

OUR PLACE *News*

The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

AUGUST 2022

Inside this issue...

Scorchio!

How to prepare your garden for the potential drought

Frugal food:

9 tips to make food last longer as prices soar

Cheese, cider & cycling:

A tasty tour of the West Country

A new start after 60:

2 stories about embracing life in later years

PLUS...

What's on • Health & Beauty • Money & Work • Leisure & Travel
Food & Drink • Arts, Crafts & Hobbies • Home & Garden

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to Our Place - The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

Every month, we bring you news and features on; Health & Beauty, Money & Work, Leisure & Travel, Food & Drink, Arts, Crafts & Hobbies, Home & Garden, plus... our Charity of the Month!

Our Place was founded with a mission to connect the mature online community to a world of news, features, offers and life changing products they may have missed out on. Bring them all into one place, Our Place.

What makes us special is that we are a vibrant team of all ages, from 21 to 65 who are all passionate about living life to the fullest irrespective of age. We have built strong relationships with some of the best UK age related businesses with the aim of brokering discounted rates for our Over-50s community.

Become a Friend of Our Place and receive our exclusive newsletters. They are a great way of keeping updated with the latest news and promotions. We aim to bring a smile to your face every time you open your inbox by selecting exclusive vouchers and discounts just for you.

We welcome you and hope you enjoy Our Place.

The Editor - Our Place

PS. Do you have an interesting story or article? If so, send us an email by visiting: www.ourplace.co

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NEVER leave your dog in a hot car!

Every year, dogs suffer and die when their guardians make the mistake of leaving them in a parked car, even for “just a minute” while they run an errand.

Parked cars are deathtraps for dogs: On a 78-degree day, the temperature inside a parked car can soar to between 100 and 120 degrees in just minutes, and on a 90-degree day, the interior temperature can reach as high as 160 degrees in less than 10 minutes.

Animals can sustain brain damage or even die from heatstroke in just 15 minutes. Beating the heat is extra tough for dogs because they can only cool themselves by panting and by sweating through their paw pads.

If you see a dog left alone in a hot car, take down the car's colour, model, make, and license plate number. Have the owner paged in the nearest buildings, or call local humane authorities or police. Have someone keep an eye on the dog.

Don't leave the scene until the situation has been resolved.

If the authorities are unresponsive or too slow and the dog's life appears to be in imminent danger, find a witness (or several) who will back up your assessment, take steps to remove the suffering animal from the car, and then wait for authorities to arrive.

Watch for heatstroke symptoms such as restlessness, excessive thirst, thick saliva, heavy panting, lethargy, lack of appetite, dark tongue, rapid heartbeat, fever, vomiting, bloody diarrhoea, and lack of coordination. If a dog shows any of these symptoms, get him or her out of the heat, preferably into an air-conditioned vehicle, and then to a veterinarian immediately. If you are unable to transport the dog yourself, take him or her into an air-conditioned building if possible and call animal control: Tell them it is an emergency.

Provide water to drink, and if possible spray the dog with a garden hose or immerse him or her in a tub of cool (but not iced) water for up to two minutes in order to lower the body temperature gradually. You can also place the dog in front of an electric fan. Applying cool, wet towels to the groin area, stomach, chest, and paws can also help. Be careful not to use ice or cold water, and don't overcool the animal.

When walking your dog, keep in mind that if it feels hot enough to fry an egg outside, it probably is. When the air temperature is 86 degrees, the asphalt can reach a sizzling 135 degrees - more than hot enough to cook an egg in five minutes. And it can do the same to our canine companions' sensitive foot pads.

On an 87-degree day, asphalt temperatures can reach 140 degrees, hot enough to cause burns, permanent damage and scarring after just one minute of contact. Rapid burns and blistering can occur at 150 degrees. Hot sidewalks, pavement and parking lots can not only burn paws, they also reflect heat onto dogs' bodies, increasing their risk of deadly heatstroke.

If you wouldn't put your dog in a frying pan, please don't make him or her walk on a hot pavement. Always test the pavement with your hand before setting out (too hot to touch is too hot for your dog), walk early in the morning or late at night when it's cooler, carry water and take frequent breaks in shady spots and never make dogs wear muzzles that restrict their breathing.

Summer tips for your dog

1. Exercise your dog early in the morning or late at night. Since these are the cooler parts of the day, this will make the walk more comfortable for both you and your dog. I'm a believer in vigorous exercise for healthy dogs, but this is the time of year to back off on exercise intensity.

2. Use doggie boots. You can find these at your local pet supply store. If you can't walk your dog during the early and later hours of the day, this is a good way of protecting him. Heat rises from the ground, especially on surfaces like cement and asphalt, and dogs absorb and release heat through their feet. Just like boots prevent the dog from absorbing the cold in the winter, they also isolate heat.

