

CHAS'S ROCK 'N' ROLL ALLOTMENT

In his first column, cockney crooner **CHAS HODGES** gets to grips with slimy pests and chicken pellets

THE ALLOTMENT IS looking good. Had planned to manure the lot this year as it's into its fourth year un-manured but only managed to cover a quarter of the plot. So, having kept chickens in the past and knowing the value of poultry droppings (rich in potash, sulphates and especially nitrogen) I decided on a couple of buckets of chicken pellets for the rest. Seems to be working.

Everything is looking green and healthy. So what is everything? I decided on going for a mainly "don't have to be there at the point of fruition" crop as I've got a tour with Dave coming up. So onions, shallots and leeks are to the foreground this year. I always grow some but this year about three quarters of my plot is given to these.

Onions. Some are grown from seed and some from sets. These

'Slugs and snails are real gits this year'

can be eaten at all stages. When they're spring onion-sized you can use them in salads: pull alternate onions and let the rest in the row grow on to larger spring onions or final maturity which can be stored in the shed.

Slugs and snails are being particular gits this year. When I took on this plot four years ago I piled the sods I removed from my plot (grass sods) into a nice heap to the end of my plot. It's now a nice conical mound which is grass covered which I have kept smartly clipped.

Decided on planting a ridge cucumber right at the peak so it can trail nicely down and around the sides.

I can help it along as she trails. Lovely vision of a cute grass mountain adorned with cucumber foliage and a cocky cucumber poking out here and there. No such luck. Snail gits had it away.

Whole healthy cucumber plant got bashed up daily (or nightly



Picture: LUKE SANTILL

probably, 'cos that's when they come out) until it was but a stalk. It looked at me sadly as I inspected it.

It knew what I was going to do. I had no choice. Grabbed it by the scruff of its stalk and tossed it on

the compost heap. Tried another two times with cucumber but the snails were ready for it now. Whoosh! I began to feel a third time they would have had my fingers off.

So I arrived yesterday to find

three nice butternut squash plants left for me by a plot neighbour. They now sit smartly atop the mound like the folks who live on the hill. Do snails have hearts? I will let you know.

(By the way, I've tried the beer tubs in the past, which do collect a wealth of snails but I do suspect that snails from all around say, "Hey, hey, there's a party going on," and the snails you want to get rid of don't get a look in. Might try it again tho')

Butternut squash still OK but noticed blackfly on my beetroot. Will need to spray. Now there was something that my Grandad used to make up out of fag ends.

He'd chuck all his dog ends in a bucket of water and then after a week or so he'd make up a spray. The bucket gave off a lovely stink. But I don't smoke no more so that's out.

Grandad used to take me over his allotment but I don't know

'Grandad just shouted Get off there!'

why. He never showed me anything. Just bunched up carnations to sell down the pub and hollered at me wherever I was to "Get off there!". "There" was just earth or dirt from what I could see but had he sown seeds there? He never said.

He'd just say, "Get off there!". Loudly. It's a wonder I ever got in to growing. I enjoyed these trips with him though. His mate's plot next to him had some lovely goosegog bushes, and luckily I can't remember him ever being around.

Me keeping out of eyeshot of Grandad of course...

● *Chas's Rock 'n' Roll Allotment Facebook page at facebook.com/chashodgesrockandrollallotment Chas and his band are playing the following gigs: Shanklin Theatre, Isle of Wight, August 15; Princess Theatre, Clacton, August 23; Orchard Theatre, Dartford, September 6. More details at chashodges.com*



Did you know?

by Mitchell Symons

AS FRIDAY IS INDEPENDENCE DAY IN THE US, HERE ARE SOME MORE GENUINE EXCHANGES IN US LAW COURTS

Q: Do you know if your daughter has ever been involved in voodoo or the occult?

A: We both do.

Q: Voodoo?

A: We do.

Q: You do?

A: Yes, voodoo.

Q: Can you describe the individual?

A: He was about medium height and had a beard.

Q: Was this a male, or a female?

A: Unless the Circus was in town, I'm saying male.

Q: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?

A: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

Q: Are you married?

A: No, I'm divorced.

Q: And what did your husband do before you divorced him?

A: A lot of things I didn't know about.

Q: What is your brother-in-law's name?

A: Borofkin.

Q: What's his first name?

A: I can't remember.

Q: He's been your brother-in-law for years, and you can't remember his first name?

A: No. I tell you I'm too excited. (Rising from the witness chair and pointing to Mr Borofkin.) Nathan, for God's sake, tell them your first name!

THIS WEEK'S PONDERABLES

● **Sixty years ago this week, all food rationing in Britain ended. The last items to be de-rationed were meat and bacon.**

● When Mel Brooks was 14, he was taught how to play the drums by a neighbour, the great Buddy Rich.

● **Hummingbirds can't walk.**

● Napoleon took 14,000 French decrees and whittled them down to a set of seven laws. This was the first time in modern history that a nation's laws applied equally to all citizens.

● **The poodle derives its name from the German word pudel, meaning to splash about.**

● The French word for "hashtag" is Motdièse (which translates as "sharpword").

● **More fatal car accidents occur on a Saturday than on any other day of the week.**

● When police suspect someone of having swallowed narcotics, they give them curry to speed up the reappearance of the drugs.

● **In order to mate with his female partner, the male common box turtle has to lean back past the vertical.**



Rupert

And The Blue Star
EPISODE 12

Meanwhile Mrs Bear is packing up the picnic things. "Rupert and Bill have been away a long time," she says. "I hope they are safe."

"See, here they come," says Mr Bear. "They're carrying something."

"Look, Daddy, a new starfish," says Rupert when he arrives. "It's blue, and it made the pail too electric to hold, but we found that when we put the wooden spades through the handle we could carry it."

Mr Bear stares and murmurs. "My, the things you do find."



With wooden spades to guard their hands, They bring the pail across the sands.



"Blue starfish? Gives electric shocks?" gasps Daddy. "Stranded near the rocks?"

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