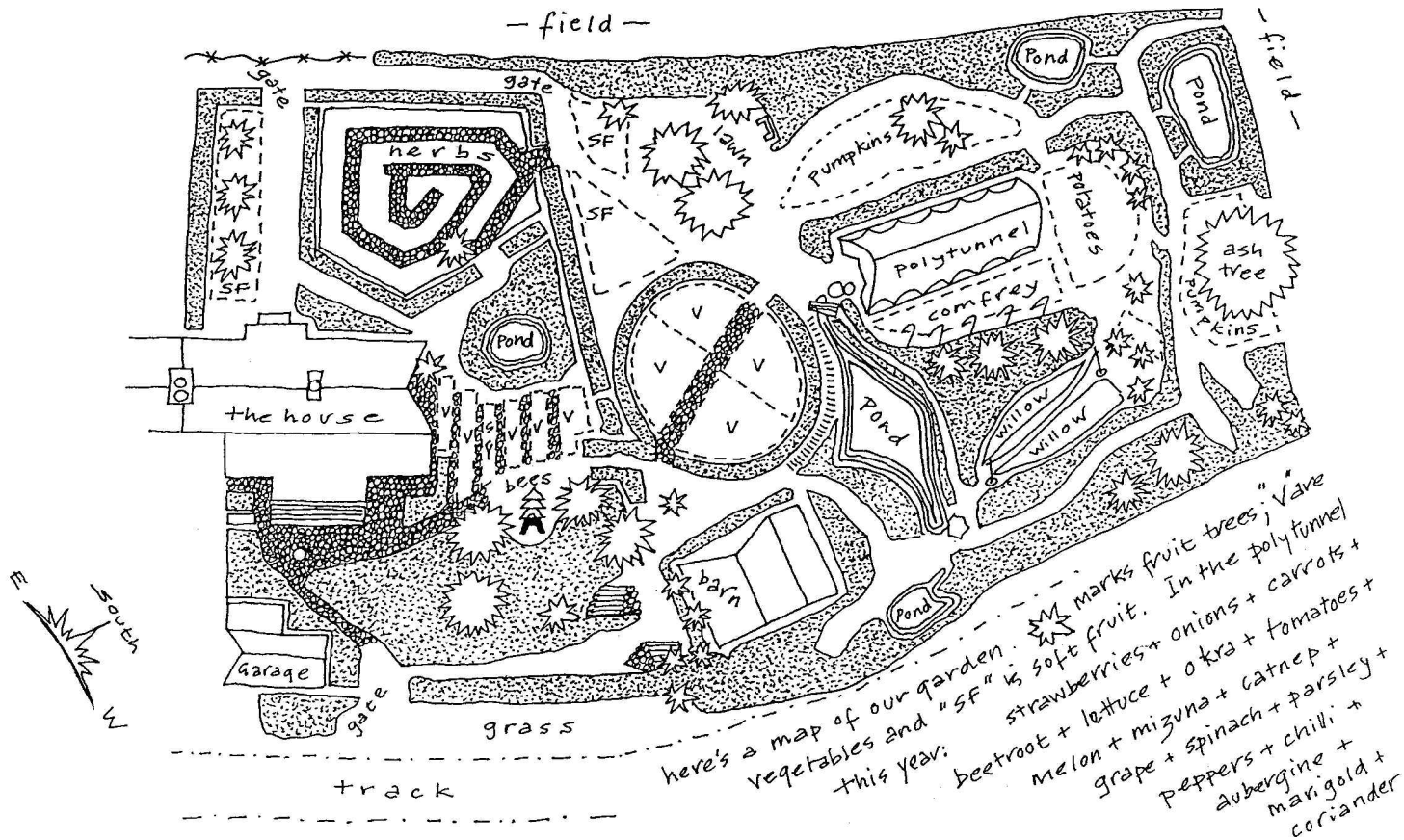




THE GOOD LIFE

MIDSUMMER COTTAGE





MANY THANKS for parting with 'real' money in return for this booklet, and all without having the slightest clue of what's contained within. Don't worry, you've made a wise investment. On these pages you'll find tips and inspiration which will pay you back many times over. Who knows it may even change your life. This is what this booklet is all about.

Briefly, it contains a map of the garden for those who don't know the myriad disguises weeds can adopt; there's a plug for the house, which is for sale; some stuff about alternative energy; and loads of info about how to create an organic garden so you can grow your

own healthy food.

You've been round our garden by now and you may be scratching your head and asking "what are they trying to achieve?" It doesn't readily fit into anything conventional, let alone anything like you'd see on GARDENERS WORLD.

Though Bob Flowerdew would probably like it.

Well it is an organic garden, just like Bob's. Which to the uninitiated means very basically we don't use any chemicals, so everything has to be done differently to achieve the same result. But ah ha, it is also a magic garden, oh yes, and to us it represents something far bigger than just a green-fingered hobby.

You know how you go through life asking yourself, what's it all about? Well this garden has given us an answer. Before we came here we had our heads

down just like everyone else to make a good salary, holidays, car..... You worked hard during the week and spent out with a fury at the weekends. That was until five years ago when I was simultaneously made redundant, for the second time, and we bought the much larger part of this garden. It couldn't have been a worse moment. Yet it was to be the garden that would solve our financial problems. It was the garden that showed us the path to an alternative we had never previously had dreamt of.

Because of our reduced circumstances we began to grow our own food, and because we were already vegetarians our compassionate stand meant we should do it without chemicals. Anyway they cost money. We also became "scrimpers": finding alternative ways of doing things by recycling rather buying new. Unfortunately both are rather addictive and we've now become obsessed by all things 'alternative', including considering how to generate our own electricity and hopefully, one day, building our own home.

