



FROM SEED TO PLATE



WITH JANETTE MARSHALL

Getting the very best out of your garden reaps the benefits for your health, too

GROW AND EAT

People who buy pre-trimmed and sliced vegetables from supermarkets are missing out on what you can enjoy as your garden approaches peak productivity – the skin and leaves that usually go to waste are some of the tastiest and most nutritious parts of the plant.

Beetroot leaves and stalks can be cooked and served just as you would chard and spinach – in fact, they have a higher iron content than spinach as well as Vitamin K that works with calcium for bone strength. Trendy diet bloggers tend to go on about the benefits of kale but overlook the green leaves on broccoli and cauliflower that contribute just as many antioxidants, carotenoids, minerals and vitamins.

Finally, be sure to compost the peelings, skins, stalks and leaves that you don't eat, to feed the next generation of your garden's fruit and veg.

Plant out...

Seedlings, or purchased plant plugs, should now all be planted outside. Continue successive sowings of:

- ◆ Carrots (ready in 10-16 weeks)
- ◆ Chard (12 weeks)
- ◆ Peas (8-10 weeks)

- ◆ Radish (ready in 6-12 weeks)
- ◆ Salad leaves, Chinese greens (ready in 6-12 weeks)
- ◆ Squash (ready in 20-24 weeks)
- ◆ Herbs (Basil, Borage, Coriander, Dill, Parsley, Sage, Thyme)

Transplant...

- ◆ Broccoli
- ◆ Summer/winter cabbage
- ◆ Cauliflower

Stake...

Heavily-laden branches of gooseberries, currants and raspberries and net as protection against birds.

Falafel Burger With Beetroot Salad

400 calories per falafel

Ingredients (Makes 4)

- ◆ 100g each dried fava beans and chickpeas
- ◆ 2 diced onions
- ◆ 2 garlic cloves
- ◆ 3tbsp olive oil
- ◆ 1tsp ground cumin
- ◆ 1tsp dried coriander
- ◆ 50g fine breadcrumbs
- ◆ 3-4 cooked beetroot
- ◆ 125g natural yoghurt
- ◆ 1tbsp horseradish, grated or creamed
- ◆ Salad to serve

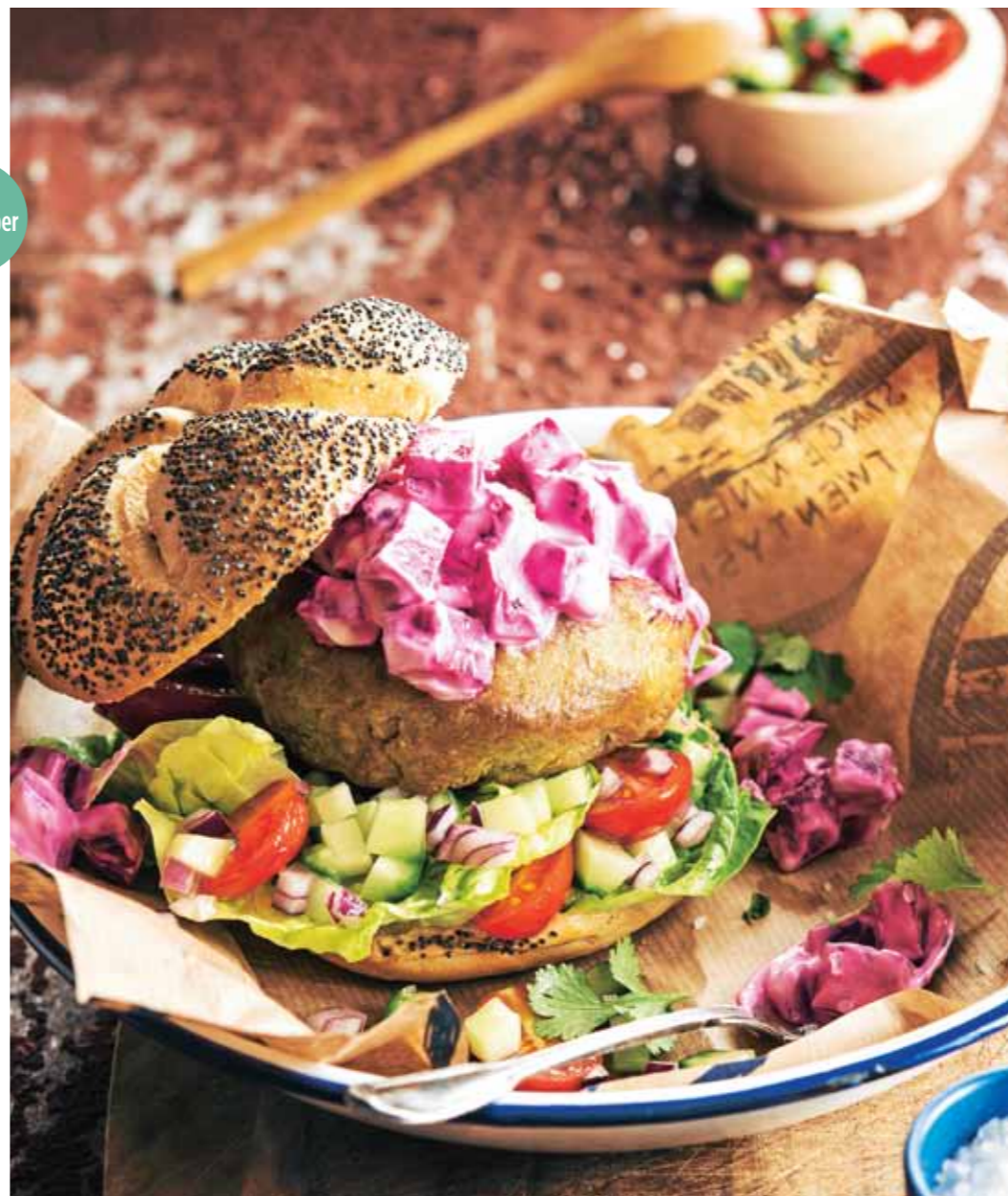
1 Soak the pulses for 2hr or overnight then boil for 1hr or more until soft. Sauté the onions and chopped garlic in 1tbsp of the oil until soft.

