



# newsletter

Issue 5, March 2006

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Manx Organic Network newsletter, packed with news and features reflecting MON's ever-increasing momentum as an organisation effecting real change in the Isle of Man.

## Putting principles into practice

By Janet Bridle

WELL, CHRISTMAS came and went and I hope you all had a good one. We enjoyed the most delicious organic turkey from Radcliffe's – juicy, tender and full of flavour. To accompany it we had Andrew Moore's cabbage, potatoes and local organically grown leeks. But looking at the food on the table there was so much that could have been locally organically produced, from carrots to cream, bread to bacon – and of course the turkey itself.

The Manx Organic Network is an organisation dedicated to LOCALLY produced organic foods. But there is simply not enough. Vegetables are in very short supply, as the Island no longer has enough vegetable producers growing conventionally, let alone organically.

### New challenges for farmers

As you'll read later in this issue, January 2011 will see the end of meat derogation, which means the Island's retailers will be free to import cheap meat from around the world. This is putting enormous pressure on our farmers. What is the future for our farming communities? Should we just sit by and watch as we produce less and less, and import more and more; as farms are developed into housing and business units?

### New opportunities for organics

Or shall we bite the bullet and look for innovative ways to encourage quality, niche produce that Manx residents CHOOSE to buy – and that can perhaps find markets in the UK and beyond? All indicators tell us that

the organic market is an ever-growing one. Leading market research firm Mintel, for example, conservatively predicts that the organic market will double by 2010.

Farmers are discouraged from making innovative moves partly because of the stranglehold that supermarkets have on them. But as research shows, the organic market is growing fastest at the farmer's gate, farmers' markets and vegetable box schemes: enterprises where the middleman is excluded.

### Taking the initiative

Let's be passionate about what we eat and how it is produced. Let's lead the field and encourage organic farming around the Island, celebrate our local foods and specialities, create regional farmers' markets. The Green Mann market is a wonderful example. We need more enterprises like this in order to engage with producers and our farming community and encourage them to succeed.

### Play your part

MON will continue to do all it can to support these organic producers and innovators. We are a hardworking and passionate committee, but we need the support of members too. If you feel you have any expertise or qualities that will help, come to the AGM on March 23 and put your name on our list of active volunteers. You can do as much or as little as you like – it all helps, so put your ideas and your passions into the pot.

## Date set for AGM

Our AGM will take place at 7.30pm, Thursday 23 March at Knockaloe Farm, Patrick. With delicious organic refreshments on standby for the end of the meeting, the aims are to:

- receive the Chair's Report
- receive the Treasurers Report
- receive and approve the year's balance sheet and accounts
- elect the management committee
- discuss any other business

We need to appoint officers to ensure that all funds raised are handled responsibly and effectively, and that MON continues to develop in line with members' wishes. The current committee members who would like to stand are:

Janet Bridle, Pheric Curphey, Viv Davies, Kim Lamb, Gary Lamb, Clare Lewis, Andrew Moore, Cilla Platt, George Platt, Caroline Perry & Anne Thomsett.

Any other members who want to stand should send their nominations in writing to the Secretary at least 14 days before the AGM. Please also note that no voting will take place on issues raised in 'any other business'.

## Celebrity evening on the cards

Following the huge success of last year's Bob Flowerdew talk, we're in discussions with one or two organic gardening/cooking celebrities regarding a similar event for this year. Keep your fingers crossed – and watch this space!

## MON takes part in food industry forum

MON recently took part in a food industry discussion forum chaired by The Examiner editor John Sherrocks. The forum provided the basis for a major feature in The Examiner's monthly Business Update supplement on 21 February headed 'Why local's best'.

