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## CORONA-YOUR-OWN

Helping you to get organic growing despite the disruption  
**e-Newsletter 17      28 August 2020**

### Welcome

Not quite Hurricane Laura strength, but Tuesday found me trying to anchor my climbing bean canes to a fence post and washing line. The sweetcorn plants in front of them ended up at an angle of almost 45 degrees. So far this year has seen excess winter rainfall, drought, record high temperatures and sunshine, and unseasonal gales – challenging growing conditions for any gardener. There are several recipes this week for fruit and veg which have managed to come through the challenges.

### Shading for plants – little tents or veg gazebos from Gillie

Leafy green veg (lettuce, spinach and brassicas) don't like the fierce sun and intense heat of our summers – they just wilt, bolt and die. For the past 3 years, I've been shading the veg boxes with little tents made of tarpaulin and secured over the boxes with string and tent pegs. The boxes already have stakes and netting, so these tents rest on top. Uprturned carrier bags work well on the chicken wire cages, giving shade and also leaving the bottom part free to let air in. The plants have given a very positive feedback! And produced lovely crops. It's worth the effort – just remove them for watering or when rain is forecast. Happy gardening.

### Keeping cats at bay from Gillie

I have found that adding garlic skins to tea dregs and putting them round the garden works well, as cats don't like the smell of garlic (it works out cheaper than ready made granules from Wilko).

### Reflections on the growing year from Gillie

This year has been a wonderful bumper crop year of fruit and veg. The organic spuds from Potato Day, now all dug up, produced several pounds of totally blight and damage free salad spuds, although Maris Bard produced less than Colleen and Casablanca. It has totally been worth all the effort and TLC put into the garden, and the hours spent talking to my plants that have paid off. Nurturing plants is vital, I think – they grow much better if they know they are loved and cared for!!

### Updates on some of the unusual veg from Gillian

**Minutina/buck's horn plaintain:** hated the heat and sunshine and promptly wilted, despite my best efforts to provide some shade. I know it likes cooler conditions and will survive a mild winter, so I let it flower in the hope that it will self seed. Just cut all the flowering stems off and the foliage is looking good, appreciating the cooler temperatures and rain.

**Tomatilloes:** Harvested the first few and added them to a mixed veg soup. I normally use them raw for salsas – taste is tart, like a limey tomato.



**Texsel greens/garlic kale:** bolted, too hot and too dry.

**Tromba d'Albenga:** have an enormous plant on the allotment, with several very large fruit, maturing into squash.

**Salsola/agretti:** growing strongly, but doesn't have the strongly salty taste I remember from growing it many years back. It looks like it might be about to flower, so will move the plants in a container into the greenhouse to see if they do flower and produce seed.

## COOK-YOUR-OWN

Several useful seasonal recipes detailed on the Resources page of the website

<https://rps.gn.apc.org/organic/resources.htm>

**Seaweed greens** from Gillie

A recipe good for using up the outer leaves of brassicas.

**Courgette recipes** from Karen

Prior to our week in Pembrokeshire, I picked every last tiny courgette...one week later I have 5 "Super-courgettes" to get rid of. Two of my solutions are glut soup and courgette bread – full details see the Resources page at <http://www.heog.org.uk/>.



**Spiced plum and ginger chutney** from Gillian

I've previously made this with yellow Warwickshire Drooper plums, but I no longer have that allotment. This year I made it with purple skinned plums from next door's tree overhanging my garden. It came out a lovely ruby red colour. It also make a good stir fry sauce.

**Too many tomatoes?** Roast, puree and freeze.

## POSTSCRIPT

Feedback from our readers is important, so if you have ideas, news or tips you would like to share, please let us know.

If you have any questions related to organic growing which you think our members might be able to answer, let us know and we will try to include the questions and replies in our newsletters.

You can contact us at [enews@heog.org.uk](mailto:enews@heog.org.uk).

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