It was whilst we struggled to tame the new vast garden and give it some meaning that we came to realise that, given enough land, it should be more than possible to grow a fair proportion of what we've been spending a large part of our salaries and precious time working for. Even better, eventually we could do it without the huge unnecessary 'extras' like tax, NI and VAT, without all the expenses of going to work, and without the hassle of shopping. Plus we would enjoy the taste of our labours and know exactly what had gone into it all.

Our relationship with this garden has now reached a point where there is more cultivated than weed-infested and it's not really big enough for the ultimate challenge, full self-sufficiency along with animals and generating power, plus land to build a house. We want somewhere to have a go, put down roots, and watch the trees grow. So Midsummer Cottage is for sale and we're looking for the right gardener/owner to take it on. If you feel you might be interested, and would like a personal guided tour, just give us a ring or call in anytime (01845 501443 there's always someone in). Who knows, it could work its magic on you too.



~ maple leaf

The following booklet is a precis of things we've discovered, so if you fancy a go perhaps it'll be a little bit easier. Good luck!

Phil & Maureen Rooksby
1996

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@ introduction

I THINK the world must be divided into those who worry about everything and those that just go with the flow. I'm definitely the former. From waking up in the morning until my head hits the pillow again I carry around both a sensitivity to things having to be just right plus a huge mental list of tasks that need doing. I thought I was cured when I stopped writing lists!

Such an outlook means anything can get you down if you let it, from a tiny scratch right up to the hole in the ozone layer. The only way out is to have a go at creating solutions. This booklet is one of them.

Self-sufficiency we believe is a first big step towards finding something meaningful and fulfilling to answer that big question: 'why are we here?'.

@ energy for free

+ solar

even in the depths of winter there's lots of sunlight just going to waste. In the summer it's truly abundant. Why not harness some solar power by installing a **solar collector** to turn that sunlight into heat and cut your domestic hot water bills.



+ water

if you live near a fast running stream, and especially on a hillside, you could be generating up to 2KW of free 240volt electricity by using a water turbine.

+ wind

if you live on a high exposed and windy site you should consider a wind turbine. Unlike a water turbine it won't create a continuous supply, but with battery storage it could run all your lighting and other low powered appliances.

+ coppicing

if you grow trees and regularly coppice them you could have a

useful source of fuel (logs), heat (from composting brush chippings heaped around a coil of water-filled copper pipe), and gas, for cooking (from composting brush chippings). And both the ash and composted chippings can be returned to the soil.

@ recycling

+ water

is a resource that is both wasted and over-treated. Why not collect your own from the roof, both for the garden and flushing the toilet? Large (400gallon) recycled tanks are available very cheaply and can be buried in the garden out of sight, accessed using a simple submersible pump.

VIRTUALLY EVERY-THING in the home that is thrown away as rubbish could have at least one more life.

+ compost

all biodegradeable material (except meat/fish) can be composted. Keep a bucket with a lid in the kitchen to save it in and then transfer it to a compost heap.

+ household rubbish

it should be obvious by now that you take to the recycling banks: **tins + glass + newspapers + magazines + rags**
 ~ take good quality **clothing** to a charity shop
 ~ maintain unmade roads & tracks with **coal ash**
 ~ use **wood ash** in the compost heap
 ~ old **furniture + electrical/gas appliances** can be used again by those unable to afford new, contact your community furniture project
 ~ if either totally natural or all synthetic **carpets** make brilliant weed suppressant mats in the garden
 ~ when you've drunk your expensive bottled water don't throw away the **plastic bottles**, they make great 'cloches' for seeds and young plants
 ~ re-use those **envelopes** with a sticky label.

+ industrial rubbish

schools and playgroups have an insatiable appetite for arts materials, so if your company throws away anything clean and safe why not contact the local headteacher or playgroup to see if they could make further use of it. Or why not start a local **scrap store** to coordinate collection and redistribution on a local scale.

+ composting toilets

the British don't like talking about toilets, even if we are wasting precious resources needlessly. Once again our european neighbours are light years ahead of us with a toilet design that doesn't use any water and recycles what goes in for valuable use in the garden. The latest models look no different from what we're used to, so why continue to poo poo talk about toilets?



+ reed bed water treatment

if we want to save water why not clean what we use ourselves and store it in a natural pond for summer use? A reed

bed system is a proven natural filter for household 'grey water', which adds an attractive water feature to any garden.

+ salvage

why buy new when there's enterprising folk like Ron Moverley who can sell you just what you want at a fraction of the cost. Ron runs a skip hire business and a scrap yard in Sutton-on-the-Forest, York. His yard is full of reclaimed treasures - tiles, bricks, wood, bathroom fittings, metal, doors, windows, and the ever-changing unusual item rescued from skips. Worth a regular browse, take wellingtons and gloves, and if you can't see what you want - just ask. 01347 21666.

@ energy conservation

IF YOU are buying a new home or improving an existing one there's a whole host of new 'green' products available to cut down on energy costs

and potential health hazards. See **booklist/magazines** at end. Basic savings can be made by replacing 'wool' type insulation in the roof with a granulated paper product called 'Warmcel'. A safe to use recycled product it can be blown into the smallest of crevices ensuring a draughtproof seal. It can also be used in stud walls. ~ if you are buying new windows/doors insist on triple-glazing, the european standard. ~ don't block up old chimneys, they maintain a safe flow of fresh air. Install one of the new clean-burning woodburning stoves and have yourself a cosy feature.

