in a salad, although the (13)



P O T M A R I G O L D

more delicately scented or unusually coloured varieties would prove a more interesting ingredient.

PANSY (*Viola wittrockiana*): A common perennial garden plant available in an amazing range of colours. The little 'faces' especially of the smaller, more delicate varieties are a beautiful addition to salads.

CHICORY (*Cichorium intybus*): Any varieties of this perennial, whether wild or cultivated, will produce blue or pink flowers if allowed to run to seed. The flowers have a slightly bitter taste, almost like coffee. They should be picked just before use.

LAVENDER (*Lavendula* spp.): A popular plant in many gardens. The blooms have a strong flavour, but can be an interesting addition to a salad if they are finely chopped and added sparingly.

ELDER FLOWERS (*Sambucus nigra*): Richard Mabey recommends that the creamy blossoms of elder can be munched straight off the branch on a hot day - but beware of insects! The flowers can provide a delicately flavoured addition if a few are sprinkled

over a salad. Try to avoid washing them as the fragrance is easily lost.

PRIMROSE (*Frimula vulgaris*): This beautiful perennial, known to everyone, is becoming increasingly rare in the wild but can be cultivated in the garden. The delicate yellow flowers can be used whole in salads.

COWSLIP (*Primula veris*): As with primroses, cowslips are becoming quite rare in natural habitats but can also be cultivated as a garden perennial. Use the flowers whole in salads.

VIOLET (*Viola odorata*): The small and beautiful blooms of violets have a delicate flavour and should be used whole in salads. Suzanne Beedell, in her book "Pick, Cook & Brew", includes the following recipe for a 'Violet Salad':

Violet leaves and flowers	Vegetable oil
Celery	Seasoning
Endive	Wine vinegar or lemon juice*
Parsley	

Mix all the ingredients together well.

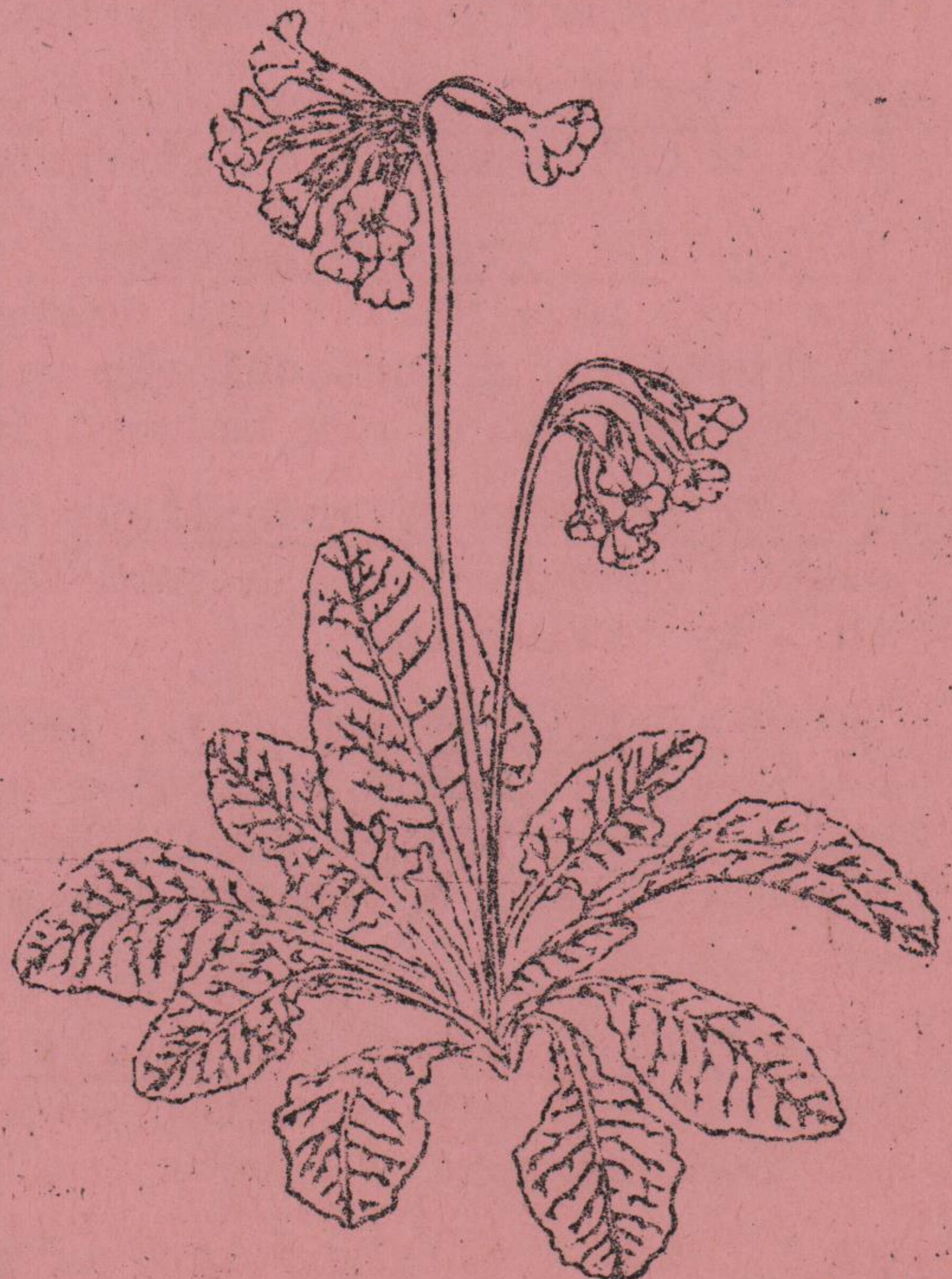
Try this recipe for a purslane and flower salad from Joy Larkcom's book "The Salad Garden" to whet your appetite:

