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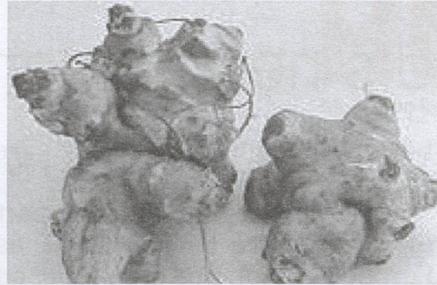
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"It is important to destroy all these volunteers" - can you imagine my feelings when I read this? We are always short of volunteers, not only in the Swiss Clubs. The Citizens' Advice Bureau is staffed by volunteers. The Cats Protection League needs volunteers to feed the cats and clean their cages. Forest and Bird relies on volunteers to raise seedlings and do planting. The Department of Conservation has volunteers for their weeding and monitoring projects. Schools appeal to the community for volunteers to help in the classroom or with individual reading programmes. The Cancer Society is always advertising for volunteers to drive cancer patients to their treatment. I'm sure you could easily name another dozen organisations that rely on volunteers. Many if not all of us are involved to some degree in one or several voluntary organisations - so why would anyone advise us to destroy volunteers?

Well, the story began last year, when a friend gave me some Jerusalem artichokes from her garden. I thought it would be a good idea to grow them, so rather than cook them, I planted them in my garden, at various places - and forgot all about them. In due time plants appeared; they looked very much like sunflower plants. Sunflowers are flowers I'm particularly fond of, but they are difficult to grow in my garden; as they have shallow roots, they get blown over too easily. But this year I'd have sunflowers! They grew, and they grew - but it was all leaves and no flowers. Maybe they weren't sunflowers after all? When I couldn't stand the uncertainty any longer, I pulled one out, and sure enough: no sunflower roots, but small tubers: Jerusalem artichokes in the making! So I gave up sunflower hopes and nourished artichoke hopes.

The other day I decided it was time to harvest them, and I pulled them all out and collected the tubers I found, quite a good harvest, enough to invite friends

for an artichoke meal. To be sure I'd do it right, I looked "Jerusalem artichoke" up in the internet and found recipes, and all sorts of information: They are related to sunflowers, some va-



rieties do have small sunflower-like flowers; the tubers contain a special type of carbohydrate diabetics can eat without problems; they have nothing to do neither with Jerusalem nor with arti-

chokes: The Jerusalem bit of their name comes from Italian "girasole" and the artichoke bit from an Arabic word I forgot.

And then they warned that all the tubers that are not harvested will turn into next year's plants and produce next year's crop - and therefore "it is important to destroy all these volunteer plants". I guess that is sound advice if you grow vegetables commercially. But needless to say I shall not try and find all the forgotten volunteers, on the contrary: I look forward to having more volunteers growing in my garden, have more tubers next year. Wouldn't it be great if we could grow volunteers in clubs and associations just as easily?

Inde

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