@ self-build

FOR A third of the price of a conventional home you could build the house of your dreams and at the same time incorporate the latest in alternative energy systems and energy conservation. Heating bills of just than £30 a year? It's possible. What's more, you get everything just how you want without compromise, and you have the satisfaction of knowing just how it was put together. Change your life, no previous experience in the building trade necessary.

@ L.E.T.S.

STANDS FOR Local Economy Trading Scheme and is catching on once more around the uk. This is how village life used to work. It's a form of barter that does away with the need for money. You join a group to participate, who list what skills you

page
four

have in their regularly updated directory. To use the scheme members are charged/paid in hourly units of a fictitious currency, that is debited/credited to a scheme bank account via a chequebook. You start with no credit, so until you have 'earned' some currency cannot 'buy' into anyone else's skills. The beauty of the scheme, apart from no money changing hands, is that the barter doesn't rely on reciprocating with the same person. Materials are paid in sterling.



@ homeopathy

EVER THE sceptic, I am a child of the age of 'science',

~ ash leaf

until recently it was hard to see that a form of medicine that had existed for thousands of years might have any use in our modern world. But with the NHS reduced to a field hospital service and the 'ordinary-man-in-the-street' reliant on drug companies to make all the research breakthroughs I for one would now prefer something tried and tested. Homeopathy is one such system. Based on treating the whole person it is based on balancing deficiencies so the body can defend itself. Treatment is usually with tablets. One of our cats was tried on it first when conventional medicine had given up any hope of recovery. It had an immediate success. We both now increasingly rely on homeopathy and feel in more control of our health.

@ the garden

WHY GARDEN organically?

~ because gardens are living things, and should be treated with a similar/mutual respect

~ whilst mankind has to rely totally on the natural world for its life systems, and gardens are part of that system, we should take responsibility to ensure it functions properly

~ nature is so utterly complex, we have hardly touched upon how just one part of it - the human body - works. Expecting 'commercial interests' whose sole aim is to make large profits, to put the same amount of time, effort and money into researching safe 'garden products', is so unbelievable that I wonder how anyone could be so trusting as to take the risk using them. Until we understand with absolute certainty how nature works we should do no more than observe and marvel

~ organically grown equates as near as possible with 'as Nature intended'. The use of any man-made product in growing food is introducing unknown risks into our food-chain. As we are what we eat, processed and cheap food equates with treating your body with utter contempt.

WHAT FOLLOWS is a step-by-step guide to making your garden organic and productive.

~ before we start, if you only remember one thing from the entire booklet let it be - **making mistakes is the best way to learn and understand**

~ luckily most of what you really need to start an organic garden is probably already there, it just requires a little bit of tie loosening and plenty of tlc

~ don't panic with the thought of all the work, a garden is for life,

you've got all that time to get it just how you want. And don't worry about it being physical, there's no digging, unless you require landscaping, as we don't disturb the soil with either fork or spade.

So, let's start, with

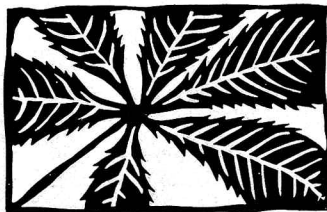
+ planning

the best thing you can do at first is to step back for as long as possible and observe. Watch and note the path of the sun over the seasons and see where the shade occurs. Is it windy, from what direction? What plants have you already and do you want to keep any? I personally dislike any plants that don't have a use, so make a note, in the autumn move all shrubs, bulbs etc. that you can't part with to a North facing (from the house) spot. Then get some paper and a tape measure and draw out a scale drawing of your garden as it is, make lots of copies. Start by adding:

+ fruit & nut trees

the first essential when planning a garden, they have the major role in the management of the ecology of your garden. They create microclimates in which crops can flourish, lift the water table, and feed the earthworms who in turn nourish the plants.

Trees come in sizes to suit every garden or can be coppiced.



~ horse chestnut leaf

+ fruit & nut bushes

come next in importance. Seek out strange varieties and ones that stagger the harvest times to extend the bounty for as long as possible.

+ vegetable and soft fruit

planting areas come next. Place them as close to the house as possible, you'll be visiting them the most and you can keep a watching eye from indoors on developments. We have our main vegetable area formed as a circle - a feature - with a path running through its centre. The two halves are mentally divided again into two halves. There are no permanent paths on the beds. A clipped hazel hedge all round protects against the wind. The four beds are used for specific types of vegetables and rotated each year. More on that later.

+ greenhouse/polytunnel

we want an all-year round supply of vegetables, plus variety, and to be able to grow certain exotic types; something a garden located here wouldn't normally be able to achieve. Using a greenhouse or polytunnel this becomes a possibility. They would probably benefit by being sited close to the house with a long side facing towards where the midday sun would be in midwinter. There's not enough room here to talk about using greenhouses/polytunnels but I'd be only too happy to spend time sharing my experience if you'd like to make contact.

+ herbs

are an essential part of organic gardening and are used extensively in Companion Planting (see later). Plan for a permanent herb area in a sunny spot near the house.

+ potatoes

if you've the space, will need their own area. To prevent disease it

is probably a good idea to have at least three similar sized areas and rotate around each year with other crops: a light feeder and a green manure.

+ tomatoes & rhubarb

also prefer separate beds, and tomatoes do far better under cover.



+ russian comfrey

in a large permanent bed is essential. More later.

+ ponds

each with varying depths, and edged round their perimeter with mounds of large stones, wild vegetation and decaying logs providing a habitat for many useful predators.