3. Keep your dog hydrated! Different dogs have different needs when battling the heat. Keep in mind that darker coats absorb more heat than lighter coats. Also, overweight dogs are at higher risk for dehydration. Carry a bottle of water when going on a walk with your dog. Better yet have your dog carry it for you in a backpack or a vest! The water in the bottles will keep the dog cooler and also give the dog a sense of purpose.

4. Keep your dog in the shade Don't have air conditioning? No problem! Find a spot in the shade and set up a kiddie pool. Lay down a wet towel for your dog to lie on. Or simply set up a fan in front of a pan of ice.



A new start after 60: 2 stories about embracing life in later years

After decades in hairdressing, 65-year-old Sharon McAllister was ready for a change rather than a rest. And her yoga classes are just the beginning. And at 70 Erik Wilkinson went camping for the first time - and stopped cocooning himself from life.

When Sharon McAllister's daughter trained as a yoga teacher, she raved about it so much that McAllister herself was tempted. She had spent decades as a hairdresser, but this year, at the age of 65, she joined four strangers on an intensive, 250-hour yoga-teaching course in Spain.

"I thought: 'What do I want to do with the rest of my life? What have I got to offer? Am I just going to be another invisible old lady, or can I be of some use?'" She has already led 10 classes as a cover teacher where she lives in Essex. Her instructor told her: "You have your own individual skills to bring."

While she is still developing her personal style of teaching, she has noticed that the way she ends her classes is very popular - with an assisted savasana, or corpse pose, in which she offers a postural adjustment of her class-goers' feet, arms, heads, necks and shoulders. "I'm used to touching people from my hairdressing career. It feels natural, something I've got to offer people, exchanging energies through touch."

It was McAllister's father who suggested hairdressing as a career when she was a child. Himself a barber, he had been trained by his father. A family photo shows McAllister's grandfather in the family salon in the 1920s.

As a child, McAllister "was always patted on the head rather patronisingly by adults and told: 'I expect you will go into the family business.' Through gritted teeth, I would smile at them and think: 'No I bloody won't!' But I did. And I was very grateful for it."

While completing a degree in fashion and textile design, McAllister realised that it wasn't the path for her. "I wanted to branch out on my own," she says. She asked her dad to train her and, at 22, with £1,000, she opened her own salon, Buddies.

"It was the 70s. Vidal Sassoon was my idol. I had done my dissertation on him. I had delusions of grandeur, in the small town of Brightlingsea," she says.

She wore her hair in a short pixie cut, coloured to a strawberry blond, and she decorated the salon in cream and brown, put cork tiles on the walls, and spider plants in macramé hangers. "It went down incredibly well. There were no unisex hairdressers around at the time. It was quite revolutionary." McAllister loved to go to London. "Colouring courses, advanced styling... In those days, you could sign up and go to the Wella school, or Vidal Sassoon." When her dad retired, she took over his salon, then acquired a third.

Her brother was a competition hairdresser, and won the world championships in the 70s. McAllister "was more concerned about keeping people happy in my locality. It's been such a privilege to have been a hairdresser all my life. You meet the most amazing people. You have the most fabulous conversations." However, three salons proved overwhelming. She let two leases lapse. Then in 2008, she broke her arm in a fall. "I couldn't hold a comb, couldn't hold scissors. I had to close the salon for three months. That's a long time in haircuts." When she returned, she was 53. "It was a different world. I was starting again. And I found that my age went against me. People expect women in hairdressing to be younger. And I wanted to do other things with my life."

As well as the yoga, those "other things" have included a course to learn plant-based cookery. Next she wants to study sound therapy. She may yet run retreats. "I could do the food as well. As you grow in confidence, you think: 'I could take this a bit further.' "I like to think when I've finished a yoga class that people go out feeling happy and contented and pleased and relaxed," she continues. "Those are the same feelings I wanted people to leave my salon with. In return, I've been able to keep my brain active, my body supple. Physically, emotionally, mentally and psychologically, it's been amazing." As she says of those hairdressing courses decades ago: "It is all about the journey of learning."



His tent has blown down, midges have forced him to sleep in a van, but after decades of planning and preparation, Erik Wilkinson is embracing the unexpected. Erik Wilkinson's 70th birthday hit him with great force. He celebrated, but cannot remember the occasion. However, a phrase entered his head. "Pregnancy of death," he says. "The words sprang into me. I thought: 'I don't know how long I've got.' And this phrase kept coming to mind." It began to dominate his thoughts. "Like any pregnancy, you need certain inputs. Because you are going through a transition," he says.

This is how, at 70, Wilkinson decided it was time for his first experience of camping. A thinker and a planner - he says he is often described as a thoughtful tactician - he took preparation seriously. He and his wife, Norah, put up a tent in the garden. During lockdown, they slept out for the first time.

