



## »»» ECO NEWSLETTER «««



### **'WHERE FLOWERS BLOOM SO DOES HOPE' – LADY BIRD JOHNSON**



**I love spring. It fills me with a desire to clean, fix, renew, plan and combined with my lenten promises makes me think about how I want the year ahead to be. It's also the season that hosts Mothering Sunday and my most favourite time of the year holy week and Easter.**

**At a time when America is going through a somewhat turbulent time in the worlds eyes I have chosen an inspirational quote from Claudia (Lady Bird) Johnson first lady of President Lynden Johnson and known for advocating the beautification of the nations cities and highways with wild flowers. She is recognised as one of the most highly regarded first ladies in US history and every bit relevant today as she was in her time.**

**I heard today that we can expect fewer slugs this year which after a relatively dry and colder period this is good news for the gardeners amongst you. I certainly hope that the sun continues to shine especially on the 25th of this month when our church will be judged for a Gold A Rocha Eco Church award.**

**Good luck St.Mary's. May our efforts be rewarded. Andrew**

# A NEW ECO-APPROACH TO COTTON PRODUCTION – ANNE STONE



Cotton, a versatile and comfortable fabric, enjoyed by all has a somewhat tarnished side to its reputation. The amount of chemicals used in its production and the effect of these chemicals on growers and the environment leaves little to be desired. That's why a new method developed by the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) is leading the way in making the product match its 'natural' label.

Food sprays made from brewer's waste, or maize, are sprayed onto the cotton plants. These mimic the fluid released by pest insects and in turn attract predatory insects. Combining this approach with interplanting of other predatory attracting crops (e.g. Alfalfa) and the occasional use of locally made insecticides this approach has the same success as chemical spraying. The result has produced a 30% increase in cotton returns for farmers and more importantly is healthier for the producers and the environment. Sounds like a win win!

## THE STORY BEHIND MOTHERING SUNDAY – KAREN WEST

Mothering Sunday here in the UK unlike in other parts of the world maps onto our religious calendar and always falls on the 4th Sunday of Lent.

Increasingly commercialised these days it has moved somewhat from its original more holy origins. Back in the 16th century the faithful made pilgrimage to their Mother Church. This may have been where they were baptised, nearest Cathedral or a major parish church. It wasn't so much about honouring your own mother but rather a time to reflect and give thanks for Mary the mother of Jesus, her loving nurture of him and her support of his Ministry. Another tradition was to give farm and estate workers a day off on this day to visit their mother and perhaps attend church too. Family focused occasions were rare in previous centuries, so this day held special favour amongst the working classes.

On the 30th of March this year St. Mary's and churches nationwide will celebrate and give thanks for Mothers and other maternal figures who love and care for us.

Remember whilst it is always nice to receive a card or a gift the joy of company, turning up and saying 'I love you' are more precious than any monetary gesture and have a much greener footprint.

**It's not quite known how the cake got its rather distinct name. Did Simon, who wanted to bake the cake, and Nell, who wanted to boil it, get together to make the resulting Simnel cake or was it the Latin word 'simila' meaning ground wheat flour that gave this seasonal cake historic importance?**

**The cake originated back in 11th century, medieval England, as a yeast-leavened bread. By the 17th century it was made into a pudding batter with almonds, spices and dried fruit, boiled like a pudding then wrapped in pastry and baked to a hard crust.**

**The 19th century, the familiar decoration of 11 small balls of marzipan set on a flat piece of marzipan became the trend, the balls representing of course the disciples and the marzipan flat base, Christ.**

**Originally, the cake was baked to use up all the luxury ingredients before the period of Lent. Later it was made to share on Mother's Day giving everyone a break from an otherwise bland period of abstinence.**

**So, whether for Mother's Day or for Easter why not try baking a lovely Simnel cake as a gift. Below you will find an easy-to-follow vegan recipe as an eco-friendly option to the more traditional recipes.**

**Maybe you could bring your bakes along to coffee on Easter Sunday and share it in fellowship with your St. Mary's friends and our risen Lord. I'm sure Father Adam will be a willing judge.**



**THIS VEGAN SIMNEL CAKE IS A DELICIOUSLY SWEET PLANT-BASED VERSION OF A TRADITIONAL EASTER TREAT.**

### **Ingredients:**

**175g light muscovado sugar**

**175g vegan butter, softened, plus extra for greasing**

**175g self-raising flour**

**3 flaxseed eggs (3 tbsp ground flaxseed mixed with 9 tbsp water, let it sit for 5 minutes until it thickens)**

**50g ground almonds**

**3 tbsp plant-based milk (such as almond milk or soy milk)**

**100g sultanas**

**100g glacé cherries, quartered**

**100g dried apricots, cut into small pieces**

**2 tsp mixed spice powder**

**For the decoration**

**500 g golden vegan marzipan**

**2 tablespoons apricot jam**

### **To make the cake:**

- 1. Preheat your oven to 160C/140C Fan/Gas 3. Grease a 20cm round, deep-sided, loose-bottomed tin with butter and line the base with baking paper.**
- 2. In a bowl, cream the vegan butter and sugar together until light and fluffy.**
- 3. Add the flaxseed eggs to the mixture, one at a time, beating well after each addition.**
- 4. Sift in the flour and ground almonds, and fold gently.**
- 5. Add the plant-based milk and mix until combined.**
- 6. Fold in the sultanas, glacé cherries, dried apricots, and mixed spice powder.**
- 7. Pour the mixture into the prepared cake tin and smooth the top.**
- 8. Bake in the preheated oven for 1 ¾ to 2 hours (or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean).**
- 9. Once baked, remove from the oven and let it cool in the tin for a few minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.**
- 10. Roll out the vegan marzipan and cut it to fit the top of the cake. Brush the top of the cake with apricot jam and place the marzipan on top. Add the 11 small balls to the cake, securing with a small amount of jam.**

**Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter.**