

Garden diary : time for beans!

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Chuchichästli (Kitchen Cupboard)

Garden Diary

Fondue is not what you think it is!

With cheese high on the menu in this issue of the Helvetia, we thought we would find out how the different Swiss clubs around the country make their very own special fondue. The result? No fondue is quite like another fondue. We are delighted to be able to share these recipes and of course thank all clubs most cordially for revealing their top secret.

Hamilton caters for about 100 people and for this, they bring 10lt of white wine to the boil, together with two crushed cloves of garlic. To this, they add 15kg of cheese: half Masdaam from the Mercer cheese factory, half extra mature Gouda. Once it's melted, they add half a packet of corn flour mixed with water, pepper, nutmeg, paprika, and last but not least, a cup of Kirsch.



Taranaki on the other hand, makes individual portions for 6 people at a time: 6dl white wine, two cloves of garlic, 800g Mainland Te Horo Swiss cheese, 100g Edam (the cheap one in the supermarket), cornflour and Kirsch as required at the end. The method is as in Hamilton. This version was very successful this year.

Wellington, catering for about 80 people, makes up a mixture of two thirds Masdaam and one third Gouda (the mild one). The medium one does not melt well and gets lumpy. White wine, garlic and Kirsch with corn flour are added in the same manner as described above. At some stage, it was discovered that the addition of some Edam makes the mixture smoother and prevent it from thickening up too soon.

In Auckland, the basic recipe is for four people and multiplied up to the number required present at fondue nights. It includes 400g grated Gruyère Cheese, 400g grated Emmental Cheese, one clove of garlic, cut into two, four teaspoons of corn flour, 350ml white wine, four tablespoons of kirsch, one pinch white pepper, one pinch nutmeg and one tablespoon fresh lemon juice. Rub the fondue dish with the clove of garlic. Leave in pot if desired. Mix the Gruyère, the Emmental, the corn flour and the nutmeg together in the fondue dish, add the white wine and bring to a boil while stirring continuously until the cheese has melted. Add the kirsch and the white pepper. If need be, add a bit more corn flour mixed in with the kirsch. Keep the fondue dish warm on the burner over a very low flame.

A big thank you goes to Anita Zuber, Marianne Drummond, Roland Schütz and Marcel Rüedi for sharing these recipes.

Collated by Trudi Fill-Weidmann



Time for Beans!



Wait until late October to sow runner beans direct, unless you have left them over winter to die down and to re-sprout in spring. Dwarf beans have to be planted each year. Both types of bean are frost tender, requiring warm conditions for germination and growth. Climbing beans usually produce heavier crops and occupy more space than dwarf varieties. There are plenty of choices for dwarf or climbing varieties including long, short and stringless, as well as a variety of colours in purple, green, yellow or red striped.

Beans are easy to grow and can be harvested in 65-80 days sown directly, or in punnets or toilet roll tubes for easier transplanting if started inside. In the North, sow mid-October with later sowings in December and January to give an extended harvest. Sow dwarf seeds in double rows 3-5cm deep and 5-10cm apart. Climbing beans should be grown 2-3cm deep and 10cm apart. Beans are planted at soil temperatures between 16-30 degrees Celsius, after all danger of frosts has passed. Plant in a fertile, well cultivated soil with lime added in an open sunny situation, where the taller varieties don't overshadow other plants.

Grow climbing beans up fences, trellises, sticks, sweet corn or tepees. Dwarf beans can be supported by crossed sticks placed along the rows. Keep well watered in dry weather and pick regularly to encourage new flowers, as well as misting with water to encourage pollination. Regular feeding with a liquid fertiliser is beneficial. Watch out for snails, as they will eat through the stems at ground level.

Beans freeze well and can be blanched and added to salads or simply steamed or boiled. Pick and use when young and tender or they become stringy.

By Melissa Lanz