On the forum panel were:

- **Janet Bridle**, Chair, *Manx Organic Network*
- **Tony Horsthuis**, Managing Director, *Robinson's Fresh Foods*
- **Findlay Macleod**, Chief Executive, *Isle of Man Creameries*
- **Bob Martin**, *Isle of Man Fat Stock Marketing Association*
- **Kenny Marshall**, Store Manager, *Marks & Spencer*
- **Phil Gawne** MHK, *Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry*
- **Richard Lole**, Director of Agricultural Services, *DAFF*
- **Bob Perry**, Area Manager, *CI Newsagents (Spar)*
- **Peter Whittaker**, Operations Manager, *Manx Co-op*
- **Howard Quayle**, President, *Manx National Farmers Union*

In his editorial leader encouraging readers to enter the debate, John Sherrocks said, "Farmers need to make every effort to add value to produce and exploit niche markets. The success Isle of Man Creameries is enjoying with its cheese exports is evidence of the opportunities. There are many who believe that the growth in demand for organic produce should be capitalised on."

The question of 'going organic' was discussed at length by the panel. As Tony Horsthuis said, "If this is going to be progressed, we need to get retailers, the interested farmers and probably an expert together, close the doors of a room and kill this for once: is it feasible for us to do this or not?"

Says Janet Bridle, "This was a lively open debate on a subject integral to the Island's future in so many different ways. It gave

MON and organics as a whole great coverage, and opened up a channel for Manx people to get involved."

## Healthy profits: an organic farmer's view

ON NOVEMBER 7 last year, at the invitation of DAFF, organic farmer Richard Parkes gave a presentation to Manx farmers and other interested parties on his Cumbrian dairy farm. Here are the highlights, including some of the questions put to Richard at the meeting.

### Turning adversity into opportunity

As intensive high input dairy farmers with 145 cows, the Parks were hit hard by the sharp decline in milk prices in 1996/7. Questioning how they could continue to make a living, they finally decided to give organic farming a go.

The herd was reduced to 120, while soil fertility was boosted by rotating white and red clover with cereals and using bedding muck. Grass yields were low for the first year but have steadily improved, and the Parks now get three silage crops a year. Beans have been added to the cows' diet to improve the protein and the hay is also used as a cash crop.

As organic farmers are restricted in their use of medicinals, the cows' health and comfort is of paramount concern. With this in mind, the Parks have removed the fronts of the cow sheds, put down mats and improved ventilation and lighting. This encourages the cows to eat more grass and silage, reducing protein concentrates.

### Unequivocal results

The Parks' conversion to organics is paying off:

- 7300 litres – 145 conventional cows
- 8800 litres – 120 organic cows

2002 again saw low milk prices, so the Parks started working directly with

local processors. As well as organic milk, the Sizergh Farm shop now offers two cheeses, ice cream, organic eggs from the Parks' own flock and organic vegetables from land specially set aside for this purpose.

The icing on the cake for the Parks is that the price of organic milk is rising in line with ever-increasing demand for organic dairy products across the UK.

### Questions and answers

*Q: Is your land more suited to organic agriculture than other types of land?*

A: Certainly not. It's all about land management and finding the right products for the land you have.

*Q: Do you find your costs are higher?*

A: Certainly organic feed is more expensive at the moment, but with the quality of our grass and silage we don't need to supplement the cows' diet so much with those feeds. There is more detail in organic farming and converting has made us look more closely at issues like preserving the herd's health so as to rely less on medicinals. Clean grazing and rotating means we now have no worm burden, and therefore no expensive and time-consuming worming problems.

*Q: Would you ever farm conventionally again?*

A: Absolutely not, I think we are better farmers now than we ever were. The biodiversity on our farm has improved dramatically and some species which were dying out are now thriving again.

*Q: Are the grants more attractive?*

A: We are trying to get the business away from grants and subsidies...but conservation grants are very useful for specified skills like hedge-laying.

## Meat derogation: the implications for the Island By Janet Bridle

MEAT DEROGATION is the means by which DAFF has been able to control imports of beef, sheep meat and veal, keeping Island prices relatively stable – and significantly higher than the UK.

### Emergency meeting

Following written confirmation from Brussels that derogation will end as of January 2011, DAFF held an emergency meeting before Christmas for those involved in farming and related industries, which three members of MON attended.

The end of derogation means that the Isle of Man will be open to cheap meat imports from around the world, which could see Island prices failing to stay competitive. Some would argue that for consumers this is a good thing. But there's no arguing that for Manx farmers it's a terrible blow. The DAFF meeting was full and with such a lot at stake, feelings ran high.