"Our tent opened Norah and me to strange rustles of animals, the flutter of moths and the gentle hues of the sky... and the tent stayed up!" Did Wilkinson want to camp as a child? "Not at all!" he says. "The thought was awful. It was too challenging." In cubs and scouts, he declined all invitations. "I wonder why," he muses. Maybe he liked to know how things would pan out in advance? "Probably. Yes."

Wilkinson spent most of his working life, from his late 20s to 55, in the National Careers Service, which is ironic, given that he didn't really know what to do. He was looking for security after two years travelling - itself an attempt "to break the whole thing about lower-middle-class kid goes to university, comes out and goes into a bank". He set up a self-funding assessment centre in Wiltshire, which used psychometric testing to provide careers advice. In a sense, at 72, he is now advising himself on his own best way forward.

After the night in the garden, Wilkinson continued his camping apprenticeship with Norah in Stroud, then in Carmarthenshire. He saw other campers' fires, and bought a fold-up brazier. He adapted his Citroën Berlingo to take a camp bed. Then, in June, after they had visited family in Scotland, Norah caught the train home to Gloucestershire and Wilkinson set off on his first big solo adventure - "10 days on my own around the north of Scotland".

He slept out in the van by the sea on his first night, after midges drove him from the campsite. But that was great, he says. "It's the things that go wrong, the problem-solving, the people you meet, that take you out of your comfort zone. It's not cocooning you from life." Another night, a gale blew down his tent in Durness - and that was fine, too. "That's there as a memory. It's shifting it from 'This is awful' to 'This is an adventure'. That's the journey I'm trying to do." Maybe he is trying to effect the same shift on hitting his 70s.

Camping, or adventure, is only one aspect of Wilkinson's "pregnancy" preparations. The phrase being so suggestive, I wonder if he and Norah have children, but Wilkinson says they chose not to and "it's not been a big deal". He lists other "pillars" of this gestation as practical (getting a will in order, accepting death, developing intergenerational relationships), but say there is a spiritual element, too.

Wilkinson says that all his life he has worked too hard. Even volunteering for local climate groups in retirement came to feel like a job. As he talks about his "pillars", this "pregnancy" that may extend to decades sounds as if it has activated his work ethic, albeit in a liberating way. "I'm very in my head," he says. "That's why the camping is so good." It chimes with his experience after university. "What I wanted to do was to travel," he says. He went to India and Israel. "And that was the best thing I ever did." Not least because he met Norah on a kibbutz.

There are times, especially while having breakfast at his campfire, or sitting there in the evening, between eight and 10 as the light fades, enjoying "that meditative aspect" of the flames, that he really appreciates camping - "for giving me a way to be as healthy and positive as I possibly can be for the people I love".

(Article source: *The Guardian*)

Inspirational 82-year-old man eight peaks away from completing challenge to climb all 282 Munros

Two years after setting off into the hills, the grandfather of four only has eight of Scotland's Munros to climb.



Sky News reports that an 82-year-old man is just eight peaks away from completing his challenge of climbing the peaks of Scotland's 282 Munros.

Nick Gardner said he was "knocked for six" when his partner of 50 years, Janet, had to be moved into a care home after she developed Alzheimer's disease and osteoporosis.

So the grandfather of four set off into the hills in July 2020 in order to do something to keep him going.

Now, around two years on, he only has eight Munros left to climb. "When Janet went into care it absolutely shattered me," he told the PA news agency.

"We were incredibly close as a couple, she was the most wonderful and caring wife, mother and grandmother possible, and now she doesn't recognise me. "I was heading into some mental condition, so I thought I have to get myself a challenge, to pull me out."

Having never climbed a Munro - a Scottish mountain that reaches a minimum of 3,000ft (914.4m) - the former physics teacher gave himself 1,200 days to complete the challenge while raising money for Alzheimer Scotland and the Royal Osteoporosis Society (ROS). With his final summit planned for about two weeks' time, Mr Gardner is on track to finish much earlier in under 800 days.

"I am so close to completing it, I really feel like a child in the run-up to Christmas," he said, "I have butterflies."

Once he completes his challenge he will have climbed more than 500,000ft (152,000m), the equivalent of scaling Mount Everest (8,848m) around 17 times.

He will have walked 2,000 miles (3,218km), a similar distance to hiking from Edinburgh to Greece. Mr Gardner said he is never truly alone during his climbs.

"I am over 80, and I think it would be irresponsible to climb on my own at this age, so I always have people with me. "I don't climb in a rush, and after the first two or three Munros I just started stopping people on the hill to tell them what I was doing.

"People couldn't believe it, and they started joining me and donating money. "Now, when I am walking, I regularly hear, 'Nick' shouted. "One man came up to me and said: 'Nick, excuse my language, but you're a f***** legend'. "I don't normally get sworn at like that."

