

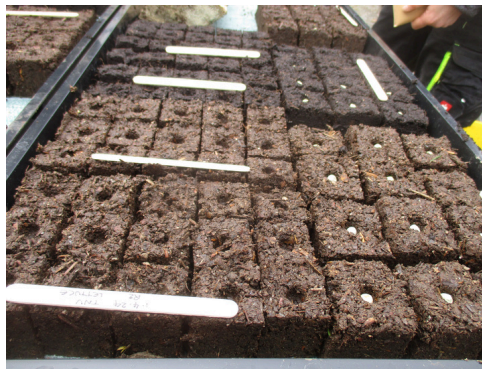
Tombreck Market Garden

Newsletter #14 April 2024

A slow start to April, with Winter still refusing to let go and all the plants staying dormant much longer than expected. We took the tarps off plot #2 but it was far too boggy to do anything on it, apart from digging out the surviving docks on the drier areas. Eventually there was long enough between downpours to get to the point where we could start barrowing manure onto it. There was a sunken area where a large boulder came out which I slowly filled with topsoil from the mole hills that have been particularly abundant lately. 'The problem is the solution', as they say in permaculture circles. I just finished rotovating the whole plot a few hours before sitting down to write this, sore but satisfied. Soon we'll be forming it into beds and starting to plant it out, and then there will be double the outside growing area to take care of compared to last year. Pretty daunting!



Elsewhere, there's now a bed of raspberries by the big rock pile, which will be something to look forward to come late Summer. We've set up drip irrigation in the polytunnel, which will free us up from watering with the lance and means less soil splash and run-off from the beds. And the soil blocking trial is going well, with all the blocks holding together and pretty good germination all round. Exciting to see the possibilities of (nearly) plastic-free propagation, coupled with the fact that we were able to make them almost entirely from materials found on site. It was a mix of compost, more mole hill soil, river sand and leaf mould, which was the only thing we struggled to find in sufficient quantities.



I finally used some of the buckwheat saved from our green manure crop (see Newsletter #7). As predicted it was hugely laborious for the resulting calories, but there are a number of ways the process could be made more efficient. Winnowing in particular is a bit limited if all you have is the power of your own lungs! Anyway, it made for some tasty bannocks, mixed with oatmeal and wheat flour. Baby steps...