"Arrange young purslane in a flattish bowl and add some chicory, nasturtium and bergamot flowers and a few rose petals. Sprinkle with chives, marjoram and green and purple basil, and decorate with a few sprigs of redcurrants. Splash with a light vinaigrette, made with walnut oil rather than olive oil, just before serving."

Another interesting use of flowers is as fritters. Lilac flowers, fruit blossoms, elder flowers and the flowers of marrows and squashes can be dipped in a batter and deep fried. Marrow flowers can be removed from the plant once the fruit has started to form. The large yellow blooms can be filled with a mixture of chopped fried onion, wholemeal breadcrumbs, fresh chopped parsley, and grated lemon zest* before dipping into the batter. Claire Clifton gives the following recipe for a suitable batter in her book "Edible Flowers":

1 teacup flour; 3 tbsp light vegetable oil; approx. 1 teacup cold water.

C O W S L I P



Put the flour into a mixing bowl and add the oil gradually, stirring to blend. Slowly add the water, stirring constantly until the mixture is the consistency of a thin cream.

The flowers should be quickly dipped into the batter and coated completely. They should then be quickly fried in hot oil, drained, and served immediately.

Certain flowers can be used to flavour vinegars, which will make an interesting ingredient of a salad dressing. Primroses, roses, violets, elder flowers, nasturtiums, lavender, rosemary and thyme flowers can all be used to flavour white wine vinegar or cider vinegar. Large flowers should be placed into a wide-necked jar until it is two-thirds full; it can then be topped up with vinegar. Smaller flowers such as lavender can be poked into bottles of vinegar. The final flavour of the flower vinegar will be best if the bottles are left to steep in the sunshine. The flavour of the flowers should be imparted into the vinegar after two weeks.

Some flowers can be used to flavour fruit during cooking. Primroses impart a delicate flavour when incorporated into apple pies in liberal quantities. If elder flowers are added to gooseberries during cooking, at the rate of four umbels (clusters) per pound of fruit, the gooseberries take on a flavour similar to that of muscatel grapes (the flowers should be removed after cooking). Meadowsweet is said to sweeten apples and rhubarb if added during cooking. Four heads of flowers should be added per pound of fruit, and removed after cooking. Removal is made easier if the flowers are added in a muslin bag.

There are many other uses for flowers in cooking, including preserves and syrups, crystallised blooms, water ices, sweet sauces and deserts, in sandwiches and flans, and of course in tisanes.

Many of the seeds for plants mentioned here are available from: SUFFOLK HERBS, Sawyers Farm, Little Cornard, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 0NY. Send them a 6" x 8½" s.a.e. for their catalogue.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

PICK, COOK & BREW - Suzanne Beedell, Mayflower Books (1973).

EDIBLE FLOWERS - Claire Clifton, Bodley Head (1983).

THE SALAD GARDEN - Joy Larkcom, Windward (1984).

ALL GOOD THINGS AROUND US - Pamela Michael, Ernest Benn (1980).

*Note: Instructions for growing lemons in temperate regions can be found in VSSN Newsletter No.3 or the "Growing Unusual Fruit" information sheet.

(Elaine)

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T S

ACCOMMODATION WANTED: After various delays, my property will be subject to compulsory purchase - probably in about 6 months. I hope to be in a position to look for accommodation fairly soon: anything, dry and cheap, with vegan growers? Preferably with off road parking for light van and trailer, not too far away from a library, and non-smoking please. Contact: ROD SINGLETON (address below).

MAPS ON OFFER: I have some maps which I hope will be of interest to readers:

Bartholemews ½", of Scotland - No.59 (Dornoch Firth), No.51 (Grampians), No.48 (Perthshire). (These, with No.55 (Moray Firth) added would form a set of N. - S.)

