

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013**

Dear Customer,

Things are stressful at Jonnie Watson's farm in Tadcaster today. His combine harvester broke down last night and his drier which isn't good news. If you live in the countryside you will be aware of the mad, frantic harvesting and the slow farm machinery on the roads. One wonders how they managed to harvest anything last year when it never stopped raining. This year there have been a great number of enormous caterpillars eating Jonnie's foliage leading to a massive hatching of butterflies. Although there are some permitted organic sprays, he doesn't use anything and waits for them to metamorphose and fly away. Actually, he did tell me that he took 150 kilo batch of broccoli and submerged in water to try and drown them recently but I said I wouldn't be telling you that else you'd think he was a psychopath. In a recent butterfly survey he had 6 types of butterfly on his land and the neighbouring farm, a conventional farm, only had one – the white butterfly – which must be hardy and resistant to pesticides. We have his Ambo potatoes and Romanesco cauliflowers in the bags this week. We also have parsnips making their first appearance, which along with the X Factor, signals that autumn is looming.

Here are a few recipes you could try with this week's bag contents:

**Romanesco Cauliflower Pasta**

1 Romanesco cauliflower, cut in small florets including thin slices of stalk  
4 tbsp olive oil  
1 red chilli, deseeded and sliced  
50g sultanas  
juice of ½ lemon  
handful grated Parmesan (optional)

360g fusilli pasta, or other  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
100g pine nuts, toasted  
zest of 1 lemon  
handful chopped parsley

*In a pan of boiling salted water, cook the Romanesco for 2-3 minutes, then drain and refresh in a bowl of cold water to stop further cooking. Drain again and put to one side. In another pan of boiling water cook the pasta according to packet instructions. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large frying pan. Add the cauliflower and fry for a couple of minutes until just starting to turn a golden colour. Add the garlic and chilli and cook for a couple of minutes more. Add the pine nuts, sultanas, drained cooked pasta, lemon juice and zest and parsley. Toss together to combine then transfer to serving bowls and serve drizzled with a little extra olive oil and grated Parmesan if using.*

**Peach, French-bean, Tomato and Almond Salad**

30g (1¼oz) blanched almonds  
1 clove garlic, chopped  
3 perfectly ripe, sweet peaches, halved and cut into slices about ½cm thick  
1 tbsp white balsamic vinegar  
4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

zest of 1 lemon  
leaves from 4 sprigs mint  
100g (3½oz) cherry tomatoes, halved  
200g (7oz) french beans, topped but not tailed

*Steam or boil the beans until cooked but still al dente. Rinse in cold water and set aside (I like to serve this dish while the beans are still warm).*

*Toast the almonds in a dry frying-pan until golden. Tip on to a chopping-board to cool. Add the lemon zest and garlic to the board and chop the whole lot. Tear the mint and put it in a mortar with the almond mixture. Give this a couple of bashes to meld the flavours. Arrange the peaches with the tomatoes and beans on a platter or individual plates, sprinkle with the balsamic vinegar and olive oil and season. Scatter the almond mixture on top and serve.*

**Roasted Rhubarb**

1 lb/ 450g rhubarb  
3 tbsp orange juice

2 tbsp soft, brown sugar  
preheat the oven to 350°F/175°C/Gas 4

*Cut the rhubarb into 1"/3cm pieces. Place the rhubarb into an ovenproof dish. Sprinkle over the sugar and the orange juice. Loosely cover the dish with tin foil, a lid or simply a roasting tray. Bake in the preheated oven for approx 20 minutes or until the rhubarb is cooked through but not falling apart.*

I think we are having an Indian summer ! Talking to my neighbour the other day over the garden fence, I was very relieved when she told me she'd been eaten alive, bitten all over, and in places never exposed. She was very relieved when I told her I had been too. I told her I'd been thinking I had fleas. She told me she thought she had bed bugs. We decided it must be midges or mosquitoes but how, where, when....it was a mystery. I went off to get back to my chores and started contemplating whether I had bed bugs. Every day without fail, new bites.

Are you all back from your travels ? I hope you had a lovely time wherever you went. I get very envious of you galavanting round the world. Envious because I can't bring myself to fly. I haven't flown for 10 years and it makes the world microscopically small. It wasn't even for a good reason. It was because of a horrible attack of palpitations in a long queue in Dinard airport. That was all. And I think the palpitations came about by the person I was staying with doing all the driving, and the airport queue was the last straw. Of course, the longer you leave it, the harder it becomes. I keep trying to persuade myself to take a little flight from a little airport, then persuade myself out of it again by not wanting to leave Myfa.

Coco is at the vets having his operation this morning so I'm praying he will be ok with the anaesthetic.

I hope all is well with you,

Kind wishes,

Isobel