

Tombreck Market Garden

Newsletter #5 June 2023

The big development in June was the construction of our first polytunnel. David from Meadowsweet Organics in Fife came over with his colleague Namkha and we worked two very long days with them putting up the framework, concreting it in and digging a trench around the outside to bury the plastic. The following week the weather was right to put the cover on, so with a gang of Tombreck volunteers we managed to get it in place and buried around the edges before finishing with the sliding doors. Within the next couple of days we'd managed to get all the tomatoes & cucumbers planted out and attached to strings. A day in bed was needed after all that!



We've slowly started to get our produce out there, with the first appearances in the Tombreck farm shop, followed by a few customers ordering via Neighbourfood and beginning to put some items for sale in MacGregor's Community Hub in Killin and the Handam stores in Aberfeldy and Pitlochry. The radishes, lettuces, spring cabbages and turnips have gone down pretty well, though people seem a bit less keen on chard for some reason, maybe unfamiliarity. It's like spinach and celery rolled into one, what's not to like?? We'll soon be getting regular crops of courgettes, along with fennel, broad beans, new potatoes and beetroot, and the tomatoes and cucumbers won't be far behind... Exciting times!



We are also now trialling a weekly veg box scheme, with five portions of our seasonal veg for £10, probably lasting through until Christmas (see pic above-left for a typical example). A limited number of boxes will be available for pick-up from Tombreck - please email us at the usual address: marketgarden@tombreck.co.uk and we can make further arrangements. Alternatively you can order them as a one-off via our page on Neighbourfood for delivery to the hubs in Killin, Aberfeldy or Pitlochry: <https://www.neighbourfood.co.uk/producers/tombreck-market-garden/229770>



Otherwise we have enjoyed having a small herd of cows at Tombreck in the field just above ours, complete with young calves and a (thankfully) placid bull. We've been making use of their copious manure which, when layered in with weeds, scythed green manure, grass and woodchip, has made a very fast-fermenting compost. One of the heaps we built got to 75°C! It shows the usefulness of having animals involved in a mixed farming system, and puts into practice the permaculture principle of 'closing the loop' by turning waste into a resource. This would surely have been understood by the people whose whole way of life was organised around cattle, as was the case around Loch Tay and much of the highlands not so long ago: muck is gold!