

CHAS'S

ROCK'N' ROLL

ALLOTMENT

REMEMBER that butternut squash I rescued from the snail gits on the hill some months ago? Well it's let me down badly. It's snaked its way all around my allotment and in and out the lettuces and spinach and all, without producing one baby. That's the thanks I get for providing it with a nice new, snail-free home. While its poor neighbours the courgette and ridge cucumber got mildew and bit the dust, it strutted about looking well healthy. It don't give a monkeys about bearing fruit, it just beefs its way about pleasing itself and I swear it was sticking two stalks up at me the other evening. My beetroot has never treated me like that. It wouldn't, it's not in its nature. In fact nothing I've ever grown would. Everything has always been thankful for the

'Pickled red cabbage beats the shop stuff'

extra food and water I have provided and I have been rewarded with fine fat onions, slender, tender beans, sparkling spinach and crispy lettuce in abundance. Along the way I know, too, how much they have appreciated me plucking weeds from around their feet letting the air get to their toes. But not the butternut squash. Don't give a monkeys about weeds. It just barges around pushing 'em out the way as it goes. Gotta be some 24ft long at least and getting longer. Expecting it to rise up in the sky any minute and a giant to climb down. Then I'll get the old woman out with the axe. Do you like pickled red cabbage? It's well easy to do your own and of course beats the shop stuff hands down. If you haven't grown any, (I haven't) get one from the supermarket. Chop it up as fine or as coarse as you would like it, give it a good rinse and drain it off. Don't bother to salt it



Picture: LUKE SANTILLI

if like me you eat it with everything and it gets eaten quick. It's lovely with egg and bacon. Anyway, stuff it in jars and top up with pickling vinegar, or I prefer plain malt vinegar with a little home-made muslin bag of pickling spice placed in the top. You can start eating it in a couple of days. If you've got a mint patch now's the time to make up some jars of mint sauce too to keep in the fridge. You can freeze the leaves as well just as they are and chop 'em up as you need 'em. Do it soon 'cos the patch'll soon be dying down for the winter and won't be back 'til next spring. Most restaurants, and I mean most restaurants, posh or ordinary, no matter how nice the roast lamb is, give you rotten mint sauce out of the jar. Tastes like TCP (what my brother Dave

used to call Tom Cats' ****). I don't get why so few restaurants serve fresh mint sauce. I can think of only two or three over the years I've been eating out. Bowles mint (the best) is so easy to grow, so easy to make and tastes so great you could eat it by the spoonful. Here's how I do it. Pick a good handful of leaves, rinse and put on a chopping board. Sprinkle over a teaspoonful of sugar and shake on some salt. Start chopping. The sugar and salt will help soak up the mint juice as you go. Then put it all in a mint dish and pour boiling water over to just cover it. Add malt vinegar, about a couple of tablespoons. This, with roast lamb, is my favourite Sunday dinner. If you haven't got a mint patch, find a neighbour who has. They are bound to be overrun with it and

will be glad to dig up a clump for you. Plant it somewhere where you don't mind it multiplying like mad though, 'cos it will. ● Chas & Dave: All About Us by Chas Hodges (John Blake, £7.99) Tonight: An Audience with Chas Hodges (Hosted by Goodmaze and Shed) Chas and his piano and your chance to come along and have a rabbit about the last five decades from The Beatles, Jerry Lee Lewis, Joe Meek, Albert Lee, Gene Vincent, Cliff Bennett And The Rebel Rousers, plus hear some of those favourite songs from the past. Corringham Hall, Essex (0844 561 7107). Chas & Dave gigs, Princess Theatre Aldershot, October 31; City Hall, Salisbury, November 1; Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells, November 2.



