

Food news by Carolyn Hart

Gadget guide by Rose Prince

Potato peelers Those old-fashioned rope-handled potato peelers, how they chafed and rubbed.

A large Sunday lunch would cause such an ache in the hands. Then the Y-shaped peeler arrived from France, and suddenly the thumb joints were no longer in pain after a peeling session.

The US kitcheware innovators **Good Grips** spotted the flaw in the Y peeler: a cold metal handle that, while more comfortable to hold than the peelers that went before, had awkward edges. It adapted the peeler to carry its trademark soft-to-hold rubber handle and gave it a razor-sharp blade. Now sold under the Oxo brand, it has few rivals in the hand-held ranks. It can also be used to 'carpaccio' other vegetables and to take wafer-thin slices of hard cheese. From £3.95 at kitchen shops nationwide.

Other great peelers: the **Princess** electric model peels 1kg of potatoes in two minutes using stainless-steel blades, and can also be used as a salad spinner: £35.50, electricshopping.com.

Kenwood has an excellent peeler attachment for its mixer: £25.49, kenwoodworld.com.



Cold cuts

Those who lust after Nestlé's Maxibon ice-cream sandwich (bafflingly difficult to find in the UK) can now make their own version using Tovolo's moulds, though quite a lot of effort is required on the part of the luster - baking the biscuit sandwich for one thing, which rather takes the spontaneity out of the ice-cream moment. Ice-cream sandwich moulds, by Tovolo, from £9.95, from Gilberts Food Equipment (0845-2300681; topgourmet.co.uk).



Purple patch

In a country where 'drought' often translates as 'very wet, take umbrella', it might still be handy to bone up on the type of kitchen garden plants that flourish when it's truly dry. Lavender is one of them, and you can gaze at luscious swaths of this fragrant herb in Kent this weekend. Castle Farm is holding a Lavender Festival with food tastings, aromatherapy and bee-keeping all on the programme. Castle Farm, Shoreham, Sevenoaks, today and tomorrow; 10am-5pm; entry free (01959-523219; hopshop.co.uk).