+ nettles

you can't do without. More later.

+ bees

scare most people, but are an absolute must for the garden and are so amazing to be around. Don't worry about having to learn anything beforehand, or buy special equipment. Just get a hive to begin with, maybe a second-hand one, repair it and thoroughly clean it. Bees like to be well off the ground facing the morning sun. Pick somewhere sheltered from wind and with a clear flight path. You can rub the inside of the hive with Lemon Balm leaves and wait for a swarm to move in (from May onwards), or ask a friendly local beekeeper to look out for one. Plant bee-friendly herbs/shrubs in abundance, one specimen of each won't be enough to feed 40 000 bees. Avoid any involvement with local

Beekeeping groups.

+ chickens/ducks

are a liability. Think hard before you decide to go ahead. It's an expensive option just for eggs. They make a fair bit of noise, especially in the summer, and will need top-rate accommodation. Which means expensive. They need to be kept very clean, safe from foxes, and locked away securely from the temptation of your seedlings.

+ walls

waste valuable growing space unless south-facing and unshaded, where you can use them to train tender fruit trees against. Instead plant a 'living' wall of fruit/nut hedging or something more grand - espaliered and grafted fruit trees. These also provides essential wildlife habitats for birds and insects.

+ grass

is the most expensive waste of time and money in a garden. Do without it completely if you can, build a wooden verandah to sit out on instead.

+ tools

these are our most often used:

wheelbarrow with pneumatic tyre + spade + fork + hoe + hand trowel & fork + sickle & stone + secateurs + 2 gallon watering cans + shears + saw + shovel + backpack sprayer 15ltr. + long tape measure + spirit level + rubber mallet (the last three for

laying paths and erecting polytunnel/greenhouse). Peruse the ads in the free-ad press (Yeller) before buying new, and make sure the spade & fork are big enough for you.

+ getting started

Autumn through to early March is construction and major planting time in the garden. The weather is cool and trees/shrubs are concentrating on putting down their roots.

+ planting

buy from stock from local Nurseries (never garden centres) where they actually raise the plants, and begin with fruit/nut bearing trees & bushes, hedging, and soft fruit canes.

+ paths

take up all existing ones and wait until garden has been in use for a while before laying new ones. Ensure they are wide enough to get a full

wheelbarrow along. Our paths are made with gravel (.75inch washed @ £12 a ton = 22 cubic feet) and edged with upturned wine bottles hammered in with a rubber mallet.

+ greenhouse/polytunnel

construction is best done when the weather is cool and damp but the tunnel cover shouldn't go on 'til at least June.



+ bird houses

should be constructed and fitted as high as possible in the trees to encourage grub feeding birds, especially on fruit trees, ready for early spring. A garden without birds is a dead one, they are unequalled in controlling pests.

+ bat boxes

fixed to the east to south facing walls of a house as high up as possible. They feed on night time insects and a valuable control of woodworm.

+ weeds & weeding

weeds are misunderstood plants, we just have to find a positive role for them. They do far more to protect the soil than harm it. Chickweed, for example, provides a free winter cover on sandy soils preventing leaching, and comes away easily providing a useful compost/mulch material. The world's best fertiliser is the nettle, compost made solely from it is unbeatable. In drought conditions a crop growing with the right amount of weeds will fare better than a 'clean' one. And of course weeds can be eaten!

Unfortunately to clear land for a crop nothing beats hand weeding, then regular mulching. We are trying out this approach for the first time, this year, and it appears to work. Everytime you cut grass or slash weeds you layer it onto the beds around the plants. Recurring weeds have dropped off considerably and underneath all is nice and damp.

+ preparing the soil for planting

we spray the soil early in the spring with a BD (see later) preparation that will encourage ideal conditions for microbes and earthworms.

+ seeds

despite the apparent dearth of seed catalogues there are very few companies that sell seeds which haven't either been treated with chemicals or are non-F1 varieties. There is a list at the back, plus when you start to save your own seed you can join a seed-exchange scheme and enjoy old and well-loved varieties sadly no longer available for sale.

+ sowing seed

everyone has their own way, this is ours. Starting with Christmas week, when I can't stand the television any longer I fish all the new catalogues out and decide what to grow in the coming season, then make up my order. When the parcels arrive I put the **seed potatoes** straight out into wooden trays (free from the vegetable market) and leave them in the spare room to 'chit' (grow shoots). Then I sit down with the information on the back of the seed packets and draw up a

map of the garden and a month-by-month sowing/ planting calendar for the year through to December (it can include jobs to be done as well). The beauty of doing it this way is that it allows you to concentrate on just a month at a time - so each month you can't forget anything, suffer from nervous exhaustion, and it reminds you to plant for succession crops (something I always forget).



When it comes to the actual sowing I have about fourteen cat litter trays, each of which holds either twelve pots for vegetables, fifteen pots for herbs, or two small seed trays (for lettuce/leeks/onions/

parsnips/celery). In the afternoons (explanation later) I fill the pots with seed compost and sow the seeds, just below the surface. I write on the sides of the pots in felt marker what's in them (write small, you'll use them over and over). Fill the tray with rain water about half an inch deep and place in a warm dark airing cupboard. Look in every morning and top up water as necessary. When they germinate (herbs take forever) bring them out, in the morning, into a suitably warm and light spot (herbs need to be brought out as soon as they show or they go leggy and probably won't survive). I've made cold frames, each to fit two trays, out of scrap wood and old panes of glass, and put these in the polytunnel and it's an ideal place from as early as January onwards. You'll need access to the cold frames from above to regularly water and feed. Keep an eye out for slugs/snails. The sowing calendar can also remind you when to direct sow into the soil, though I find it safer to start even these hardy crops in trays, at least until June and then you can be sure of a good early start unaffected by the vagaries of the weather.

