John Ruskin’s roof top garden gives children year-round gardening projects as well as delicious produce to use in cooking classes. It has raised beds, apple and pear tree planters and a cold frame all bursting with fruit and veg growing under the watchful eye of teacher and gardener extraordinaire, Suzy Gregory. By harvesting and cooking fruits and vegetables from the school garden, they nurture an interest in growing and cooking food in children as young as four. They have a particularly keen group of young gardeners from Year 2 who have very green fingers!

Chris’s Comment

“Potatoes taste quite different depending on whether they are picked early or late in the year. New potatoes with soft skins need to be eaten immediately so harvest them after flowering has stopped. For larger potatoes with tougher skins, like the ones used in this recipe, wait until the leaves have yellowed and died down before picking. These are great to store.”

Marcus’s Pick

Potatoes and rainbow chard.

Home Grown Hints from our John Ruskin Growers

“It’s best to water plants in the morning or evening otherwise a lot of it evaporates and doesn’t get to the plants roots.”
Rustic chicken and winter vegetable soup

Ingredients

- 6 chicken thighs
- 1 medium onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 sticks of celery, chopped into 1 cm squares
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon of chopped thyme leaves
- A couple of good knobs of butter
- 1 large carrot, peeled and finely chopped
- Half a swede, peeled, and cut into 1 cm squares
- 75g pearl barley, soaked for 2 hours
- 3 litres of vegetable or chicken stock
- Salt and black pepper
- 4 to 5 leaves of rainbow chard cut into 1 inch squares
- 1 medium potato, cut in 1 cm squares

Method

1. Place the chicken thighs and the pearl barley in a small saucepan and cover with half the stock.
2. Season with a little of the salt and bring to the boil before turning down to a gentle simmer for about 20 minutes.
3. In a separate large saucepan gently cook the onion, carrots, swede, celery, garlic, and thyme in the butter for 3 to 4 minutes until soft.
4. Add the remaining stock to the vegetables, bring to the boil and simmer for about 15 minutes until the swede is soft.
5. Add the potatoes; continue to simmer for another 10 minutes or until the potato is almost cooked and then add the rainbow chard for the last 3 minutes of cooking.
6. Remove the chicken thighs from the smaller saucepan and allow them to cool until they can be handled.
7. Add the remaining stock and the cooked pearl barley to the soup.
8. Flake the chicken from the thighbones and add to the soup.
9. Season to your taste and serve.

Equipment

- 2 saucepans
- 1 sharp knife
- 1 chopping board
- 1 mixing bowl
- 1 wooden spoon
- 1 peeler
- 1 ladle

Cook’s Code

Cooking pearl barley is similar to cooking rice. Simmer in water otherwise it will not be edible.

John Ruskin’s Review

“This was really, really tasty - we all had seconds!”

Kitchen Garden Ideas

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