The remaining peaks are three in Knoydart: Ladhar, Mell Buidhe and Luinne Bheinn; four in Glen Dessary: Sgurr na ciche, Garbh chioche mhor, Sgurr nan coireachan and Sgurr Mor.

For the last, the 282nd summit at Cairn Gorm in the Highlands, he will be joined by friends and family for the final climb. Mr Gardner's target was initially to raise £10,000, but he is now on track to reach £50,000.

(Story source: Sky News)

Adults aged 50 and over are best at being 'happy with what they have', study finds

Holidays and time to spend on hobbies and interests featured in the top 10 things the over 50s are satisfied with, along with being debt free, having good health and knowing the children are happy.

The Mirror reports that adults aged 50 and over are most content with their lives, according to research.

A poll of 2,000 adults found those in this decade and beyond are best at being 'happy with what they have' - and also report stronger relationships.

Holidays and time to spend on hobbies and interests featured in the top 10 things the over 50s are satisfied with, along with being debt free, having good health and knowing the children are happy.

A fifth of adults this age with kids still living at home also admit they are more than ready to get them moved out - and move on to the next stage of their life. It also emerged more than one in 10 have a more active sex life than they ever had before.

The swinging 50s: Age when we feel at our sexiest is revealed as 53... and a fifth say dating is spicier as we mature, survey shows



Get to the age of 53 and some of us might think we're past our prime. But, insist researchers, it is actually the age when we feel at our sexiest.

Three quarters of adults said having time to relax is what really makes them feel content, with those 50 and older likely to take four or more minibreaks or weekend getaways in an average year.

Simon Thompson, managing director of Warner Leisure Hotels, which operates 15 adult-only hotels across the UK and commissioned the research, said: "It's no surprise that the results found a huge part of what makes people happy is simply having time to enjoy life.

"Our guests love unwinding in whatever way suits them - from dancing the night away to live entertainment, to relaxing in our spas, learning something new like archery, or indulging in delicious three-course meals. "By the time they reach their 50s, people are more open to simply doing what they love when they want."

Things that make adults over 50 feel serene also include learning to be happy with what they've got (54 per cent), and enjoying a leisurely tea or coffee in the morning (35 per cent). Simple pleasures such as sunny days with clear skies, a good night's sleep - and seeing old friends also featured in the list. But the research found those under the age of 30 describe themselves as least content with life overall, stressing most about their finances and work/life balance.

Older Brits are most likely to consider themselves a 'glass half full' person, compared to other age groups, with 40 per cent of over-50s feeling this way. This compares to just 24 per cent of under-30s, and only 28 per cent of those in their forties. Across all age groups, finances are the main thing that keeps Brits from feeling truly content with their lot (39 per cent), and 38 per cent worry about their fitness levels.

The research also explored the happiest moments of Brits' lives to date, with the birth of children (32 per cent) at the top of the list. This knocked most people's wedding day into a distant second place (21 per cent), while 17 per cent said their happiest memory was the day they met their partner. For 12 per cent, their happiest ever event was finally getting to go on the 'dream holiday' they'd always wanted, according to the OnePoll.com data.

Simon Thompson added: "It's nice to think that the older you get, the better it gets. "It seems the 50s are the age when people start to appreciate what they have - and have more time to enjoy it."

(Story source: The Mirror)

The Daily Mail reports that four in ten (41 per cent) of 53-year-olds said they were more comfortable in their own skin and confident about their looks than ever before, according to a survey.

And when it comes to dating, apparently almost a fifth (18 per cent) reckon it is spicier and more exciting than when they were meeting people in their youth.

More than half, 53 per cent, say they now know what they want, while 40 per cent admit they've let go of worrying about how they come across. The research by over-50s dating service Ourtime also found a quarter of over-50s said their relationship and sex life became more exciting after hitting a half century.

Rachel Peru of Ourtime said: 'Being single later on in life doesn't have to mean your love life is over. 'As the survey suggests, you do gain more confidence the older you get and you understand what you want and don't want from a relationship.'

Celebrities currently aged 53 include Tess Daly, Jennifer Aniston, Owen Wilson, Mariah Carey, Hugh Jackman, Cate Blanchett and Gillian Anderson. A third of the 50 plus Brits polled admit that passing the big 5-0 mark meant they let go of their previous insecurities and inhibitions. The research also found 35 per cent reject the idea of everyone "letting themselves go" when they hit middle age.

Other inaccurate stereotypes of what it means to grow old include getting fat and wrinkly (44 per cent), only eating boring, bland food (36 per cent) and getting desperate to find someone so they don't grow old alone (34 per cent). So it's no surprise that HALF (50 per cent) of those polled are insulted when they hear people say that over 50 are boring and tame when it comes to dating and relationships.