DAFF Director of Services

Richard Lole gave a short presentation highlighting that beef and lamb are respectively 30% and 40% dearer in the Island than the UK. It was suggested that farmers could review costs, for example, by cutting overheads, improving the food chain, adding value to product and looking at alternative incomes.

### The farmers' response

In response, Howard Quayle, President of MNFU, felt that farmers were running their businesses at the bare minimum already. In fact, many farmers are already taking on paid jobs to supplement their incomes, and a growing worry is the lack of young farmers coming up through the ranks.

DAFF made one or two suggestions about niche markets, although there were no concrete ideas on which to build. And while 'organic' wasn't mentioned, we were approached by farmers afterwards who quietly expressed an interest in learning more.

### A silver lining?

On a more positive note, it's clear from the February 7 issue of the *Isle of Man Examiner* that young Manx farmers don't give up so easily. In the Young Farmers' all-Island farm planning competition, 1st and 3rd prizes went to organic solutions, with the winner, 25-year-old farmer Chris Kneale, foreseeing a future in organic farming in line with a rising demand for organically produced food.

We believe Chris's faith is well placed. If Manx meat is to compete in a market flooded with cheap alternatives, it needs to have a unique selling point. People could well be prepared to pay a premium for quality local meat, particularly if it's also organic – as our organic butchers Fenton Campbell's in Douglas and Radcliffe's in Castletown have discovered. We will be following developments on derogation closely and will keep you posted.

## MON INITIATIVES

### Organics on the curriculum?

ALISON Jones, Cilla Platt, Sharon Jamieson and Kista Tastagh have been working hard recently on compiling a proposal for Education Minister David Anderson. This highlights the enormous benefits of encouraging our schoolchildren to learn more about where food comes from.

Today's Manx children tend to have very limited exposure to rural-related studies as part of their primary education. But the creation of 'living outdoor classrooms' – small organic gardens in or near school grounds – would enable them to learn first hand about a whole range of issues, from how food is grown to the importance of choosing local seasonal produce.

The working party's proposal highlights the advantages – not only for children, but ultimately for the Island itself – of making this part of the curriculum. The paper also details projects already developed by various organisations that provide potential guidelines for implementation.

### Half price subscription to Organic Gardening magazine

Organic Gardening magazine – the only one of its kind – has a great offer going on: half price subscription when five or more copies are delivered to a single address.

Viv and Ian Davies have got a group of subscribers together in the north, with the health food shop Mother Nature acting as the central distribution point.

If you'd like to join in the Ramsey area, or start up your own subscription group elsewhere in the Island (minimum effort required!), contact Ian Davies on 882332, or [iandavies@manx.net](mailto:iandavies@manx.net)



## Sowing seeds for the future

IN DECEMBER, Ian Davies reviewed a number of seed catalogues with a view to getting MON members the best deals on seed potatoes and seeds through discounted group orders. Publications reviewed included Organic Gardening Catalogue, Mr Fothergill's, Dobies and Tamar Organics.

Ian concluded that the Organic Gardening Catalogue stills represents the best value for money, especially if you enjoy the HDRA members' 10% discount. They also do Organic Collections: particularly good for growers who want to try several varieties but don't have a lot of room. Another member, Mike Ward, recommended Tamar Organics.

## Group certification: a revolutionary new way for Manx growers and producers

MON has been talking to Organic Farmers & Growers (OF&G) about group certification: a revolutionary means of enabling smaller producers growing organically to gain certification.

Whether members of the group want to sell through a co-operative venture like a farmers' market or box scheme, or simply want to take part in order to gain certification (eg, small livestock producers), group certification represents a far more affordable alternative to individual certification.

### Who is it for?

The sort of individuals who could benefit from group certification range from people with under two acres of land to producers with a maximum of 20 – classified by DAFF as 'hobby farms'.

This is an exciting possibility for MON members who are looking to sell their surplus organic produce: certification gives consumers confidence in the organic status of the produce

Tamar offers 10% off orders of £200, 15% off £250 etc, while the Organic Gardening Catalogue offers 25% off £160 and 30% off £360. To get the best deal, MON members could order Seeds and Sundries separately from Potatoes, where orders of five bags plus would get us £1 off per bag.

