

# Tombreck Market Garden

Newsletter #13 March 2024

Weather-permitting, we spent quite a while in March working our way around the outdoor beds, taking out the weeds, putting fresh wood chip down on the paths, and spreading the first of our own compost. We opened up one of the bays that we made up last summer and layered with fresh manure from visiting cows, thus getting much hotter than the others (see Newsletter #5, June 2023). It has broken down nicely, with only the woodier materials still recognisable and the pleasant, forest-floor smell you want from mature compost. We top-dressed one bed and planted out onion sets and some more garlic, adding cut grass as a mulch between the rows. A few other beds got composted and then covered with mypex to allow the worms to work their magic, and we'll plant them up in a month or so. We've found the grass works quite well as a mulch, except there's one species that's able to root itself back into the soil from the stem, so we have to go round occasionally and flip it over. Annoying, but at least it stops the wind blowing it away, I suppose...



The first seedlings are beginning to emerge, including tomatoes, cucumbers, celeriac and fennel. We're doing our best to keep a constant temperature for them, which is best for strong growth. But there have been some wild swings between daytime and nighttime temperatures, so they've had to come into the house for a few nights when it dropped below zero. A few leaf sprouts are starting to appear on the willow hedge, and buds are breaking on some of the other hedge plants and apple trees, but generally things seem very sluggish and slow to get started this year. One sympathises! Last year's veg is mostly finished, but we're still harvesting swede, kale and leeks, and there are some very welcome salad leaves coming through in the polytunnel. Limited availability in Tombreck Farm Shop while stocks last.



Looking ahead, we're excited to announce that we will be soon hosting **weekly volunteer days** on Tuesdays, starting from **April 23rd**. Sessions will run from 9.15am to 1pm and will include a varied range of tasks in the market garden. A better way to keep fit than going to the gym, dare I say, and an opportunity to get practical veg growing experience with like-minded people. See our website for more details: <https://www.tombreckmarketgarden.co.uk/volunteering>