

Common Soil Recipes for June 2023:

Welcome to our Common Soil veggie boxes for the 23/24 season. Summer is well and truly underway and hopefully our veggie offerings will bring a plethora of delicious veggies and herbs to you. Traditionally this is the time of year when we can eat raw foods regularly. The warmth of the sun encourages a smaller appetite and plenty of hydration. As I have recently run a juice fast I have also shared some simple juices for you.

Veggie boxes: coriander, kale, spinach, beetroot, cabbage, lettuce, cucumber, peas, mange tout, broad beans, flowers, other herbs and plenty more!

Beetroot: Either love it or hate it fresh beetroot is packed with essential nutrients, folate (vitamin B9), manganese, potassium, iron, vitamin E, K, zinc and vitamin C.

Both the leaves and roots are high in folate which we need for cellular growth and repair. It also plays a crucial role in our fertility, immune and nerve function.

Beetroot contains the amino glutamic acid, essential for the health and maintenance of our gut. Once eaten, it forms glutamine which fuels the cells in our intestines to encourage healthy mucousal lining between our guts and the rest of our body.

Beetroot is high in fibre. Fibre feeds the thousands of friendly gut bacteria in our digestive tract. These bacteria help digestion, detoxification, vitamin production, keeping potentially harmful bacteria in check, encourage a healthy immune support and keep our moods balanced.

Beetroot is full of antioxidants. Studies have shown beetroot juice has better antioxidant capacity than most other fruit and vegetable juices - only pomegranate came higher (sorry, Common Soil can't grow pomegranate yet!).

Beetroot contain betalains which give red and yellow beetroots their colour. Betalains have the potential to reduce inflammation in the body. I found an interesting research study demonstrating the anti-inflammatory effects of beetroot juice may be better than many synthetic anti-inflammatory drugs, including Ibuprofen. Watch this space for more information as it becomes available.

Beetroots and its juice has many health benefits including improved blood circulation, lower blood pressure, increased exercise performance, cognitive function, liver support & blood sugar regulation.

Beetroot contains nitrates which converts to nitrous oxide when eaten. Nitrous oxide relaxes veins and arteries encouraging blood flow thereby reducing blood pressure. Researchers, funded by the British

Heart Foundation, found that 250ml of beetroot juice daily significantly lowered blood pressure over the four-week duration of the study.

Beetroot can be juiced, steamed, roasted, grated raw into salads, pickled, fermented or blended. Use it to add texture or bump up the nutrient density of deserts. Don't forget you can also use their leaves and stems!

Caution: Beetroots, and its leaves (which can be cooked like spinach) are high in oxalates. High levels of oxalates can trigger kidney stone formation in susceptible people so be careful if you have a history of it. Oxalates can also be a problem for irritable bowel syndrome, coeliac disease and Crohn's.

Beetroot cake – from one of my associates Christine Bailey



Preheat the oven to 180C, gas mark 4.

Line a 8inch / 20 cm cake tin with greaseproof paper.

Place all the ingredients in a food processor and blend

until smooth. Makes 1 8inch / 20cm cake.

180g self-raising gluten-free flour

1 tsp gluten-free baking powder

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

3 tbsp cocoa powder

2 tsp cinnamon

80g raw grated beetroot

60g melted coconut oil or olive oil

100g choc shot (sweet freedom) or use honey and more cocoa powder

3 eggs

1 tbsp vanilla extract

Pour the mixture into the cake tin and smooth the surface. Bake in the oven for 35 -40 minutes until risen, cooked through and golden brown on top. Cool in the cake tin for 5 minutes before removing from the tin. Allow to cool on a rack. Store in the fridge

Chaat masala chick pea salad: serves 3 ish



My husband first introduced this to me. He's adapted it from a Meera Sodha's recipe. It's an explosion of taste but not like a curry.

- 4-5 spring onions – chopped
- Half a cucumber – chopped
- ½ teaspoon chilli powder
- 1 teaspoon mustard seeds
- Half a teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- Juice of half a lemon
- ½ teaspoon chaat masala powder (easy to buy but you could just combine half a teaspoon of each of these in dried form together - mango powder, ginger, aniseeds, coriander, paprika, chilli, cumin, cardoman, clove, salt, cinnamon and cayenne pepper. Once combined keep in a glass storage jar)
- handful fresh coriander leaves and stems or use another herb leaf if you prefer. I like mint or parsley
- 200-250 grams radishes – chopped
- Seeds of 1 pomegranate
- 2 tablespoons desiccated coconut
- 2-3 tablespoons sunflower oil or coconut oil
- 1 tin chickpeas – drained

Cut the cucumber into small cubes and then do the same with the radishes. Cut the spring onions finely and add these plus the pomegranate seeds into a salad bowl. Now chop the mint or coriander (include the stems) and add to the mix, it should begin to look rather colourful by now.

Heat the oil in a pan and add the mustard seeds. You will know when they are cooked because they “pop”. Add the drained chickpeas – heating them for about 5 minutes until they get slightly brown. Add the chilli powder, salt, sugar and lemon juice; gently coating the chick peas in this fragrant mix. Turn the heat down to very low and add the desiccated coconut – stirring a few times. It’s done. Pour this mixture over

the veggies. Sprinkle with chaat masala and gently mix together. I love the taste of Chaat Masala so I am quite liberal with the sprinkling! It’s ready. Enjoy!

Juices:

Iron man smoothie

Handful spinach
 Handful kale leaves
 1 stick celery
 1 apple or handful of berries
 Banana skinned
 200 – 500 ml almond/hemp or any plant milk
 Blend together until smooth.

Orange me up – juice or smoothie (add coconut water if making a smoothie and you are going to be surprised with the ingredients – not an orange in sight!. Great for digestion, liver and kidneys)

2 golden beetroots (regular beetroot is OK too) – scrubbed and washed
 3 carrots – scrubbed and washed
 1 cup fresh dandelion leaves – scrubbed and washed
 1 lime (peeled and de pipped)
 1 apple or pear
 Red cabbage – handful
 Simply blend for a smoothie with coconut water or juice if you have a juicer.

Electrolyte special Juice:

Coconut water
 Half a cucumber
 Handful mint leaves or parsley .
 Whiz and drink!

Justine Evans ND is a Naturopath and Nutritional Therapist living in Stroud. She is passionate about seasonal living and runs on line cleanses and courses which link with the Wheel of the Year. Please visit her website for more information justineevans.co.uk