

An Litir Bheag

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 1,059 (which corresponds to Litir 1,363). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

In another [earlier] Litir, I was telling you about the càl buan or perennial kale that I am growing in my garden. This year, I have planted another kale. And it's a variety that belongs to the Highlands of Scotland.

Its name is Càl Chataibh or Sutherland Kale. According to reports, it was grown by crofters in Sutherland.

But where in Sutherland? Well, those that sell the seed name a village called West Drummie. Now, I don't know a village in Sutherland with that name. I suspect they mean West Drummuie near Golspie. But I'm not certain.

The seed was obtained from an old woman, Elizabeth Woolcombe. In 2007 she was 93 years of age. And she obtained the kale from a man who was researching plants of that type at the University of Edinburgh fifty years prior to that.

This kale is strong. It grows to a metre in height. Insects don't damage it. And it withstands the wind and the cold of winter. It grows anew in spring after the winter.

Ann an Litir eile bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun chàl bhuan no *perennial kale* a tha mi a' fàs anns an leas agam. Am-bliadhna, tha mi air càl eile a chur. Agus 's e seòrsa a tha ann a bhuineas do Ghàidhealtachd na h-Alba.

'S e an t-ainm a tha air Càl Chataibh no *Sutherland Kale*. A rèir aithris, bha e air fhàs le croitearan ann an Cataibh.

Ach càite ann an Cataibh? Uill, tha an fheadhainn a tha a' reic an t-sìl ag ainmeachadh baile air a bheil *West Drummie*. Nise, chan aithne dhòmhsa baile ann an Cataibh air a bheil an t-ainm sin. Tha amharas agam gu bheil iad a' ciallachadh *West Drummuie* faisg air Goillspidh. Ach chan eil mi cinnteach.

Fhuaras an sìol bho sheann bhoireannach, Ealasaid Woolcombe. Ann an dà mhìle 's a seachd (2007), bha i naochad 's a trì bliadhna a dh'aois. Agus fhuair ise an càl bho fhear a bha a' rannsachadh lusan dhen t-seòrsa sin ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann caogad bliadhna roimhe sin.

Tha an càl seo làidir. Bidh e a' fàs gu meatair ann an àirde. Chan eil meanbh-fhrìdean a' dèanamh cron air. Agus tha e a' seasamh ris a' ghaoith agus ri fuachd a' gheamhraidh. Bidh e a' fàs às ùr as t-Earrach an dèidh a' gheamhraidh.

<i>Two parts of the plant can be eaten – the leaves, which are tasty, and the new shoots on which the flowers grow. The shoots are very sweet and like young broccoli. Some people liken them to asparagus.</i> <i>This kale is now safe. It is grown in many places. It is not in danger of extinction. But there is a question – is it truly a kale? The kales belong to the species Brassica oleracea. But researchers reckon that the Sutherland Kale belongs to another type – Brassica napus. That came into being as a hybrid between cabbage (Brassica oleracea), turnip (Brassica rapa) and black mustard (Brassica nigra). This kale has an interesting history!</i>	Gabhaidh dà phàirt dhen lus ithe – na duilleagan, a tha blasta, agus na gasan ùra air am bi na flùraichean a’ fàs. Tha na gasan gu math milis agus coltach ri brocail òg. Tha cuid ag ràdh gu bheil iad coltach ri aspàrag. Tha an càl seo a-nise sàbhailte. Tha e air fhàs ann an iomadh àite. Chan eil e ann an cunnart a dhol à bith. Ach tha ceist ann – a bheil e dha-rìribh na chàl? Buinidh na càil don ghnè <i>Brassica oleracea</i>. Ach tha luchd-rannsachaidh dhen bheachd gum buin an càl Catabach do sheòrsa eile – <i>Brassica napus</i>. Thàinig sin gu bith mar tar-chineal eadar càl àbhaisteach (<i>Brassica oleracea</i>), snèap (<i>Brassica rapa</i>) agus an sgeallan dubh (<i>Brassica nigra</i>). Tha eachdraidh inntinneach aig a’ chàl seo!
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