Other reasons for finding confidence with age include knowing who your friends are and not wasting time with people who aren't worth it (52 per cent), learning how to say no by the time you're 50 (49 per cent) and feeling at peace with yourself (47 per cent).

(Story source: Daily Mail)



Cheese, cider & cycling: A tasty tour of the West Country

Following the Somerset Food Trail by e-bike offers the chance to meet growers and makers, enjoy beautiful scenery, and sample delicious local produce.

What more do you need than good cheese and a glass of cider?" I'm at Batch Farm, in the Somerset village of East Pennard, and cheesemaker Malcolm Dyer is genially setting out his stall.

The farm is one of the highlights of the Somerset Food Trail, a 10-day celebration of the county's smaller-scale food producers running until 24 July. The trail aims to highlight the area's bounty, offering visitors the chance to explore farms, meet growers, picnic in community farms and "food forests", sip cider while watching local bands, and generally guzzle, graze and shop to their stomach's content.

Somerset is a surprisingly extensive county, so the trail's organisers have helpfully sliced it into 11 areas. Setting out to get a taste of the terrain in advance, I decide to focus on the patch I know best - Bruton, Castle Cary and Wincanton - but to explore it anew on one of Bruton Bike Hire's guided electric cycle safaris. Ten of these tours will be running during the event, along two different routes, and I'm trialling the northern loop.

I meet my guide, Robin Balme, on Bruton's High Street. This tiny town has punched its way into heavyweight food circles over recent years with the opening of At the Chapel, Roth Bar & Grill, Matt's Kitchen and Osip. Propping them up, however, is a thriving farm-to-table scene and - once Balme has set me up with a bike, helmet and hi-vis vest - the aim is to delve into it, fork-first.

Pedalling north out of town, we start with a climb - first up Coombe Hill, then up tunnel-like Snakelake Hill. As we go, we're hit by wafts of late wild garlic, the flowers warmed by shards of sunlight. We stop at the top, on Crow's Hill. Not to catch our breath; we're on Bosch-engined Cube electric bikes and, as we navigated the steep rise, Balme had tactfully suggested that I might want to hit turbo (I did). It's more that the view is too good to zip past: it soars down over hedgerows and dimpled fields into Batcombe Vale.

From here we cycle down and up again to Westcombe, at one point squeezing between a shiny red van and a cottage so garlanded with roses I wonder if we have stumbled into a Postman Pat TV set. But while Somerset sometimes feels otherworldly in its pastoral prettiness, its food producers, as in so many agricultural communities, are facing very real challenges linked to climate, biodiversity loss, supply chains and the cost of living. Against this backdrop, events like the Somerset Food Trail aren't just a delicious way to spend a weekend but also a vital means of connecting consumers with local growers and producers.

One of the latter is Westcombe Dairy's Tom Calver. As he shows me around the dairy's hi-tech cheese cellar, he tells me he's been looking increasingly at biodiversity in a holistic way, making connections between the microbiome of the soil all the way up the food chain to people eating his cheese.

Westcombe is best known for its traditional farmhouse cheddar, though it produces eight types of cheese, and has also branched out into charcuterie and has a hand in Landrace Bakery, in nearby Bath, the next stage of which includes setting up a flour mill at the farm. With The Wild Beer Company and Brickell's Ice Cream also based in the dairy's outbuildings, there is plenty of scope for experimentation and collaboration; Brickell's makes a stracciatella flavour using Westcombe's ricotta, for example. "We've also started experimenting with agro-forestry," says Calver. "Switching from an intensive farming system to paddock farming meant we needed to create shade for the cows, so we planted fruit trees and shrubs, choosing berries in the hope that Rob, at Brickell's, can use them in his ice-creams."

Full of the joys of regenerative farming - and bites of Tom's addictively tangy cheddar - we cycle on, freewheeling past ancient orchards and enjoying the smell of sun-baked hay. Dipping down into East Pennard village, we roll up at Batch Farm. Owner Jean Turner's mother started making cheese here in 1963, and Turner is still turning 27kg cheeses herself at 69. Walking through the cheese cave, surrounded by rows of mould-marbled, cloth-bound cheddars, I get a distinct earthy whiff of maturing cheese, and an understanding of the care that goes into the process. After the tour, Malcolm Dyer hands me a hunk of 16-month-old traditional mature cheddar, rich and nutty. I nod my head in appreciation, and Turner approves (it's her favourite).