+ planting out

when the dangers of severe frost are gone you can begin to plant out your precious seedlings. They'll do best transplanted in late afternoon and especially if it has just rained. You cover them for the first weeks with a plastic bottle 'cloche'. This also helps to protect them from the wind, cats and being lost among the weeds. Large plants that are frost tender would benefit from the 'deluxe' cloche made from an upturned plastic sweetie jar from the local newsagent, with a tiny hole in the top. Plants that later on suffer

from the wind, like sweetcorn, can be fitted with a 'collar' version of the bottle cloche with the top cut out wider, which will firmly anchor them to the ground.

+ feeding

unless you have access to monumental amounts of horse or cow manure the plants and soil will need regular feeding. We mulch with cut weeds and spray with liquid feeds. This is where the nettles and comfrey come in, and for variety we also buy in seaweed concentrate. To make up the spray mixture you need a plastic barrel (water-butt size) fitted with a tap at the bottom. Pack it tight with either comfrey or nettles and then top up with rainwater until full. Leave for two weeks. The liquid can be used diluted 10:1 and watered on or 2:1 and sprayed.



+ crop rotation

is a system of growing plants with similar feeding habits together and moving them around a piece of land each year to ensure the least amount of depletion in the soil of essential minerals and elements. It also prevents the build of disease. Plants fit into four categories:

~ heavy feeders

brassicas + celery + celeriac + leeks + onions + cucumbers + marrows

~ compost lovers

spinach + lettuce + radish + beetroot + turnips

~ light feeders

carrots + parsnips

~ legumes

beans + peas

We follow a four year rotation which this year is:

leeks + courgettes

spinach + beetroot + leaf beat + spring onion

parsnip + carrots + green manure

onions + peas + beans

We don't seem to be able to grow brassicas. Next year everything moves round clockwise by one place.

+ green manures

are crops grown, and then dug in usually before they produce seed, purely for their ability to improve the soil. Overwintering varieties prevent leaching of nutrients; deep-rooted ones bring up essential minerals; legumes trap nitrogen from the air; others choke out persistent weeds; lupins bring life to poor soils. When dug in or cut and left to rot on the surface they help to increase the humus content of the soil and its fertility. You need plenty of room to make it part of your crop rotation and some of the varieties are incredibly tough to remove!

+ pests

are to some degree the result of poor design. If you selfishly create a monoculture to produce only what you want then that also becomes the sole source of food for all the local wildlife. Of course sometimes problems arise because the weather disturbs the lifecycle of certain insects/plants and then a predator/prey imbalance occurs. Drastic action may then be needed. First off, plan to create a diverse ecology throughout the garden, not just in particular areas. Similarly provide plenty of suitable local habitats

to encourage predators of major pests (we have five large ponds for frogs, newts, and toads). A healthy plant will survive attack better, so regular watering and feeding is important. Plant one or two extra in the form of an offering to appease. Particular herbs can also divert attention from your precious crop (see later). Finally if the problem appears to be getting out of hand go for the kill:

~ snails and slugs need to be picked by hand at night and disposed of in a suitably nasty way

~ aphids and caterpillars need spraying with nettle juice mixture on at least three successive evenings (you can convert a household pump-action spray container (eg.deodorant) to do the job)
~ wasps are vermin. Find the nest and in the evening spray petrol into the entrance hole and then set fire to it. That'll teach 'em.



+ companion planting

is the art of employing the beneficial and negative qualities plants may have for each other to:

aid growth + repel pests +
avoid mutual dislike + assist
germination + shade + keep
tender plants warm + improve
taste + attract earthworms +
increase aromatic qualities

Here is a basic chart showing
@ vegetables and fruit
and their relationships with
each other (including herbs)
when planted together:

@ apple
(good) blackberry-chive-
garlic-mint-nasturtium-tansy
(bad - in italics) potato

@ apricot
basil-nasturtium-tansy
potato-southernwood-tomato

@ artichoke
parsley
garlic

@ asparagus
basil-cabbage-grape-marigold-parsley-tomato
chive-garlic-leek-onion

@ aubergine
dwarf bean-runner bean-pea-potato-tarragon-thyme
garlic-onion

@ broad bean
beetroot-borage-cabbage-carrot-cauliflower-chervil-cucumber-
gooseberry-kohl rabi-marigold-marjoram-pea-potato-rosemary-
spinach-summer savory-sweetcorn-thyme-winter savory
chive-fennel-garlic-horseradish-leek-nasturtium-onion

@ dwarf bean
aubergine-beetroot-cabbage-celery-cucumber-marigold-marjoram-
pea-potato-rosemary-squash-strawberry-summer savory-
sweetcorn-thyme-tomato-winter savory
garlic-horseradish-kohl rabi-leek-onion

@ runner bean
aubergine-celeriac-marigold-marjoram-pea-rosemary-summer
savory-sweetcorn-winter savory
beetroot-broccoli-brussels sprouts-cabbage-cauliflower-chive-garlic-
horseradish-kohl rabi-leek-nasturtium-onion-strawberry-swede
@ beetroot

broad bean-dwarf bean-
cabbage-chervil-cucumber-garlic-
kohl rabi-lettuce-onion
@ blackberry
apple-garlic-tansy
@ broccoli
caraway-celery-chamomile-dill-
hyssop-mint-potato-rosemary-
sage-southernwood-thyme
*runner bean-lettuce-spinach-
strawberry-tomato*



