

Tombreck Market Garden

Newsletter #3 April 2023

April has brought lots of changes to the appearance of Tombreck, and we've been enjoying the milder weather, the leaves coming out on the trees, the arrival of lambs and kids, the first swallows & house martins, and cuckoos beginning to call from the woods by the loch. It's a pretty nice corner of the world here, really...



On the market garden we decided to hire in a more powerful rotavator for a week to help us prepare two more growing plots as well as re-tilling the first one and mixing in mushroom compost and lime to neutralise the acidity of the soil. We sowed plot #2 to a green manure mix and moved the silage tarp onto plot #3 in the middle of the field. Next we started the long process of forming beds in plot #1 - marking them out, raking soil up from the paths in between, pulling out the dead grass, working it to a fine tilth, and spreading woodchip on the paths. Finally we were ready for the first sowings of carrots, parsnips and beetroot, shortly followed by planting out the seedlings of spinach, chard, onions, broad beans and cabbages. When we watered them in, using the irrigation we'd set up in March, it felt like everything had come together and we had properly arrived - and begun to at least *look* like we knew what we were doing!



One day, with the help of Raina and little Boo, we had our first experience of using a working horse, Jackson, who also lives on the farm, and up to now we only knew as grass-grazer, manure-provider and general mischief-maker. We put the harness on him, attached a wooden sled, and managed to shift a big load of bracken, followed by a spruce log which will get cut up for firewood. It was really interesting to see what he was capable of and to think of all the possibilities it opens up for tasks you would otherwise be reliant on machinery and petrol to accomplish. He seemed to enjoy it too, after some initial self doubt. I don't know if we'll ever get him to pull a plough, but there's definitely some potential there. Many thanks to Raina for showing us the ropes.

Otherwise we're still waiting for permission from Perth & Kinross council to build our first polytunnel, nearly two months after submitting the initial application, which is frustrating, to put it mildly... If you see tomato and cucumber plants for sale in the farm shop you'll know why!