Over the summer Mike and Ian will be putting together a proposal, say for a north group, in September or October. We could do the same for groups elsewhere too, so if you'd like to take part, call Ian on 882332, or e-mail [iandavies@manx.net](mailto:iandavies@manx.net).

and therefore enables it to be sold at a premium.

### Get involved

Group certification is also a potential minefield however, but together we may find a solution.

Before discussions and research get underway in earnest, we're holding a meeting at Knockaloe Farm on Monday 27 March, 7.30pm.

**If you're interested, please contact Viv Davies on 882332 or [vivdavies@manx.net](mailto:vivdavies@manx.net), or Caroline Parry: 613478, [caroline&phil@manx.net](mailto:caroline&phil@manx.net)**

## EVENTS CALENDAR

**An outline of events in the pipeline for the coming months...**

### 23 MARCH

Manx Organic Network AGM

### 27 MARCH

Group certification meeting

## Showing off our best!

By Ian Davies

In 2005, MON had a presence at the two big shows: the Southern and the Royal. As reported in the last issue, we made quite an impact, and we will of course be there again this summer.

The shows also give MON members an opportunity to win prizes for their organically grown produce – and some, like Pete Robertson and Bill Mizen, win big style!

But it's not only the big shows that give members the chance to win. If we had more MON entrants at the many local shows, we could make a big impact in categories such as 'grown under organic conditions'.

The number of entrants is in decline and in some classes there are no entries at all – the only reason my dwarf French beans won 1st, 2nd and 3rd at Ramsey! We would be supported by a small stand at each show to reinforce the organic message.

So if you grow your own and want to get involved, call me on 882332 or email [iandavies@manx.net](mailto:iandavies@manx.net) about the sort of fruit/vegetables you could enter. We can then put a plan together.

The shows in the north I was thinking about are Sulby, Ramsey and Maughold in August, and Andreas in October. Let me know about others elsewhere and I can put together a calendar. We could also have a go at the Farm & Garden section at the Royal in August, since we will have a stand there anyway.

### MAY

Watch this space for our next celebrity evening

### 29 & 30 JULY

Southern Agricultural Show

### 11 & 12 AUGUST

Royal Manx Agricultural Show

### 26 OCTOBER

Highgrove gardener visit, Manx Plant & Garden Society

## Growing excitement in the north

By Viv and Ian Davies

Several families in the north who have a few acres are aiming to grow to organic principles. We wanted to report back to MON members on the progress of one of them. Working to a five-year plan, Jennie and Ken Maynard recently moved to the Bride area and have a house to renovate as well as six acres of land to develop.

Ken has nearly finished installing rabbit-proof fencing in the field. The Maynards will then create alternate strips of growing area and path using their small tractor. The strips will run north/south for best aspect, getting some protection from the field boundary hedges. In future, extra protection will be afforded from intermediate productive hedges of fruit trees and soft fruit bushes.

These will be based on cuttings taken from the traditional organic trees and bushes the Maynards have just planted in the garden, complementing the apple trees acquired with the house. Several historic breeds of hens will soon be making the most of the acreage too.

MON members in the north will be watching the family's progress with interest – not least in anticipation of fresh, wholesome, local produce!

*Ed: There's probably lots going on in the south, east and west too – so tell us about it for inclusion in future issues! Email jbridle@manx.net*

## Is it a polytunnel? Is it a greenhouse? No, it's a Keder!

By Viv and Ian Davies

Our 4m wide x 12m long Keder, which is like a cross between a polytunnel and a greenhouse, was finally installed in December.

The name Keder comes from the structure's material, a uniquely strong, durable and energy efficient bubble plastic. Since 1989, Keders have been installed in some of the wildest parts of the British Isles. The fabric comes with a 10-year guarantee, but none of the installations have had significant problems, even in areas where 140mph winds are commonplace.

There are two ranges: the Gardener and the Grower, as well as bespoke constructions. Gardener Keders come as kits for self-installation, or can be installed by the makers for a price. They install the Grower themselves, and we are so far impressed with ours.

