

Tombreck Market Garden

Newsletter #16 June 2024

Another challenging month weather-wise, still very cool (down to 5°C some nights), not much sun and quite damp, which meant the slugs continued to be a problem. We've started to get harvests of turnip, spring cabbage and french beans, but growth has been very slow especially for the outside crops and the delay of any meaningful income has been a concern. It sounds like growers have been struggling across the country, mainly for the same reasons coupled with the inability to get tractors out in the fields earlier on in the year when it was too wet. Until recently there wasn't *any* UK produce from the organic wholesaler, which is unheard of for this time of year. So it's not just us at least...

Anyway, we think there will be enough quantity and variety to start the veg boxes from the **second week of July**, delivering on the 11th and 12th. Head over to <https://tombreckmarketgarden.co.uk> to set up a subscription or place individual orders. The number of boxes will initially be quite limited, so if you don't manage to order in time do remember to check back the following week when numbers should begin to pick up - fingers crossed!



Otherwise the jobs of sowing, bed prep, planting out, weeding etc have continued as usual, with maybe 2/3 of the outdoor beds now occupied. We've been scything lots of grass and layering it up in the compost bays with wood chip, manure, weeds and other bits & pieces. The fresh grass really gets the temperature rocketing up, with one bay up to 73°C - more than enough to kill any weed seeds (generally 60°C is recommended) and speeding up the break down of plant cellulose. The hope is to make enough compost that we can leave it for a year before using it. If it's crumbly enough by that point to apply directly without sieving, so much the better.



A pair of pied wagtails decided to nest in one of our sheds, perched up on a stack of plastic crates. It was remarkable to see the whole process from small clutch of eggs, through 2 weeks' incubation, the hatching of 4 fluffy chicks, another 2 weeks seeing the parents rush about foraging for insects to feed them and then one morning they'd all fledged and gone. Apparently the parents continue to feed them outside the nest for another 2 weeks and then they're on their own. An impressively fast turnaround - it took me the best part of 30 years!