

With the summer glut comes a surfeit of vegetables. I sell some of mine via a box scheme. On Friday evenings I set off with boxes of mixed veg for a few customers. All proceeds go to charities of my choice. Mind you it was much easier for me when we sold vegetables at the allotment gate.

Unfortunately that came to a stop when one plot occupier felt that the little stall we ran would attract undesirable characters to the allotment site, and he reported me to the local council.

Now this became rather embarrassing for them as two councillors bought veg from the stall, one of which even had an allotment on our site. It eventually ended up at a council hearing. I had letters and receipts from charities we had supported plus letters of support from local people. Of course it was evident that we would lose in the end, even though 90% of the allotment holders voted in support of the stall. You can read more about it if you go into your browser and bring up 'Selling Allotment Produce'. Scan down the page to case study number 3. It makes interesting reading.



Show Judging

By the time you read this I will have judged my first show of the year which will lead me into another enjoyable season of judging and showing veg. I was very pleased to see that our local paper the [Lymington Times](#) had a double page spread advertising the fact that the New Forest Show was hosting the NVS National this year. It was an impressive write up that is sure to draw the crowds to our marquee.



Celery Morning Star

With a little over two weeks to the NVS National hope springs eternal. I am pleased with the celery. This one has just had its weekly tidy up. Now the corrugated cardboard



will be drawn in quite tightly to exclude the light and blanch the stalks. Other plants in the deep bed have a bit more pink at the base but I expect this one will catch up. With the warm weather each plant has approximately a gallon of water each day. Keep up the weekly calcium feed and don't

forget the slug pellets. You don't want to spoil them if you have got decent celery to this stage of development.

250g Onions

This **Vento** onion measured a fraction over 10" in circumference. And look what it weighed on the scales. This year my **Vento's** are growing a little more globular in shape which means they weigh rather heavier than a flatter onion would do. The neck will slim down but will that be enough to take it down to 250g. Well one thing for sure, they won't be on show at the National.



Storing the Summer Glut

One thing you can do is turn some of your veg into pickles or maybe ratatouille which can be frozen and used when required. When a crop is at its prime I like to lift it and use the ground for another vegetable.



These **Pablo** beetroot are just the right size. It amazes me that sometimes, on some plots on the allotment site, I see beetroot left to grow to the size of cannonballs and they are probably so tough that only the pigs will eat them. I like to get them up and stored in peat. Twist the tops off, don't cut the foliage as that would cause the beetroot to bleed and lose flavour.

Pack them in layers between peat or sand in a bucket and they will last for many weeks if kept somewhere cool.



On the NVS Forum recently someone recommended an organic spray that would deal with powdery mildew on peas.

As I am growing **Show Perfection** peas for the National I thought I would give it a go. Mind you, buying it via the internet it wasn't cheap. With postage it cost me around £16.00. If the peas don't win I am certainly out of pocket and knowing my luck with peas I will be lucky to get a dish onto the show bench.

And now with a couple of weeks left to the show it comes down to preparing some of the veg as they are growing. Right now I am selecting one inch long runner beans to grow on. I make sure that the flower is removed from each tiny bean. At the moment I am leaving about six beans on a stalk. 'They will be thinned down to three'. The bunch of flowers on the end is nipped off. This would be wasteful if growing beans for kitchen use but I am after getting some good ones of a decent length for show. And length wise I shall be selecting beans at 16.5" to 17" inches long. The best beans generally come anywhere from 2' 6" on the main stalk up to 4' 6" above soil level. I estimate that I should start picking in 12 days time. Next week I shall do a progress report on the beans.



Elsewhere some of my other National contenders are doing well and some not so. The caulis I doubt will make it. A mole undermined their roots. But on a positive note I am pleased with my potatoes. They are up to size and of the right shape but how will they clean up. I will only know the night before the show.

I will write another article for next week, just before things start to get rather frantic.

Good luck to all the exhibitors and a warm welcome to all visitors coming to the show. I look forward to meeting you all.

John Trim