Another MON member is having



a Keder installed this spring/summer. The more people who do, the more this will help spread the costs associated with Island installation. If you'd like to see our Keder or a brochure, give Ian a call on 882332, email iandavies@manx.net

## London to get the world's biggest organic store

Barkers of Kensington, London's oldest department store, is to become the world's biggest outlet dedicated to organic food.

New owner John Mackey, pioneer of US retail phenomenon Whole Foods, is bringing the concept of organic foods on a large scale to the UK.

Combating the industrialisation of farming by dealing only with reputable, small-scale suppliers, Whole Foods has grown over the last 25 years to become America's fourth biggest retail chain.

Quoted in The Observer, 29 January, Mackey said, "People dismissed us as a sort of fad, just a bunch of weird food hippies. But we've proved them wrong wherever we've gone, and we'll carry on."

## Organic farm incomes 50% higher than conventional

As reported in Farming Today on 3 February, research by the Institute of Rural Sciences, Aberystwyth, shows organic farmers getting 50% better returns than conventional farmers.

Nic Lampkin, the report's author, put the difference down mainly to the negative fall-out from BSE and FMD on conventional farm incomes.

Full details at [www.organic.aber.ac.uk/irs-enquiries@aber.ac.uk](http://www.organic.aber.ac.uk/irs-enquiries@aber.ac.uk)

## Organic dairy sector booming

On 27 January OMSCo, the organic milk supply company, reported an increase in sales of over 65% over the past year.

The company cautioned conventional producers against jumping into the sector however, which it believes can only absorb 75 to 100 new producers annually.

This caution goes back to previous boom and bust cycles in the organic liquid milk market.

But with UK demand currently outstripping supply, some retailers are importing organic milk to sustain continuity of supply.

See [www.omscoco.uk](http://www.omscoco.uk) for more.

# Herbal Medicine and The Herbal Apothecary

By Hilary Costain



*Hilary Costain at the Herbal Apothecary, Arbory Street, Castletown*

HERBALISM is the practice and study of herbal medicine (or phytotherapy, from the Greek 'phyton', meaning plant). This is the oldest and most widely used form of medicine worldwide, offering a knowledge that has increased over countless generations and improved the lives of millions.

The majority of today's medicines are still derived from plants, whether they contain plant extracts or are created using vegetable molecules as the basis of chemical combinations. However, following the discovery of several fundamental medicines like antibiotics, doctors and patients alike came to view the medicinal status of plants as dubious.

## **Herbalism: the advantages**

But even science is now coming to acknowledge that herbal medicine offers many advantages compared to conventional medicine. For example:

- By treating each patient holistically (as a whole), herbs are usually correcting the body's balance in order for it to cure itself – eg, boosting a low immune system that may be causing recurrent sinus problems.
- Medicines from plants are usually made up of several active constituents that work together, the total effect being far more powerful than the sum of the constituent parts. A conventional drug, on the other hand, would work as a single entity.
- Because they have a gentle action on the body, herbs don't seem to cause many side effects compared with orthodox drugs.
- Herbal medicines are a lot cheaper than many conventional drugs.
- With self sustainability and organic practices, the herbal medicine industry helps rather than hinders the earth's ecological balance. And if it continues to develop, it could provide work for many people in under-developed countries as well as the west.

An issue with herbal medicine in the modern world is investment. Whereas conventional drugs can make manufacturers a fortune, herbal

remedies cannot be patented. This means that funds for research into herbal medicines are currently very limited.

As a pharmacist, I believe both herbal and conventional drugs are necessary in our lives. But whereas in the past a sick person's first port of call would be a herbalist (doctors were rare and expensive), today it is cheaper to see a doctor than an alternative practitioner. Hopefully the future will see a balance, with patients taking more responsibility for their health.

## **The Herbal Apothecary**

Featuring original pharmacy fittings from the 1840s, The Herbal Apothecary at 4 Arbory Street in Castletown opened in December to offer herbal treatments and products.

As well as myself, Dr Francis Galambos is involved in the venture. Francis is a naturopath, herbalist, iridologist, homeopath and acupuncturist who has been practising in Douglas for many years. The shop is currently open every day, with Francis available two days a week.

