

Nude gardener – charges dropped

BY JOHN HAWKINS

A NATURIST accused of behaving indecently while gardening in the nude has been cleared – but he has vowed not to garden naked again regardless.

Donald Sprigg, 63, did not dispute that he regularly potted

Naturist denied his neighbour's claim

about in his back garden naked, but he vehemently denied a neighbour's claim that he performed indecent acts.

After hearing the prosecution evidence, Cheltenham

magistrates upheld a defence submission that there was no case to answer. They quashed the three charges against Mr Sprigg of using insulting behaviour which caused harass-

ment, alarm or distress.

Delighted Mr Sprigg, of City Bank View, Cirencester, said: "Common sense has prevailed and justice has been done.

"This has been a very wor-

rying time for me and my wife, but I am very grateful that we have had the full support of the family."

However, he said that despite his name being cleared by the magistrates he would not be



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Donald Sprigg

Charges dropped, but nude gardener says he'll keep clothes on

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doing any more naked gardening. The case was brought against him after neighbour Theresa Fairchild said that while out smoking on the balcony of her first floor flat in January and March she had seen him naked and committing an indecent act in his garden.

Her partner, Daniel Demain, took pic-

tures of Mr Sprigg naked apart from a pair of gardening gloves on March 20, and they were shown to the magistrates.

Ms Fairchild, who said her home was about 150 yards from Mr Sprigg's garden, said she was "gobsmacked" when she first saw him naked on a January afternoon. "I just couldn't believe what I was seeing," she told the

court. There was another occasion in early March when she saw him behaving the same way, she claimed.

She said that on March 20 she saw Mr Sprigg naked in the garden again, although this time he was wearing gardening gloves and appeared to be dealing with a bag of compost.

The court heard that when interviewed by police Mr Sprigg denied any

indecent act and said his neighbours' claims were "totally and utterly false".

He dismissed their allegations as "a total load of rubbish", and he rejected the suggestion that he had been out naked in January, adding: "It's a fine weather occupation."

Throwing out all three charges, the magistrates said they found the prosecution evidence "vague and weak".