(good) (bad)

@ brussels sprouts
caraway-celeriac-celery-
chamomile-dill-hyssop-mint-
potato-rosemary-sage-
southernwood-sweetcorn-
thyme
*runner bean-radish-spinach-
strawberry-tomato*

@ cabbage
asparagus-broad bean-dwarf
bean-beetroot-bergamot-
caraway-celeriac-celery-
chamomile-chervil-chive-dill-
fennel-horseradish-hyssop-
lavender-marjoram-mint-
nasturtium-onion-pennyroyal-
potato-rosemary-sage-
southernwood-thyme
*runner bean-garlic-grape-radish-
spinach-strawberry-tomato*
@ carrot
broad bean-celeriac-chive-
cucumber-garlic-leek-onion-pea-
radish-rosemary-sage-tomato
dill
@ cauliflower
broad bean-caraway-celeriac-
celery-chamomile-dill-hyssop-
mint-potato-rosemary-sage-
southernwood-thyme
*beetroot-radish-spinach-
strawberry-tomato*
@ celeriac
runner bean-brussels sprouts-
cabbage-carrot-cauliflower-leek-
onion-tomato
@ celery
dwarf bean-broccoli-brussels

sprouts-cabbage-cauliflower-chervil-dill-kohl rabi-leek-lettuce-
tomato
angelica-lovage
@ cherry
plum
@ courgette
borage-fennel-nasturtium-sweetcorn-tansy
potato-rosemary-rue-sage-thyme
@ cucumber
broad bean-dwarf bean-beetroot-borage-carrot-dill-horseradish-
kohl rabi-lettuce-lovage-nasturtium-pear-pea-radish-sunflower-
sweetcorn-tansy-yarrow
potato-rosemary-sage-thyme
@ currant
garlic-plum
@ garlic
apple-beetroot-blackberry-carrot-chervil-currant-gooseberry-
lettuce-peach-pear-plum-raspberry-rhubarb-strawberry
*artichoke-asparagus-aubergine-broad bean-dwarf bean-runner bean-
cabbage-marjoram-pea*
@ gooseberry
broad bean-currant-garlic-tansy-tomato
@ grape
asparagus-basil-blackberry-borage-hyssop-mulberry-sage-tansy
cabbage-radish
@ kohl rabi
broad bean-beetroot-caraway-celery-chamomile-cucumber-dill-
hyssop-mint-onion-potato-rosemary-sage-southernwood-thyme

*dwarf bean-runner bean-fennel-
spinach-strawberry-sweet pepper-
tomato*

@ leek

carrot-celeriac-celery-chive-dill-
fennel-onion

*asparagus-broad bean-dwarf
bean-runner bean-marjoram-pea*

@ lettuce

beetroot-carrot-celery-chervil-
cucumber-garlic-onion-parsley-
parsnip-radish-strawberry-
thyme

broccoli-fennel-lavender-rue

@ marrow

borage-fennel-nasturtium-
sweetcorn

potato-sage-thyme

@ mulberry

grape

@ onion

beetroot-cabbage-carrot-
celeriac-chamomile-dill-
kohl rabi-leek-lettuce-parsnip-
strawberry-summer savory-
thyme-tomato

*asparagus-aubergine-broad bean-
dwarf bean-runner bean-
marjoram-pea*

@ parsnip

lettuce-onion
sweet pepper



@ peach

garlic

@ pear

cucumber-garlic-mint-
nasturtium-spinach-sweetcorn-
tansy

@ pea

aubergine-broad bean-dwarf
bean-runner bean-carrot-
cucumber-marigold-mint-
potato-radish-swede-
sweetcorn-turnip

garlic-horseradish-leek-onion

@ plum

currant-garlic-raspberry
chervil

@ potato

aubergine-broad bean-dwarf

bean-broccoli-brussels sprouts-cabbage-cauliflower-celery-
horseradish-lavender-lemon balm-marigold-
marjoram-mint-nasturtium-parsley-pea-strawberry-summer savory-
sweetcorn-tarragon-valerian
*apple-apricot-courgette-cucumber-pumpkin-raspberry-squash-sunflower-
tomato*

@ pumpkin

nasturtium-radish-sweetcorn-tansy

potato-rosemary-sage-thyme

@ radish

catmint-carrot-chive-coriander-cucumber-dill-lettuce-nasturtium-
pea-turnip

*brussels sprouts-cabbage-cauliflower-grape-hyssop-spinach-summer
savory-winter savory*

@ raspberry

garlic-plum-rue-yarrow

potato

@ rhubarb

garlic-spinach

@ spinach

broad bean-coriander-dill-horseradish-pear-rhubarb-salsify-
strawberry-sweetcorn

broccoli-brussels sprouts-cabbage-cauliflower-kohl rabi-radish

@ squash

dwarf bean-borage-fennel-nasturtium-potato-sweetcorn
rosemary-sage-thyme

@ strawberry

dwarf bean-borage-leek-lettuce-onion-spinach-tansy

broccoli-brussels sprouts-cabbage-
cauliflower-garlic-kohl rabi

@ swede

catmint-pear-pea

@ sweetcorn

broad bean-dwarf bean-runner

bean-brussels sprouts-cour-

gette-cucumber-dill-marrow-

pear-pea-potato-pumpkin-

spinach-squash-sunflower-

yarrow

@ sweet pepper

aubergine

kohl rabi-parsnip

@ tomato

asparagus-basil-dwarf bean-

borage-carrot-celeriac-celery-

chive-dill-gooseberry-

horseradish-lemon balm-

marigold-mint-nasturtium-

onion-parsley-rosemary-sage-



~ walnut leaf

thyme

apricot-broccoli-brussels sprouts-

cabbage-caraway-cauliflower-

fennel-kohl rabi-potato

@ turnip

catmint-pea-radish-thyme

fennel-summer savory

+ harvest

all crops that grow above ground in the mornings (between 3am and 11am), this ensures they are most full of vitality, and root crops late in the afternoon (from 3pm 'til midnight) when there is a downward flow of sap.