In a previous life, Balme worked as an electrical engineer at Glastonbury, and we gossip about the festival as we pedal on along the old Roman Fosse Way to Wraxall Vineyard, established in 1974. The owners, Lexa Hunt and David Bailey (not that one), bought it 18 months ago, transforming it from a sleepy English vineyard into something that wouldn't look out of place in Napa. Beyond the vines themselves (which the couple are overhauling with the help of expert viticulturists), plans include cellar door sales, workshops, tours, parties and vineyard stays. The centrepiece is a striking glass-walled event space with an extraordinary view over a vine-covered hillside to what looks like the Somerset Levels but is, in fact, the misty northern reaches of Dorset.

"The archaeologist at The Newt [a nearby garden and hotel that's opening a reconstructed Roman villa this summer] is an expert on English vineyards planted by the Romans and he believes this was on of those," says Hunt. It's not hard to conjure a bacchanalian vision from 2,000-odd years ago as we taste a trio of wines - a sparkling white, a raspberry-nosed pinot noir rosé and a fruity bacchus.

On the bike tours, hungry cyclists will stop here for a wine tasting and Somerset Lunch - a banquet including sausage rolls, charcuterie, salads from Pinsents deli in Castle Cary and White Lake goat's cheese.

Today, though, we're pedalling on for glasses of Harry's Corker cider at nearby Alhampton Inn and what Balme calls his "emergency ploughman's" - a feast of Westcombe cheddar, homemade bread and pickles stashed in his pannier that Batch Farm's Malcolm Dyer would surely approve of.

From here it's a gentle 20-minute cycle back to Bruton and the end of my magic buffet ride. Or, nearly. The next day I return on my own to visit a few more producers. In Galhampton I meet grower Tia Cusden at Wild Garden, a bucolic organic market garden where trail visitors can picnic by the pond and nose around a neat patchwork of leafy greens and edible flowers.

Then there's the Somerset Spirit Company, outside Castle Cary, where entrepreneur Anthony Gaster's milk vodka, milk gin and "wheysky" are made using waste whey from Wyke Farms and sells out almost as quickly as he can make it (he is currently working on a cheese-cave-aged version of the wheysky).

My final stop is at Chapel Cross Tea Room in South Cadbury. Run by Rose Adams, it comprises a pocket-size arts venue, a circus-style outdoor cafe and a small herd of Golden Guernsey goats. Last winter, Adams built her one-woman dairy from scratch, milking the goats just once a day, in a horsebox milking parlour, so that the kids can stay with their mothers. The resulting two cheeses (a nutty semi-hard and a gorgeously gooey soft) are delicious.

As I make my way home, I spot a sign on the A303 stating 'You are seven fields from Teals'. A glossy farm shop and café, Teals is like a more intimate, more West Country version of Gloucester Services, its fridges and shelves full of local produce. Forget food miles, I think. Field miles feels a much better unit of measurement for Somerset.

The Somerset Food Trail runs from 15 to 24 July. Guided e-bike Food Trail safaris cost £100pp, all inclusive, or from £30 a half-day for e-bike hire alone. Operators in other regions of Somerset are also running bike tours during the trail.

(Article source: The Guardian)



Frugal food: 9 tips to make food last longer as prices soar

Keeping produce fresher for longer will hopefully help you cut down on trips to the supermarket. The cost of living crisis means many of us are feeling the pinch.

We're looking to make savings wherever we can - particularly as data from Kantar suggest Britons are set to see their annual grocery bills jump by £380 this year, as food price inflation hits a 13-year high.

While a few money-saving hacks won't take all of the heat off rocketing energy bills and petrol prices, every little helps - and making your food shop last a bit longer could go a long way.

These tips will mean you don't have to throw out food that's gone off, and you don't have to go to the shops quite so often to top up your fridge...

Store your herbs like a bunch of flowers

There's nothing worse than buying a beautiful bunch of herbs, only to have them wilt within days - before you even have a chance to cook with them.

But there's an easy hack to fix this: simply fill a glass with a few centimetres of water, and pop the herbs in like a bunch of flowers. To really extend the lifespan, put a sandwich bag over the top - you'll be surprised at how much longer they'll last.

If your herbs are looking a bit limp and you don't think you'll get to them in time, you can freeze them. Chop the herbs up, put them in the bottom of an ice cube tray, and fill to the top with water. When you want to use them, pop them out and let them defrost.

Freeze any fruit on the turn

The same goes for any greens starting to look a bit sad - they'll be perfect in a smoothie at a later date.

Put carrot and celery sticks in water

It's hard enough getting kids to eat carrot and celery sticks, let alone if they've gone a bit soft and limp. If you want to maintain that crunch, you could try cutting the veg into sticks and storing them upright in glass jars, fully submerged in water.

Pop old bread in the oven

You don't have to chuck out bread when it goes stale - instead, quickly run it under the tap and pop it into the oven for a few minutes. The water helps rehydrate the bread, and it will come out of the oven tasting fluffy and fresh.



