

Tombreck Market Garden

Newsletter #18 August 2024

While most parts of the UK had some summer weather in August it unfortunately seemed to bypass us here, and it's already starting to feel like Autumn with daytime temperatures hovering around 15°C and often dipping below 10°C at night. It's all rather depressing from a grower's perspective, and the temptation to go on a 'weather strike' is strong when you wake up to yet another cold, drizzly morning. Still, you have to keep on going and make the most of what you've got... It helped that there were several events where we could meet other growers with whom we could compare notes and have some much needed mutual support. The Landworkers Alliance summer gathering, Killin Agricultural Show and Open Gate Festival were all well attended and enjoyable social occasions, and it was good to hear so many positive remarks when leading tours around the land.



Otherwise we've started to harvest onions and garlic, root crops like carrot and beetroot are getting to a decent size, kohlrabi and bulb fennels are getting plump off the rainfall, and we were able to salvage some 'spring' cabbage, though losing around half the weight from all the slug-damaged outer leaves that had to be taken off (it looks as though someone fired a shotgun at them!) Winter salads and spinach have been planted out in the polytunnel and the clover green manure is all flowering nicely on plot #3. We still have spare capacity for the veg boxes (see our website - link below - and tell your friends!) and are now supplying Errichel in Aberfeldy and a new pop-up market on Fridays and Saturdays at MacGregor's in Killin.



It has been good to see the flax put out its lovely blue flowers. Some of it has lodged in the rain, but it should still be good for harvest in a few weeks' time. It's a sight that would have been common around Loch Tay where there was a thriving flax industry starting in the 18th century, with many mills built to process the fibres, some surviving to the present day. Welsh naturalist Thomas Pennant visited the area in 1769 and observed that:

'The country [...] manufactures a great deal of [linen] thread. They spin with rocks, which they do while they attend the cattle on the hills; and, at four fairs in the year, held at Kenmore, above sixteen hundred pounds worth of yarn is sold [...] The yarn is bought by persons who attend the fairs for that purpose, and sell it again at Perth, Glasgow, and other places, where it is manufactured into cloth.' - *In Famed Breadalbane*, p.187

As with veg it remains to be seen if it can be made financially viable, but it at least serves as an example of what the land is capable of producing here.

<https://tombreckmarketgarden.co.uk>