

SORREL

by Mike Mason

Sorrel is used by many gardeners as a herb, but I grow it as a vegetable. I use the leaves as a particularly fine spinach which goes very well with fish.

I grew my sorrel from seed in 1980. It has grown quite happily on the allotment in a short row ever since. However, after about 23 years the plants at one end of the row died then the others died in succession, so I do not think they died from old age – some disease or other moved progressively down the row. I then re-seeded in another part of the allotment. However, those initial plants gave very good service over the years so I cannot complain that they were not immortal.

As for pests, a muntjac deer grazes them down to the ground in the depth of each winter. (I identified the culprit from the tiny hoofprints.) However, the deer never touches them for the rest of the year so I do not mind its winter foraging.

The sorrel pushes up flower stalks in May so these have to be removed. If the seeds fall some will germinate and the seedlings can be transplanted easily.

Good gardening!

MIKE MASON