

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 808 (which corresponds to Litir 1,112). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

Do you have a garden? If you do, do you grow vegetables in it? I do, and I want to tell you about a plant I planted this year.

The plant is a type of kale that I call, in Gaelic, càl buan. In English it's 'perennial kale' that it is called. Càl buan, or càl buan-mhaireannach if you want to be fancy.

I got the plant last year from a friend in England. He is really keen on gardening. He asked me if I was wanting to grow perennial kale in my own garden. I said I was. He gave me two small pieces of stalk from one of his own plants.

When I came home, I put them in soil. Over the winter, they put down roots. When the spring came, leaves appeared on them.

I had, and have, another kale growing. That is the càl ceairsleach. In English 'curly kale'. Càl ceairsleach.

But the perennial kale is much taller than the curly kale. Although you might cut many leaves from it, it comes back strongly. My two

A bheil leas no gàrradh agaibh? Ma tha, am bi sibh a' fàs glasraich ann? Bidh mise, agus tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu lus a chuir mi am-bliadhna.

'S e an lus nàdar de chàl ris an can mise, ann an Gàidhlig, 'càl buan'. Ann am Beurla, 's e perennial kale a thathar a' gabhail air. Càl buan, no càl buan-mhaireannach ma tha sibh ag iarraidh a bhith spaideil.

Fhuair mi an lus an-uiridh bho charaid ann an Sasainn. Tha esan fìor dhèidheil air gàirnealaireachd. Dh'fhaighnich e dhìom an robh mi ag iarraidh càl buan fhàs anns an leas agam fhìn. Thuir mi gun robh. Thug e dhomh dà phìos bheag de ghas bho aon de na lusan aige fhèin.

Nuair a thàinig mi dhachaigh, chuir mi ann an ùir iad. Thairis air a' gheamhradh, chuir iad freumhaichean sìos. Nuair a thàinig an t-earrach, nochd duilleagan orra.

Bha, agus tha, càl eile a' fàs agam. 'S e sin an càl ceairsleach. Ann am Beurla curly kale. Càl ceairsleach.

Ach tha an càl buan fada nas àirde na 'n càl-ceairsleach. Ged a ghearras tu duilleagan gu leòr às, thig e air ais gu làidir. Tha an dà lus agam còrr math is meatair a'

plants are now more than a metre in height. I won't have to touch them in winter, apparently. They will withstand a hard winter.

The word càl is interesting. It is related to the English kale. But it also stands for cabbage. That isn't surprising because cabbage and kale – the plants – came originally from the one plant. Scientists call both of them Brassica oleracea.

Perhaps the names – kale and càl – come from the Latin caulis. That means 'stalk, stem'. Cauliflower also comes from that root. The Gaelic for cauliflower is colag. You'll know another plant that belongs to Brassica oleracea. That's the buinneag Bhruisealach – or Brussels sprout. I like Brussels sprouts. But I know you won't all agree with me!

dh'àirde a-nise. Cha bhi agam ri buntainn orra sa gheamhradh, a rèir choltais. Seasaidh iad ri geamhradh cruaidh.

Tha am facal càl inntinneach. Tha e càirdeach don Bheurla *kale*. Ach bidh e a' seasamh airson *cabbage* cuideachd. Chan eil sin iongantach oir thàinig *cabbage* agus *kale* – na lusan – bhon aon lus o shean. 'S e *Brassica oleracea* a chanas luchd-saidheans ris na dhà.

'S dòcha gu bheil na h-ainmean – *kale* agus *càl* – a' tighinn bhon Laidinn *caulis*. Tha sin a' ciallachadh 'gas'. Tha *cauliflower* cuideachd a' tighinn bhon fhreumh sin. 'S e a' Ghàidhlig airson *cauliflower* – *colag*. Bidh sibh eòlach air lus eile a bhuineas do *Brassica oleracea*. 'S e sin a' bhuinneag Bhruisealach – no *Brussels sprout*. 'S toigh leam buinneagan Bruisealach. Ach cha bhi sibh uile ag aontachadh rium!