Herbal tinctures (mostly organic) are made to order, while products for sale range from homeopathic mixtures and organic essential oils to the highly rated Speizia organic skin care products and Culpepper teas. Blood testing kits enable customers to find out their blood groups, with blood pressure and urine testing also available.

Bill Mizen and Sharon Jamieson are aiming to provide fresh potted herbs in the spring, and we hope to offer testing for food sensitivities soon (Francis currently offers this in Douglas).

Next time you're visiting Radcliffees or the Health Food Store, call in and tell us what else you'd like to see available. Or call 825655 (shop) or 495768 (mobile) for more information.

## Get a healthy MOP at Utopia!

As consumer demand for all things organic continues to rise, Utopia hair salon in Douglas now offers MOP (Modern Organic Products): a great range of organic hair and body care, all formulated with gentle cleansing agents and the finest ingredients to detoxify and purify the hair and skin.

Utopia's Marco Leonetti says, "MOP demonstrates that organics is no longer just an emerging opportunity, but a professional, profitable mainstream industry committed to producing high quality, environmentally respectful products.

"We at Utopia are proud that our customers recognize the



value of organic ingredients for everyday health, and understand the importance of harmonizing economics with personal, professional and environmental well being."

If you'd like more information on MOP and an organic way of life for your hair, or simply hair care advice, please contact Marco: [advice@utopiahaircare.com](mailto:advice@utopiahaircare.com)

## Green Mann Market update *12-4pm every Thursday*

CHRISTMAS saw the Green Mann Market at Ballabrooie taking on a festive theme, as well as the addition of a marquee to protect stall holders and shoppers alike. Wonderful organic hampers packed with sloe gin, chutneys, chocolate and fudge went down a treat, as did pheasants, hare, duck, rabbits and organically grown chestnuts.

The groaning tables of goodies produced by Kista Tastagh and Fiona Anderson continue to attract shoppers from around the Island. Delicious homemade organic bread, cakes, scones, fudge and profiteroles are complemented by hearty soups, not to mention a full range of jams and chutneys.

Organic farmer Andrew Moore attends weekly with his certified organic vegetables, while Jimmy and Nadine offer 'real' apples. On 2 February freshly caught mackerel and newly laid eggs from Jimmy's large flock of roaming chickens were also available.

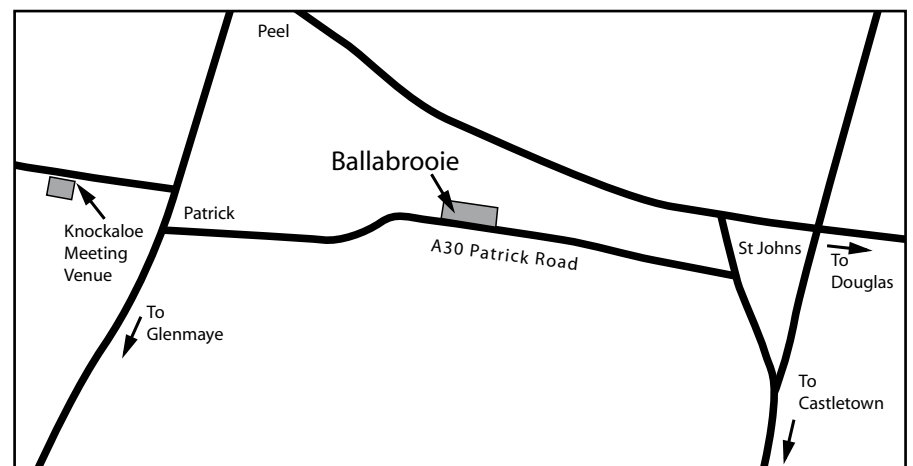
Recent additions include a kids cooking corner, where children have been buying ingredients to make

muffins and fudge served in boxes made from recycled cards. And local artists Victoria Harrup and Kay Solly have lent a craft element to the market with their inspirational greeting cards and postcards.

