

# CHAS'S ROCK'N' ROLL ALLOTMENT

PICKED the last of my beetroot and pickled 'em. I do 'em in half vinegar and half water with a couple of teaspoons of pickling spice (don't bother to boil it up no more, I think it tastes better this way) and keep 'em in the fridge. They average about small tennis ball size and I reckon they are about right; any bigger ones around this time of year I find tend to get a bit woody. I've never gotten into seed saving in general in the past though I do think it is a good idea. The less you spend out each year on your growing is all part of the satisfying feeling of getting closer to self sufficiency. I have often saved tomato seeds to sow on, not for economic reasons but just because I like to see what happens. Although most tomatoes are hybrids (offspring of two different plants) and don't

## 'My Spanish toms grew like little oak trees'

necessarily grow true to form, I've had some interesting results along the way. Wherever I am in the world, on tasting a tasty tomato, I take the pips home, spread out to dry on a table napkin, to sow next spring. Did it with some Spanish toms years ago and got a particularly tasty and prolific crop. The plants I'd brought on had grown a bit lanky and leggy so I decided to pull a few of the bottom leaves off and I planted them out in the greenhouse about a foot and a half deep with about a foot sticking out. Boy did they go to town! Grew like little oak trees and produced some good tomatoes. When I dug 'em up at the end of the year they had grown roots along the whole length of the one foot six stem I'd buried beneath the ground so they were sure getting nutrients and water a-plenty. Seeds apart, I've saved the smallest of my shallots this year



Picture: LUKE SANTILLI

(those about half inch across) and planted them out to overwinter. They look pretty good at the moment and if they do OK I am going to do this every year. So what seeds can you save? I can't give you a list but here's what I've found out. The following plants, not intentionally, I have let go to seed and they have reproduced themselves a thousandfold. Salad Bowl lettuce shed its seeds and produced a nice natural patch one year so I just let it grow and it served me well all season. Spinach beet sheds and spreads its seeds well and so do onions. Glad and Grace, the two old ladies who lived next door in the 1970s and who got me

started growing my own, would secure a paper bag over an onion or a leek seed pod to catch the seeds that would drop in tidily, when ready, to be sown next year. They would always save runner beans too. Beans that had gone too tough to eat were left to fatten up and saved for next year. It's all part of the fun of growing your own. If you're not sure whether to save the seeds of a particular plant or not, why not try a bit of an experiment? Try some of your saved seeds and also buy a packet. Make a careful note of where you've sown what and compare the results. Well that old rascal the butternut squash has finally bit

the dust. Mr Johnny Frost turned up a couple of nights ago and gave him mighty stick. He still snakes around the allotment but his ears now droop like a drowned rat's and really, he is no more. But, the one baby he left me has seeds. I'm gonna see if any of his offspring behave any better towards me next year. ● *Chas and Dave Gigs: Town Hall, Cheltenham, November 27; Town Hall, Birmingham, November 28; Ritz, Manchester, November 29; Corn Exchange, Ipswich, November 30. For full list of tour dates visit chasndave.net. Chas and Dave's autobiography All about Us by Chas Hodges (John Blake, £7.99).*



## Did you know?

by Mitchell Symons

**DON CHEADLE, WHO IS 50 ON SATURDAY, MADE UNCREDITED APPEARANCES IN THE FILMS RUSH HOUR 2 AND OCEAN'S ELEVEN. HERE ARE OTHER ACTORS WHO MADE UNCREDITED APPEARANCES...**  
**Steve Buscemi** (in Pulp Fiction – as a waiter)  
**Cyd Charisse** (in Ziegfeld Follies – as a dancer)  
**Heather Graham** (in Twins – as the twins' mother)  
**Phil Daniels** (in Bugsy Malone – as a waiter)  
**Kirsten Dunst** (in The Day After Tomorrow – as a student)  
**Charlton Heston** (in the 2001 remake of Planet Of The Apes)  
**Steve McQueen** (in Dixie Dynamite as a biker)  
**Jaclyn Smith** (in Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle as Kelly Garrett, her character in the original TV series)  
**Elizabeth Taylor** (below, in Jane Eyre – as a child)



**THIS WEEK'S PONDERABLES...**  
● It was 125 years ago today that the world's first jukebox was installed (at the Palais Royale Saloon, San Francisco). It consisted of an Edison phonograph and a stethoscope-like listening tube, which could be activated individually by inserting a coin. It was an instant success.  
● **The average British commuter travels the equivalent of two-and-a-half times around the globe over the course of their working life.**  
● In the 18th century a soldier who was put on a court-martial for supposedly sleeping at his post, swore he heard the clock of St Paul's Cathedral strike 13 times. It had and he was found not guilty.  
● **People pour more white wine into a glass than they do red.**  
● The tropical stick bug, also known as the walking stick, can change colour in response to changes in humidity, light intensity and temperature.  
● **There is a word for the faint trace of perfume you get as someone walks by: sillage.**

**THIS WEEK'S IMPONDERABLE...**  
**As today is the 23rd of the month, why is the number 23 so significant?**  
Perhaps it is because 23 is the first prime number in which both digits are also primes and add up to another prime? Or possibly because human beings have 23 pair of chromosomes? Consider also that the letter W is 23rd in the alphabet and has two points down and three points up. There were 23 letters in the Latin alphabet. It takes 23 seconds for blood to circulate through the human body. Then there is the intriguing notion that Shakespeare was born (or so it is said) on April 23, 1564, and died on April 23, 1616. More intriguingly, Shakespeare was 46 (2 times 23) when the King James Bible was published. Psalm 46 (2 times 23) has as its 46th word "shake" and the 46th word back from the end (omitting the liturgical word "Selah") is "spear". And Shakespeare was in King James's service during the preparation of the Bible.

**WISE WORDS...**  
**There never was a good war, or a bad peace.**  
(Benjamin Franklin)

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