Don't waste anything, especially surplus tree fruit. Buy/share a fruit press and hire it out to pay it off. Pear juice is particularly good, it freezes well and makes a wonderful mulled non-alcoholic drink for Christmas.

@ "isms"

WHEN FIRST starting out to do something with your garden,

or your life, that no-one else you've know has ever done it's a challenge better faced with some kind of guiding principle, no matter how vague or weird, just until you find your own personal direction/quest. Get an "ism".

And now is a good time. The "isms" have grasped the nettle of 'user-friendliness'. In fact they are falling over themselves to illustrate their message, with offerings of full colour glossy magazines, books, videos, and the chance to go on endless residential training courses. And what better way to learn, you may ask, than to regularly escape the grind by jetting off at the weekends to some exotic rural location where you can contemplate everything except actually getting down to some good honest weeding?

Believe it or not there is a down side to just talking and reading about something, someone actually has to do it or it becomes meaningless. And if you're a doer type, like me, then you'll soon begin to outgrow the value of your "ism". For their all their doctrine, inscribed impressively maybe on tablets of stone, most are really more interested in unquestioning devotion and your annual subscription. If you do actually begin to make any progress and understanding it's a sure sign that you're travelling faster on the route to self-discovery than most of the membership, who will be quite content to spend their time talking about change for eternity rather than facing the challenge of getting those gloves on and effecting it.

Nonetheless "isms" have their uses, I'm even still a member of one.

I'd like to describe here several possible "isms" for anyone really interested in organic gardening and self-sufficiency; and to set the mood, I'd like to add to the description of self-sufficiency at the beginning of this booklet with a quote.....
"There are the ethical values which should also be appreciated. These cannot be measured in sterling. What is earned is an understanding that comes from taking time out to observe the phenomena of growth, become conscious of the changing seasons as shown in the fluctuations of the weather, in the warmth and light of the sun. Experiencing pleasure watching the gradual development of plant life, harvesting our own produce. A man who comes to love the soil develops a finer awareness of the synthesizing processes and a sense for the upbuilding forces in the world, and he cares less and less for the more destructive process of analysis".

So now you know why we do it, even if at times it would be far cheaper and easier to just pave it all over and buy fruit and veg!

+ permaculture

was conceived by Bill Mollison in Australia and New Zealand. It's an organisation that trains people to be able to design self-sufficient organic eco-systems anywhere in the world. From window-boxed sized gardens up to large communities. Buy the video (see list at back) and get excited by the pure simplicity of it all. It's about closing the loop on dependency. If we grow our own food and generate our own energy then we become less dependant on others for our existence. Independence leads to happiness and creative activity. What more can anyone wish to achieve? Don't bother buying the books or subscribing to their magazine (you can

buy single copies), as they are a nightmare to understand and contain too much information that won't be relevant to the uk. Basically permaculture is 100% commonsense advice about how to live off the land without taking out more than you put in; it tells you what to plant and where to plant it, and make full use of recycled materials. Truly inspirational to the newcomer.

+ forest gardening

is a sideshoot off permaculture, created by Robert Hart. Aimed at self-sufficiency for those with a fair-sized garden and who are prepared to reconsider their diet. He has created a very low-maintenance mini-forest of food-bearing vegetation. Formed by planting standard or half-standard fruit trees at appropriate intervals around the perimeter, then filled in with dwarf trees, bushes, shade loving plants and herbs, rhizomes, and then climbers. No digging, just lots and lots of mulching. Not much scope for vegetable growing in its purest form, but then as he says they are a relatively new invention, what he is growing is what we used to live off. Every garden should have this multi-layered approach surrounding the vegetable plot, it adds a much needed vitality and reaps a rich bounty.

+ biodynamics

is my current interest and I'll be honest I find it incredibly difficult to summarise. After several years I am only just beginning to incorporate the ideas, and then with a gut instinct rather than an honest understanding. I believe it works because we're lucky enough to live near a living example - BOTTON VILLAGE near

Whitby, a 610 acre self-sufficient biodynamic community of 300 people.

Just being there you feel a wonderful sense of positiveness. There they don't just grow everything organically, biodynamics (BD) takes it one step further and grows plants and rears animals (not for vegans this) in such a way as to be able to enrich it with positive essential earthly and heavenly (not religious) forces. Such a diet in turn benefits one's health and well-being, especially the body's immune system.

They believe that 'science' based agriculture has been hijacked through an unhealthy liaison with manufacturers of chemical inputs, leading to a myopic approach to what is quite obviously an incredibly complex system, interdependent with the life of the planet itself. What is needed, they

believe, is less concern for profit, and research based on a more open, spiritually based appreciation. Science fails by its need to compartmentalise everything rather than seeing the greater whole. BD shows us that the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe all binds us to the biosphere. They take it one step further and consider the relationship the night sky has on our planet and the soil. That the heavenly bodies must also be exerting ever-changing and subtle influences as we journey through space.

