



## European Parliamentary candidate gets hot under the collar

Local European Conservative Party Parliamentary candidate for the Eastern region Margaret Simons felt things were definitely warming up when she visited chilli specialist Edible Ornamentals at their nursery in Chawston last week.



Mrs Simons was very keen to hear from Joanna about investment secured from The Greensand Ridge Local Action Group, part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), funded by DEFRA and the EU. This special funding is managed locally by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and has funded the development of the new Edible Kitchen cafe project at the Chawston nursery.

Edible Ornamentals' Joanna Plumb welcomed the team and said: "Bedfordshire is now established as the chilli capital of the UK, and it's great that future MEPs can see for themselves how their assistance can help a passion for chillies develop into a successful business enterprise and create an impact on a national scale."



Mrs Simons said: "I am delighted to visit this innovative business in Bedfordshire, which has been supported creatively through both national and EU funds, and built up by Joanna and Shawn into such a successful enterprise. The free market in agriculture, and food security, are

both key for us within Europe, and this has been an excellent visit."

She added “I know Joanna is keen on educating our youngsters, and the not-so-young, on the seasonality of food. Having come from a public health background I am really encouraged by such great enthusiasm from Joanna and Shawn to promote good local fresh produce on a national scale. We set an excellent example to the rest of the European community in this regard.”

Edible Ornaments is open for visitors to pick chillies straight from the plants, and to purchase their gourmet chilli sauces, but they also supply chillies to exclusive delicatessens, restaurants, farm shops, garden centres, Waitrose, Fortnum and Mason, Harrods, and other specialist chilli companies in the UK and Europe.

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#### **Editor's notes**

Hi res images available on request

#### **More about Edible Ornaments**

Joanna and husband Shawn started growing chillies when they moved to the UK in 1996, and their chilli plants and sauces quickly gained in popularity. In 2007 they purchased the derelict Cherwood Nursery in Chawston which they renovated. Now established as a 'Pick Your Own' chilli nursery the site also has a specialist commercial kitchen for preparing the growing range of sauces.

Edible Ornaments is now established as a leading producer of high quality chillies and specialist fresh vegetables that visitors can pick straight from the plant. As well as local farmer's markets they also supply fresh chillies to Harrods, Fortnum and Masons and leading London restaurants. Joanna's special chilli sauces are available from the nursery and local Waitrose stores.

Edible Ornaments has featured in the national daily press, The Economist and leading national trade publications The Grocer and Fresh Produce Journal. Joanna has featured as a chilli expert on BBC's 3 Counties Radio, Radio 2's 'Chris Evans Show', and Radio 4's 'You and Yours' and has appeared in many TV programmes including Ready Steady Cook, Economy Gastronomy, Market Kitchen, Countrywise, Gordon Ramsay's 'Ultimate Cookery Course' and 'The Hairy Bikers' and most recently ITV's 'Sunday Brunch'.

Edible Ornaments won the Best Effective Promotional Campaign category in the Conquest Business Awards, and was awarded the accolade of 'Local Food Hero for East Anglia by Good Food Channel's Market Kitchen.

Edible Ornaments has also partnered with Virgin and offers special half day Chilli Experience days.

For further information about Edible Ornaments Company visit [www.edibleornamentals.co.uk](http://www.edibleornamentals.co.uk)

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