Ordnance Survey 1", of Wales - No.117 (Bala and Welshpool), No.118 (Shrewsbury, cloth).

All the maps are some years old but are in good condition. Worthwhile offers please in line with today's prices and postage. Thanks. ROD SINGLETON, 59 PAXTON STREET, ACCRINGTON, LANCS., BB5 1QQ.

FOR SALE IN LLANGOLLEN, NORTH WALES: Large, late-Georgian house with many period features and frontage to A5 road. Suitable for B&B, shop or office premises, etc. An additional plot of land and/or commodious outbuildings may be purchased in addition if required. Please telephone: Llangollen 860010 or Chirk 773252.

DURING this summer I will be hitch-hiking in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and in the autumn I was thinking of working as an au-pair, preferably in Ireland but Great Britain is OK too. I'm 21, male, pacifist and vegetarian (almost vegan). I'd be pleased to make contact with anyone who can help me get a vegan au-pair place. Please write to: STEFAN JOHANSSON, Mejramvägen 66 nb, S-702 18 ÖREBRO, Sweden. (I will be off at the end of May.)

COME TO CORNWALL!

There are no plans for a national VSSN get-together this year, but Network members are especially recommended to participate in the MOVEMENT FOR COMPASSIONATE LIVING's spring gathering in Cornwall, which will be held at the WELL BEING CENTRE, CHURCHTOWN, ILLOGAN, REDRUTH from April 18th to 20th. The weekend will be informal, with group discussions and a range of activities covering both practical and leisure interests. The cost for the weekend, including vegan meals, will be £15.

For further information and booking forms, please send s.a.e., as soon as possible, to KATHLEEN JANNAWAY, M.C.L., 47 HIGHLANDS ROAD, LEATHERHEAD, SURREY, KT22 8NQ.

We'll be there with the VSSN stall and display, and we'll be looking forward to seeing you!

You might also like to know that the M.C.L. have now produced a recipe booklet - "NEW WHOLE WAYS" - which comprises 'imaginative, whole food vegan recipes using only ingredients that could be home-grown'. Price is 60p + 15p p+p.

M.C.L.'s booklet "SUSTAINING & SUSTAINABLE" is also highly recommended. This outlines the case for simple vegan living, with nutritional information, menus and simple recipes. Price is 50p + 15p p+p.

Both of the above booklets are available from Kathleen (address above).

COPY DATE FOR THE SUMMER NEWSLETTER IS 21st APRIL though small items may be acceptable up to the first week of May. Newsletter due out first week of June.

Letters, contributions, adverts (free to members), news, reports, articles, and anything else of a relevant nature always welcome for inclusion in the Newsletter - but please indicate on your correspondence whether or not it is intended for publication, and write as clearly as possible - this will help us greatly - THANKS!

BACK-ISSUES OF THE V.S.S.N. NEWSLETTER:

No.12 (Raised Bed Gardening/Tree Surgery). No.13 (Agroforestry/Insect-Detering Companion Plants/Coffee Substitutes). No.14 (Growing Food Without A Garden/Wheat, Rye, Barley & Oats). No.15 (Gardening With Children/Self-Sufficient Contraception/Misc. Reports). No.16 (Edible Fungi/The Deer & Squirrel Problem/Feeding The World). No.17 (Wholesome Food/The Onion Family/Green Manuring). No.18 (Why Vegan Self-Sufficiency/Recycling/Summer-Sown Salad Crops). No.19 (V.S.S.N. Gathering Report/Franck System Review/Misc. Reports). No.20 (Energy Saving/Leaves & Leafmould/Field Beans/Misc. Reports).

BACK-ISSUES 12 - 14, 30p each; 15 - 20, 35p each.

INFORMATION SHEETS - reproduced from articles in earlier Newsletters:

Food Additives: Are They Safe?, 5p. Growing Gluten-Free Grains (photocopy), 16p. Growing Nuts, 5p. Growing Unusual Fruits, 15p. Home Production of Linen, 10p. Natural Tooth Care, 5p. Seaweed and Its Use in Gardening, 10p. Seed Saving, 10p. Slugs & Snails, 5p. Soap & Soapmaking, 5p.

BOOKLETS:

"FIRST HAND - FIRST RATE" (Recipes & self-sufficiency hints) 65p.
"SAVE YOUR OWN SEED" (HDRA booklet) 50p.
"RAISED BED GARDENING" (HDRA booklet) 60p.
"DIG FOR SURVIVAL" (HDRA leaflet/chart) 10p.

(A contribution towards postage costs would be appreciated with orders for back-issues, information sheets and booklets. Thanks!)

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

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