Wrap your cheese in baking paper

Cheese might come in plastic wrapping, but it won't survive for long like that in your fridge. Instead, wrap it in a porous material - such as baking paper - so it can still breathe, but doesn't harden up like it would fully exposed to the air.

Put wine in the freezer

If you haven't finished a bottle of wine and don't want it to go to waste, freeze it in an ice cube tray. This creates perfect portions of wine to add to your next stew or bolognese, or to use to make a sangria. It just won't taste quite the same as a drink on its own.



Only wash salad when you want to eat it

Moisture is the enemy of salad, so next time you buy a bag of greens, don't be tempted to immediately rinse it under a tap. Instead, line a plastic container with paper towels, put the leaves on top (not too tight), and place some more paper towels on top. When you're ready to eat, give them a quick rinse and you'll be good to go.



Wrap clingfilm around banana stems

If you find yourself constantly dealing with brown bananas, buy yourself a bit of time by wrapping the stems in cling film. Bananas produce ethylene gas, and this speeds up the ripening process when it travels to the rest of the fruit. You can slow things down by wrapping the stems in cling film - equally, production of ethylene gas is slowed when you hang bananas up by a hook.



Rinse berries in a vinegar solution

There's nothing more annoying than buying a beautiful punnet of berries, only to have them going soft or mouldy within days. However, washing them in a solution of three parts water, one part vinegar apparently makes them fresher for longer - as long as you dry them properly after washing, and store in a paper towel-lined plastic tub.

(Article source: Silver Surfers)



Scorchio! How to prepare your garden for the potential drought

Worried there might be a hosepipe ban on the horizon? There are some things you can do to protect your garden now.

After the blistering heatwave and more warm weather coming our way, we could be set for a drought.

Most of England (except for the North West) has moved into a state of "prolonged dry weather" - the step before drought is declared.

This could mean restrictions such as dreaded hosepipe bans might come into action as we approach August.

There are currently no hosepipe bans in place in England, but water companies are already urging people to save water in the face of the hot, dry weather, and localised bans are possible.

The last time a drought was declared was 2018, and many of us have forgotten the havoc it can wreak on our outdoor spaces.

If you want to protect your garden from the potential upcoming drought, there are some things you can do now...



Improve soil structure

"Do this by cultivating the soil deeply and digging in large quantities of organic matter, compost, manure, garden waste and organic fertiliser," advises Martine Le Gassick, creative director at garden design company Stark & Greensmith. "This helps to improve soil structure and water retention, in preparation for a drought."

Put compost on your lawn

"This will help keep your soil porous and better suited to retaining moisture - overall improving its drought tolerance," she explains. Elsewhere, Le Gassick recommends adding gravel, as "this helps to retain moisture. Also, when dug through the soil, it helps to avoid drainage issues."

Avoid over-fertilising

It might be tempting to give your garden all the love you can before the drought hits, but Le Gassick warns against over-fertilising.

"Doing so encourages your garden to grow before a drought, which will result in your garden requiring water, which will be difficult during a drought," she says.

Get mulching

"Protect your soil and your plant's health by laying your mulch now," says Jordan. "Mulching can help trap moisture in the soil, keeping it hydrated during dry weather, as well as supplying more nutrients where needed. It's a particularly useful trick to use for keeping bedded and potted plants healthy during harsh weather, and can even be used on lawns."

Jordan's top tip? "Be sure to give your soil a good soaking before you lay your mulch, and take care to avoid your mulch touching any woody-stemmed plants or risk rotting."

Do your weeding now

"Weeds in your garden soak up the water in your soil, leaving less moisture for your plants to keep them hydrated. Before a drought, make sure to weed your garden to avoid this," advises Le Gassick.