Without getting any weirder, they have managed to chart the journeys of the known heavenly bodies and work out what form their influences could be on plants and animals, by assigning planets to particular constellational groupings with a particular basic force. There, I think I've gone too far already, but

stick with me just a little longer. Believe it or not, they believe given this information it is then possible to produce a calendar of what to do when with what in the garden. I daren't try to explain any further for fear of being burnt at the stake but one picture biodynamics has given me, that I like to carry daily, is one of the earth as a living thing. It breathes in with the dawn and out at sunset, it has a circulatory system of evaporating and condensing water, its pulse the seasons, it is sensitive and it has a skin. Confused?

@ sources of information

+ magazines

"NEW FARMER & GROWER"

~ an organic farming quarterly from The Soil Association

"LIVING EARTH"

~ The Soil Association magazine

"permaculture magazine"

~ from Permanent Publications

"ORGANIC GARDENING"

~ monthly magazine from good newsagents

"AGROFORESTRY NEWS"

~ a quarterly on fruits, nuts & tree crops from ART, 46 Hunters Moon, Dartington, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6JT

"BUILDING FOR A FUTURE"

~ a quarterly dedicated to environmentally sensitive building from AECB, Windlake House, The Pump Field, Coaley, Gloucestershire GL11 5DX

"ECO-DESIGN"

~ journal of the ECOLOGICAL DESIGN ASSOCIATION.

Uneven quality, usually incredibly disappointing and then spectacularly good. From EDA The British School, Slad Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 1QW. 01453 765575.



+ places to visit

my first choice without doubt has got to be **BOTTON VILLAGE**, high up on the North York Moors. You can't beat it, for inspiration and the sense of being in a truly magical place. It's an idyllic setting, a whole valley of lush farmland neatly manicured into a patchwork of vibrant colour and texture. Home to a self-sufficient

community working in partnership with nature rather than against it. The 300 residents run the original farms which have worked there for centuries, but now run along biodynamic lines, and they have added several craft workshops.

The two ideals meld together seamlessly, ensuring every detail is handcrafted, a thing of beauty, a painstaking labour of love. It will however come as a surprise to the new visitor that everyone who lives and works here does so for no wage. Most have a special need also. Make a visit if only just to sit in the wonderful coffee shop. I can't explain it, you have to try and see if it works for you. Opposite the coffee shop they've a great, if tiny, bookshop; and next door a shop that sells crafts from Botton and other 'Camphill' communities. They also sell bread, dairy products, preserves and fruit juices. All biodynamic. And they give a

warm welcome to visitors at any time, though on your first visit it is probably worth phoning just to get a map, ask the opening times of the cafe, and feel the genuine warmth of the folk. They also have two Open Days a year, which are not to be missed. Don't waste another day, make a visit and change your life. **BOTTON VILLAGE**, DANBY, WHITBY, N.YORKS YO21 2NJ. 01287 6621288.

+ centre for alternative technology

if Tim Hunkin is one of your heroes then you'll love CAT in North Wales. It's a site for the display of machines and ideas that use natural resources positively. And to give it an authentic edge the place is so remote, halfway up what seems to be a mountain but is in fact a disused slate tip, it has no connections to any of the mains services. Since they first began in the 1970's anything they needed, to run the site with, has had to be generated, grown and disposed of on-site by themselves. This is what makes it such a great place to visit. It works! However it is one of the wettest places on earth, so I suggest as most of the exhibits are outdoors you go well prepared. To get there (it is open all year round) get to Machynlleth, the nearest town, by the afternoon. This will give you time to have a good look round the town which is lovely, and includes a CAT cafe, then stay the night in a B&B. Give yourself at least the whole morning to browse CAT, which is about three miles away. Have lunch in their brilliant restaurant (still the place where I had my best meal ever - parsnip roast). If you like it that much you can return on one of their many all-year round residential courses. One of them will be enough to give you a unique

insight into self-sufficiency, the food is brill, the other students are 'interesting', and you get to find out what really does or doesn't work and whether it's for you. Briefly, you'll be able to see working examples of everything there is in the field of 'alternative technology': wind and water turbine + solar heating and solar electricity + composting toilets + reed beds + organic gardening + self-build + a brilliant cliff railway powered by water power + lots of stuff for kids + a good shop + and as they say much much more.

They even have a company that supplies and installs any of the devices shown into your home.
CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY,
MACHYNLLETH, N.WALES
SY20 9AZ. 01654 702400.

+ ryton gardens

I hesitate to suggest a garden to visit because it will always be

purely personal preference. And even though I detest with a fervour, the organisation that runs it, sadly you won't find a better example of practical how-to-do-it organic gardening than the Henry Doubleday Research Association's **ryton gardens**. I think they have another smaller one in Kent. Ryton is a ten-acre site near Coventry. It's got everything you'll ever need to know about organic techniques laid out as show gardens - including a Forest Garden - plus there's a great shop (weird staff) and a new restaurant that abysmally fails to reflect the beauty or ethos of the site. Well worth a visit at least once, and handy midway stop on the motorway.
RYTON GARDENS,
RYTON-ON-DUNSMORE,
COVENTRY CV8 3LG.
01203 303517.

+ organisations for help H.D.R.A.

~ the main organisation for

organic 'gardeners', but not really interested in the wider issues. Good newsletter and has local groups - address as **ryton gardens**.

THE SOIL ASSOCIATION

~ if you want to join a group to save the planet then this is probably the one that is most likely to do the job properly. The magazine is naff but they do have good local groups

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~ lots of useful titles on organic
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