

Tombreck Market Garden

Newsletter #15 May 2024

Work continued in May bringing plot #2 into cultivation, planting out the first bed with broad beans and then moving on to early cabbages in the brassica section. Unfortunately a combination of warm evenings, high humidity and cloud cover meant that there was immediate slug damage, with a large number of the poor cabbage seedlings completely destroyed in the first night. Going out morning and evening with a pair of scissors seemed to keep the numbers down a bit, but eventually we got some slug pellets (organic-certified) to at least protect the plants until they get established and stop us from going crazy. Also, we had to take up the grass mulch we'd put around the onions and garlic as well as the bark on the paths - good for keeping down the weeds, but a great place for slugs to retreat to during the day. Keeping the grass short around the plot helps too.



We extended the mesh barrier so it now goes around both plots, providing some wind protection and keeping out our friend the hare. Spuds have gone in, using our wheel hoe to dig the furrow, the tomatoes and cucumbers are in the polytunnel, and we're gradually digging out the last of the winter weeds and bolted brassica crops. We built a handy compost sieve that slots on the rim of the wheelbarrow and sifts out the bigger lumps, uncomposted material and large pieces of bark and woodchip. It takes 10-15mins per barrow-load but results in a far better material for top-dressing beds. One day while I was sieving away I saw something darting through the grass out of the corner of my eye. Keeping still I saw a weasel rush up to the compost bays and gradually work its way down towards me, eventually running past only a couple of metres away before disappearing down a burrow under a clump of rushes. Very pleased to see it make a home here - there will be plenty of mice and voles for it to eat!



Otherwise, the seedling 'conveyor belt' is going full speed ahead from tray germination indoors to growing on in the greenhouse to hardening off on pallets outside to finally getting planted out in beds. It's amazing how quickly bare soil turns into a vibrant growing space - if everything goes right, that is! The hope is to start the veg boxes in mid-late June, but in the meantime we'll have individual items like radishes, chard, spring cabbages and mixed salad for sale in the farm shop.

<https://tombreckmarketgarden.co.uk/>