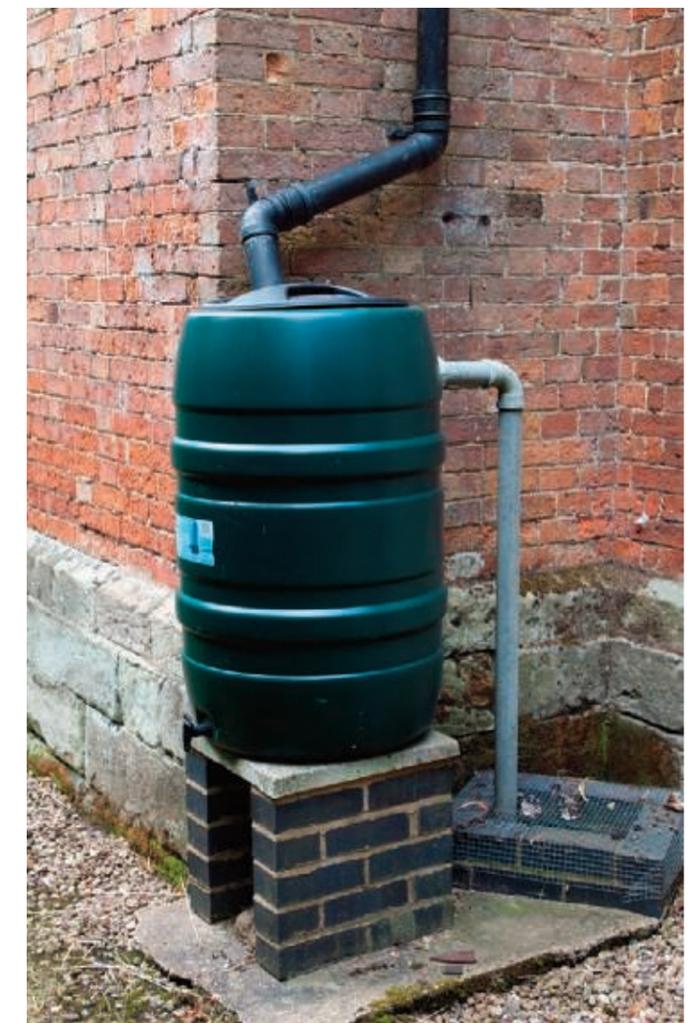
Jordan agrees, adding: "It's best to avoid applying herbicides to kill off weeds, since the hot weather will likely evaporate the product and can even scorch your lawn due to the chemicals they contain. Instead, try regularly hand weeding, pulling them out as soon as you see any begin to crop up."

Invest in a water butt

"With the looming threat of a potential hosepipe ban, now is the time to invest in alternative ways to collect and store water," says Matt Jordan, gardening expert for The Greenhouse People.

"Water butts (which catch rainwater from your drains) are great for saving water for when your garden needs hydrating later. And with this month set for some rainy storms, it's the perfect time to get some water stored in preparation for drier months."

He says water butts can range in cost - from £30 to a few thousand pounds. But if you really want to save some cash, Jordan notes: "Any plastic bin can be transformed into a DIY water butt with a little creative ingenuity."



Steer clear of your grass

Le Gassick says: "For lawn care, try to not to cut your grass too short before a drought. Leaving the grass taller also helps to retain more moisture in the soil."

The optimal length for your lawn? Six inches, according to Le Gassick.

(Article source: Silver Surfers)

Please help us rescue and care for vulnerable hedgehogs - **Britain's favourite mammal**

A shocking study has revealed that hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside, with numbers HALVED in the last 20 years.

I am delighted to tell you that Britain's hedgehog has won favourite mammal in a UK poll.

The UK's only spiny mammal won with 35.9% of the 5,000 votes, more than double that of the Red Fox, who came in second place with 15.4%. The Red Squirrel came third with 11.4%, out of a shortlist of 10 charismatic UK mammals.

Unfortunately, hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside as numbers have HALVED in the last 20 years, a shocking study has revealed.

Henry Johnson, hedgehog officer, People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) said:

"We Brits seem to love hedgehogs for a whole range of reasons, including their cute appearance, their role as slug controllers and the way they have colonised our gardens with such aplomb. This is why it is so sad to see them decline, with one in three lost since the millennium."

Threats to hedgehogs come mostly from us. In rural areas, our farmland increasingly lacks the diversity of habitats hedgehogs need and the invertebrates they feed on. In towns and cities green spaces are lost to development, paved over or increasingly fragmented. Hedgehogs are also very prone to road traffic accidents.

This is why we have launched this special Annual Appeal to protect Britain's favourite mammal.

At Hedgehog Rescue Rehabilitation and Care Centre we respond immediately to rescue injured hedgehogs. A vet is called in straight away and the hedgehogs are monitored and cared for. Once fit and well they are released back into the wild.

Hedgehog Rescue is now conducting its Annual Appeal. Only by continuing our huge effort and long-life commitment can we give these wonderful animals a safe, happy and contented life.



We care for many hedgehogs here at our rehabilitation centre. Hedgehogs just like these:

'Julie'



'Julie' (pictured left) came in last Autumn, quite small, out in daylight and had ticks. She stayed a few weeks, put on enough weight, and made a full recovery. She was released back to her own territory by the finder.

Baby Hedgehogs

These 2 hedgehogs came in as very small babies and had stayed with us a few weeks, gaining weight and giving us a chance to sort out their health issues. They had several ticks and needed worming. When they were 100% ready, we released them close to where they were found.



These hedgehogs are some of the lucky ones. Others are less fortunate.

As a friend who knows what a wonder animals can be, I hope you will support our Annual Appeal. Your kind gift will help us rescue and care for many more vulnerable hedgehogs - Britain's favourite mammal.

To donate to Hedgehog Rescue, go to:
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hedgehogrescue>
 or write to: **Raisemore, Unit 1, Alton Road Industrial Estate, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5NB**