**A big thank you to everyone who regularly supports the market. Keep on coming, and tell everyone you know! If you'd like to sell produce or have anything you feel could contribute to Green Mann's continued success, please call Jimmy or Nadine on 843738.**



*The Green Mann market, every Thursday 12-4pm (photo courtesy of Isle of Man Newspapers Ltd)*



# SOW IT, GROW IT, SHOW IT.

## A beginner's guide to growing from seed,

by Sharon Jamieson

There are three ways to start seeds off: (1) inside, in pots or trays, (2) inside, in modules and (3) directly outside. Sowing inside can be done earlier in the season and gives a better rate of success.

Use either your own sieved compost or buy some (Arthur Bowers is reputedly the best, but I've always used multipurpose compost). Make sure the compost is neither too wet or dry.

Modules (simply trays that have been divided up) are good for crops that don't like too much root disturbance – eg, courgettes, calabrese, celery, beetroot. Last year I experimented with pots made from newspaper (you can buy pot makers from the Organic Gardening Catalogue).

### To prepare your seed tray/pot

- Mound compost into the tray, making sure all corners are filled.

- Strike off level and press firmly with a board to ensure a level surface.

- Water from below and scatter seeds on top.

- Cover with compost to depth indicated on packet or growing guide.

- Label each tray/pot and place in a light spot which is not too hot.

It's a good idea to cover your container with clingfilm or polythene to prevent it drying out, or newspaper if the spot you place it in gets hot.

### For healthy seedlings

- Turn the container as plantlets come through, or they will grow leggy looking for the light.

- If you've sown quite densely, thin seedlings out, as they don't like being overcrowded (hold seedling by one leaf while loosening soil).

- Either discard or re-plant displaced

plantlets in a fresh tray or pot.

Personally, I find it impossible to discard anything, which is why last year I ended up with 234 cauliflower seedlings and only room to grow around 12 plants. The solution to this is to swap or sell your seedlings at the Green Mann market, 12-2pm up until the end of April.

### Growing on

- As the weather gets warmer, you can put your young plants in a wind-sheltered spot outdoors so they can benefit from full daylight.

- Plants can be left out overnight, providing no chilly winds or frost are forecast.

- If you have a cold frame, now's the time to put your young plants in it. In warmer weather, leave the glass or Perspex top off during the day and cover up at night. If frost is likely, use extra cover – eg, cloths or newspapers.

- Following your seed-growing details, plant seedlings out into open ground, ready prepared with compost, leaf mould or organic fertiliser – or perhaps lime if your soil is too acid.

- Water in and label your rows.

For slug protection I can recommend Nemaslug (containing Nematodes, which introduce a bacterial infection inside the slug). Beer traps are quite an effective alternative, and somehow I feel better knowing the slugs have had a happier death in what I assume is an alcoholic haze!

## Highgrove gardener visit

The Manx Plant & Garden Society are to host a meeting featuring David Howard, Head Gardener at Highgrove, on Thursday 26 October. This is likely to be at the Manx Museum, but we will confirm nearer the time.

## Next Manx Organic gardeners meeting

Everyone is welcome at our next two monthly meetings, scheduled for:

2-4pm, Saturday 8 April and Saturday 6 May at Ballikilly Farm (opposite Rushen church, just up from the Four Roads roundabout).

And look out in the next newsletter for tips on showing your home-grown produce, courtesy of veteran show master Bill Mizen.

### Manx Organic Network in a nutshell



#### Aims and objectives:

- To promote awareness of the benefits of organically produced food and sustainable agriculture.
- To promote Manx organic farmers and growers by encouraging consumers to buy locally produced organic food.
- To create a network of local resources, information and advice.
- To encourage the Manx Government to continue and increase its support for organic production.
- To develop an identifiable Manx Organic brand.

#### Membership:

300 and growing. For membership forms to pass on to family and friends, please get in touch with Kim Lamb.

#### Contact:

Janet Bridle, Chair, 835436 or [jbridle@manx.net](mailto:jbridle@manx.net)

Kim Lamb, Secretary, 832029

MANX ORGANIC NETWORK,  
C/O THE SPINNEY, HOWE ROAD,  
PORT ST MARY, IM9 5AU