



Monday 2nd September 2019

Dear Customer,

It's meteorological autumn now. We know that because Strictly is starting, that countdown to Christmas calendar, and it's not nice. Especially following a summerless summer. Partial sun was forecast for today, Sunday. It didn't look too bad on the BBC website, but what they didn't show was the bitter Arctic wind. I took Lainey up on the moors. It was 11C. I should have been born in a Jane Austen novel. The sight of the leaves of the horse chestnut tree on Richmond Green turning before August is out, fill me with dread and faiblesse. In 1790 I would have taken to my bed until spring. In those days there really would have been no point getting up..... just to do a bit of embroidery. I think life downstairs would have been far more wholesome.

Today we have to get up, we have to keep the country running while our MPs combust. What will happen this week, heaven only knows. An election surely. Autumn 2019, not for the faint-hearted.

We have the first variety of English apples in the bags this week, Discovery apples from Kent. In the early 90's Paul and Sara Ward purchased their current home which included 4½ acres of mature, neglected Conference pear trees as well as wild-flower meadows. This awakened their interest in fruit farming and in 1994 they decided it was time for a career change and they purchased an existing fruit farm, 100 acres across 5 sites in Cranbrook, Watlington, Marden, Goudhurst and Chart Sutton. They then proceeded to convert the orchards to organic standards.

Conservation and bio-diversity are essential tools in organic production and many areas around the farm are managed exclusively for wildlife, flora and fauna, to sustain and encourage beneficial insects and protect an ever-diminishing variety of wildlife habitats. Seaweed extracts are used to improve leaf and soil quality, and soap solutions for the control of aphids and other damaging insects. Soil fertility has been maintained using clover grass leys, mowing, and mulching with cuttings. We will have a seamless flow through of their many English apple varieties over the coming months.

Conventional apples are sprayed up to 40 times in their growing season with pesticides, fungicides, and even chemicals to help them stick in the trees while they ripen. Hard to imagine even stepping foot in such a noxious orchard.

Our delicious Victoria plums are from Pardoe's organic orchard near Ledbury in Herefordshire.

And here are a few tasty recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

Red Pepper, Kale and Lemon Soup

150g kale	1 onion, finely sliced
1 red pepper, finely sliced	oil
salt and pepper	3 cloves garlic
2 tomatoes	pinch chilli flakes
500ml boiling water	1 lemon, juice and zest

Strip the kale leaves from the stalks and set aside the stalks for juicing or another recipe. Finely chop the leaves and set aside. Heat a large saucepan and add a touch of oil. Add the onion and pepper and some salt and pepper. Peel and thinly slice the garlic. Dice the tomatoes and add both to the saucepan with the chilli flakes. Let it cook until the tomatoes break down to a paste. Add the kale then pour in the boiling water and bring to the boil then reduce the heat and cook for 5-10 minutes. Add the lemon zest and a good squeeze of juice. Taste and teak the seasoning as needed. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil.

Kale with Chilli and Garlic

1 bunch kale	3 tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed	½ - 1 red chilli, roughly sliced

Strip the leaves from any tough stems and wash and finely shred the leaves. Steam them or cook in lightly salted boiling water for 5-7 minutes until just tender. Drain but reserve a few tablespoons of cooking water. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and when hot add the garlic, chilli and some salt and pepper. Fry for a few minutes until they soften. Add the cooked kale and fry for a further 5 minutes stirring constantly. If necessary, add a little cooking water to stop it sticking.

Golden Beetroot, Lentil and Hazelnut Salad and Ginger Dressing

250g Puy lentils	625ml water
400g beetroot, cooked, cut in small cubes	2 tbsp hazelnuts, roughly chopped
handful mint, roughly chopped	handful parsley, roughly chopped

Ginger Dressing:

2cm piece fresh ginger, chopped	1 tsp Dijon mustard
6 tbsp olive oil	1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

Boil the lentils in the water for 20 minutes or until all the water has evaporated and the lentils are cooked, but with some bite. Transfer the lentils to a large bowl and leave to cool. Once cool add the beetroot, hazelnuts and herbs then stir to combine. To make the dressing put the ginger, mustard, oil and vinegar in a bowl and whizz. Season, then drizzle over the salad.

If you're just back from your holidays, welcome back, and I hope you had a lovely summer. And if you're just setting off, and leaving this discombobulated country, make sure you're back in before lockdown.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel