

# Tombreck Market Garden

Newsletter #4 May 2023

The pace has quickened in May, with the warm weather speeding up plant growth, and the succession of seedlings ready to be planted out that much faster. Of course the weeds have enjoyed the weather too - luckily we seem to have mainly 'well-behaved' types which can be pulled up by hand or sliced off with a hoe before they get too large. Even the dock seedlings haven't had the chance to get established, and I really hope we can keep it that way! It was definitely worth doing a thorough job digging them out before starting to cultivate the first plot.

One seemingly endless job was weeding and thinning the carrots and parsnips, a very fiddly task involving a surprising amount of concentration when the seedlings are that small, and hard on the back with the posture you have to adopt. It will need doing again but should be easier next time when the plants are larger and better able to compete with the weeds. Larger operations use a combination of black plastic to germinate weed seedlings and warm the soil, followed by a flame weeder just before the carrots come up. It would be interesting to try something similar on our plot, though I imagine it must be stressful trying to get the timing exactly right, and maybe allowing weed seeds to germinate and hoeing-before-sowing would have much the same effect.



In other news we bought a couple of sprinklers which have really helped with the watering during this dry weather. The council finally granted us permission to put up our polytunnel, so that should happen over the next couple of weeks and the tomatoes and cucumbers will just have to hang on a bit longer in their pots. And - fanfare! - we've got our first produce ready for sale: the first crop of radishes (red and white varieties) shortly to be followed by chard, lettuce & spring onions. Available in the Tombreck farm shop and via Neighbourfood while stocks last! Order here:

<https://www.neighbourfood.co.uk/producers/tombreck-market-garden/229770>

Watch out for broad bean tops too - delicious steamed or fried in butter. As you can see from the banner photo above the plants are well on their way, and nipping the tops off provides some lovely fresh greens as well as deterring blackfly and concentrating the plant's energy into growing its bean pods. The flowers smell great this time of year too...

