

Allotment and Gardening Jottings

Dilly's Diary

Winter chill is with us, as I look back on the (relative!) abundance of late summer and autumn at the plot...

3 Sept: Another wet spell is under way but today there is sunshine and swallows are still sweeping across the sky as I re-work a former potato patch in readiness for planting winter onion sets. The bed is raised slightly with a fork to aid drainage and two drills are drawn out, lining each with a little peat-free compost before putting in the small bulbs. Remove weeds from base of raspberry canes which have fresh young growth and trim canes. Purple and magenta sweet peas still flourishing and begging to be picked. Remove caterpillars from cabbage plants.

Slugs and Snails Have a Party

13 Sept: Tomato ripening set back by the recent wet weather and chilly nights, but sweet peas thriving while slugs, snails and caterpillars have had a party with most of my greens! Dig most of remaining King Edward potatoes and fork out several leeks (to use in stews). Pick remaining French climbing beans and courgettes (now almost over).

21 Sept: *Azores High* giving a welcome burst of sun and warmth. Digging programme starts, remaining potatoes cleared and the last few courgettes cut. Green shoots appearing on winter onions. Put in two more small rows.



8 Oct: Glorious day. Prepare bed to plant first lot of garlic having found that winter planting last year was fairly successful, albeit with a mild winter. This year may be different. Put in about two dozen cloves - laborious. Strawberry bed and herb patch weeded again. More digging. Pick sweet peas.

Not Growing Spaghetti Yet?

11/12 Oct: Warm weekend. Preparing bed for more garlic, I discover some undug potatoes where the plant tops had disappeared. Put in rest of winter onions. Aerate soil around Globe Artichoke plants and remove old growth. Seed catalogues are flowing in and ordering must be thought about soon. I am already awash with packets of seed unused from this year and last. There is the dilemma of wanting to try new things but not always getting them started in time or being overtaken by bad weather.

22 Oct: Standing crops now down to cabbages, a few sprout plants (perhaps ready for Christmas), broccoli and leeks. Borage and marigolds are still in bloom. At home reflect on the rather mixed results over the year but take heart as I make a pasta sauce using virtually all self-grown ingredients. The turning back of the clocks on 26 October marks the shorter days of winter, setting limits to the digging programme. Let's hope some progress is made before next Spring!

Dilly Marigold

Fibromyalgia Support Group Arrives in Milton

The first meeting of this new support group will take place on **Thursday 15th January** from 11am to 1pm at Stonecroft, Frog Lane, Milton. Please ring: 01993 830629 for information, after 6pm and at weekends.

Diana Mackay