Did you know?
by Mitchell Symons
JOHN CLEESE, WHO IS 75 TOMORROW, CHOSE A STUFFED MICHAEL PALIN AS HIS LUXURY ON DESERT ISLAND DISCS. HERE ARE SOME OTHER UNIQUE LUXURIES CHOSEN
A 78rpm record of The Laughing Policeman (to smash on the rocks) – John Sessions
A Barclaycard – Spike Milligan
A Continental railway timetable – Sir Alfred Hitchcock
Expensive ivory back-scratcher – Tito Gobbi
A gym – Sir Peter Blake
A horse saddle – Terry-Thomas
Hot lemon flannels (as provided in Chinese restaurants) – Alison Steadman
The law of the land (so he could break it) – Benjamin Zephaniah
A life-size laminated photo of James Caan from Dragon's Den (on which she planned to bodysurf) – Kathy Burke
A parking meter and caravan – Maureen Lipman
Premium Bonds – Bud Flanagan
A self-operated nuclear strike force – John Bird
A steamroller – Fred Dibnah
A tightrope – Lesley Garrett
Twenty tons of pine needles – Elia Kazan
A ventriloquist's dummy – Brian Reece
A very long stainless steel shaft to encourage pole-dancing mermaids – Felix Dennis

THIS WEEK'S PONDERABLES
In 2006, Joaquin Phoenix crashed his car. A passerby stopped him from lighting a cigarette as petrol was leaking and helped to drag him out of the car. The good Samaritan turned out to be the German film director Werner Herzog.
Neutral Switzerland was bombed by the Allies during the Second World War. The court-martial established to look into it was chaired by the Hollywood star Colonel James Stewart.
Leeches are used as a treatment for cauliflower ears.
All of Queen Anne's 17 children died before she did.
A Chinese man named Li Si invented The Five Pains, a form of capital punishment where the victim had all sorts of bits cut off before being cut in half across the waist. And how did Li Si die? You guessed it... execution by the Five Pains.
The tongue of a tiger is so rough that if it licked a human hand it would draw blood.
The fastest insect in the world is the dragonfly which is capable of speeds up to 50mph. It can hover, fly backwards and turn around in mid-air.
US President Cleveland used to answer the White House phone.
53 per cent of British households have access to a garage but only 24 per cent use them for parking.

THIS WEEK'S IMPONDERABLE: DO OTHER MAMMALS SWEAT?
Some do, some don't. Dogs, for example, do not have sweat glands so if they overheat, they either seek shade or pant heavily and lose heat through their tongues. Horses, on the other hand, do sweat but because they are covered in so much hair, their sweat does not evaporate so easily and therefore they have to be cooled down (eg with a towel). But what about the pig? After all, we talk about sweating like a pig, so presumably the pig sweats a lot? In fact, pigs do not sweat. What they do to cool down is either drink lots of water or find a nice mud bath or wet patch and roll in it. The mud also helps to keep flies and mosquitoes away and acts as a sunscreen. So although they often look dirty, there is a good reason for this and contrary to what most people think, they are in fact quite fastidious and only smelly if their owners don't clean them out regularly. The fact that they eat leftovers and other stuff considered unfit for humans is again not their choice...

WISE WORDS
A goal is not always meant to be reached, it often serves simply as something to aim at. (Bruce Lee)

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HURRY! CLOSES MIDNIGHT TOMORROW!

Here's your chance to claim £17,777 cash! That's right, we're giving all UK residents who qualify and are over 18 the chance to Win Seventeen Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Seven Pounds Cash! All you have to do is find the THREE MISSING WORDS

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of the three word lists for the chance to win an extra £1000. TESTIMONIALS As with all our cash prize puzzle winners of £1,000 or more, if required we ask that you make yourself available for a winners photograph upon receiving

your prize money. Call now for the chance to Win £17,777 Cash! Hurry, the competition phone line closes at Midnight Tomorrow! Leave your missing word answers on 0906 661 3741* Call costs £1.53 per min and lasts 3mins. Network extras apply. Max call cost £4.60.



The postman too strolls into range, "This way, I'll show you something strange!"

Rupert

And Jenny Frost

EPISODE 5

Before Algy can explain what he means there are more footsteps and the village postman comes around the corner. "Hello, you young folk. Do you want to see something mysterious?" he asks. "We already have, all of us!" declares Rupert. "Is your mystery the same as ours?" "Come and look," says the postman, taking them away from the houses and pointing uphill. "See that line of snow along the top? What sort of snowstorm is it that stops in a straight line?"



He points across some open land, "This snowstorm stopped in one straight band!"