2 Process the cooked (or canned, see Tip) pulses until finely chopped. Stir in the onions, garlic, cumin and coriander, season, divide mixture into four and form into burgers.

3 Coat the burgers in breadcrumbs and either shallow fry for about 15min, or bake at moderate heat for 20min, in both instances turning once for an even colour.

4 Chop beetroot into even cubes and toss in the yoghurt and horseradish. Season and use to top the burgers. Serve on a bed of fresh salad, in a bun if desired.

- TIPS**
- ◆ Use 200g cans of chickpeas and brown beans to save time.
 - ◆ Stir a grated medium raw beetroot into the falafel mixture before cooking.



WHAT'S IN SEASON

Now's the time to preserve fresh leafy herbs like tarragon, basil, chervil and parsley. Chop, cover in olive oil and freeze in small bags or an ice-cube tray. Use from frozen in cooking. Chopped herbs mixed into softened butter can be patted into shape, wrapped in freezer paper and frozen for up to three months.



Gooseberries freeze very well. Use kitchen scissors to top and tail the fruit, wash and dry, and pack into freezer bags. Redcurrants make a pretty garnish

on yoghurt, panna cotta and treats like chocolate desserts. If you have enough, make redcurrant jelly which keeps the taste of summer berries going all winter on toast, as well as with roasts, cold meat and cheese.

Use beetroot in our falafel recipe (left) or grate raw into salads. For general use boil or roast beetroot in their skins in a moderate oven for 30min-1hr, depending on size. Serve hot with red meat or oily fish, such as mackerel, or cold in sandwiches, salads and grain dishes.



AUTOMATIC WATERING

Just one day without watering plants in a hot, dry spell can ruin your crops and going on holiday can seem impossible. Simple automatic irrigation systems designed for small gardens and patios solve the problem. Hozelock's Easy Drip takes 15 minutes to set up. A controller on an outdoor tap automatically waters at dawn and dusk – or your preferred setting.



Adjustable micro drippers attached to the hose and sit in the soil in your pots, containers and hanging baskets. Easy Drip Kits from £32.99, stockists www.hozelock.com.

Buzzy Friends

Sow bee-friendly flowers alongside your fruit and veg so these friendly fellas can pollinate your plants. Even though the government has rejected use of neonics (neonicotinoid seed treatments), Britain's bees are still not safe, since these pesticides only have a one-year ban. See Friends of the Earth, www.foe.co.uk.



Lava Your Soil

All those veg in your containers are sucking up minerals from the soil for your health, so remineralise your container crops. Most plant foods put back nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium but natural products like volcanic rock dust have a full range of minerals and trace elements. Remin volcanic rock dust is an award winner and improves yield, flavour and pest resistance. www.reminscotland.com.



Free Compost

Turn your kitchen waste into garden compost. Start off with a food caddy near the kitchen sink to collect raw vegetable peelings, leaves, stalks, small amounts of citrus peel, tea bags, coffee grounds, egg shells. Mix these half-and-half with bought compost in an outdoor bin, or heap with grass cuttings, shredded paper, strips of cardboard – even straw. Do not add cooked veg, meat, fish or dairy, though.

