

The Eco Warriors of the past

By John Dreczkowski

*Every day the Media say, we guys are ruining the Planet
To much Waste we Fling out with Haste and only feed the Gannet*

*Every day instruction's come Recycle this and that, dare not use the
Dreaded Plastic Carriers
To save the Planet we all Young and Old will need to be willing
Eco Warriors*

*By Recycling hard and others efforts, we can Reduce our
Carbon foot print
But Everyone has to be Eager and Willing do their Stint*

*Society today they say, is Throw away and far too fast
So surely we all should take Time out, and Learn from the Past*

*Oh dear! Oh dear! Whit did they do in our Grannies day
It seems a dam site better than we're doing today*

*One wonders with all the Plans the Powers to Be and Experts seem to
Hatch
No One seems to be Talking, Thinking and Championing Re Introducing
the **Vegetable Patch***

*With food costs and food miles rising fast, time and again
The Environment and Population overall would have much to gain*

*One hears the calls loud and clear, here's the Ranting of some old dear
But that's not so, then let's take some time to make it clear*

*It is to be remembered I'm only talking about Whins of Milton, Hill Park,
Park Crescent and Bannockburn
This could easily apply to Towns and Villages elsewhere in turn?*

John apr/08

The Vegetable Patch

During the early 20th century and before most houses which were built had reasonable sized to large gardens, mostly to front and back of the house, front garden being much smaller than the normally larger back garden, this trend continued through out the period, continuing further when the local Stirling Council started to construct further housing schemes to meet the need an ever expanding population in the mid 1900,s, developments in Whins of Milton, Hill park, Park Crescent and various areas of Bannockburn bear this out .

The front garden was normally used to put a decorative front to the house with flowers, shrubs, bushes and roses along with a nice lawn being the order of the day.

(recycling the horse manure from the horse driven Co-op grocery and bakery travelling carts was the game of the day, armed with their shovel and bucket it was a race to see which kid could get to the pile first for his dad's roses)

The back garden consisted a reasonable sized drying green, normally the rest of the garden was left for cultivation including *The Vegetable Patch*.

The vegetable patch would include of types of vegetables potatoes (early, mids and lates), carrots, leeks, shallots, cabbage, lettuce, green beans, runner beans, turnips, Cauliflower, beetroot and onions, the patch was yearly fertilised by the dung from the local farms and homesteads this was dug into the ground to suit the needs of the crops.

Although the growing season was seasonal, timing of crop planting and longer term storage systems were devised to gain best use of the crops

One of the most uncomfortable jobs associated with the garden was the yearly task of moving between a half load 1 /2 ton to a full load 1 ton of dung from the road in The front of the house to the vegetable patch, this normally involved the adults and the youngsters in the family.

In some gardens when room and conditions allowed many grew their fruit crops in bush form were the black currents , raspberries ,goose berries and low level fruits like strawberries (these were protected with top nettings for the birds and old egg shells to keep out the slugs with a light cover of straw for warmth) .some fruits were eaten as a treat ,others were used to make preserves and jams to be used during the year.

Grass cuttings, old flowers, vegetable and general garden waste which suited were all recycled to the in garden compost pile, later being dug back into the soil, grass cutting until the late 1960,s was normally by hand cutting Lawn mower.

The use and working of the Vegetable Patch lent itself to many benefits both to the environment and the physical well being of the families , all the family were involved in the cultivation of the patch in one way or another.

Using the earth's natural energy resources in the growth of the crops and using straight from the garden to the table , ensured that the freshness and goodness of the food was maintained and very tasty, no or little chemicals were used in the growth period , or needed to preserve the goodness as this was natural, high recycling levels and good waste management systems limiting any waste ,had very low environmental negative effect.

Physical efforts of maintaining ,enjoying and the fresh vegetables and fruit from the patch could only have beneficial effects on the health of all involved.

Many families were rightly very proud of their gardens rightly so.

General household food requirements

Fresh food requirements such as milk, bread, butter cheeses and the likes were purchased on a nearly daily basis as a larder was the only form of cool storage.

Fruit and vegetables were purchased when required

Meats and poultry were purchased on the day of preparation and cooking.

Most areas had their local baker, butcher and grocery shops to facilitate their needs.

Families generally being on the larger side ,meant that food was prized and very little waste was seen , left over ingredients invariably were served up as another dish the following day .

Environmentally friendly life style of the past

The people at the time were probably not aware of ecological and environmental effects their lifestyle had, suffice to say they lived and adapted to their resources at that time.

In particular in the 20 the century which saw 2 World Wars and the recovery time after said wars .within that period they had experienced rationing of essential goods and also long periods of shortages, these conditions were the most likely reasons for growing your own food requirements and lent to valuing all that you had ,waste of any type was much frowned upon ,and as such gave birth to the saying

WASTE NOT , WANT NOT

As society advances new technologies and sciences seek to provide us with a better living standard and environment as it should ,we are now seeing concerns over the negative ecological and environmental impact our new lifestyles are having ,

The phrases **eco warrior and environmentally friendly life styles** are at the fore front of the news agenda ,and we are encouraged to change our lifestyle to suit this agenda,

Such as use less household energy, this makes sense in reference to pricing levels alone ,we are encouraged to recycle as much as we can ,and the reduction in wasted food is high on the agenda ,all very good reasonable requests

***To This end should we not learn some lessons from our fore fathers
and encourage the re-introduction of the vegetable patch***

Useful Link

<http://www.selfsufficientish.com/allotments.htm>