

## Allotment and Gardening Jottings

### Dilly's Diary

The end of April and early May brought tricky conditions locally with occasional wintry squalls, a little frost then a warmer spell followed by a hailstorm on 8<sup>th</sup> May. At the plot, the First early potatoes were nipped but no major casualties.

**2<sup>nd</sup> May:** weed onions, garlic and strawberries; dig new small patch for the second lot of shallots; at home the Asparagus peas sown in mid April are waiting to be planted out (manage to put them in on **10<sup>th</sup> May**). The next day at home sow several small trays of climbing French beans and leave to germinate indoors (they are through on **16<sup>th</sup>**) while on **13<sup>th</sup>** yellow and green courgettes are sown in pots and tomato plants are potted on and set out to harden off prior to final planting outdoors in June.

#### Loves and Losses at the Plot

**19<sup>th</sup> May:** The recent wet (and warmer) weather has brought things on at the plot, not least billows of white cow parsley, wild carrot and the pale yellow flowers of sprouting broccoli going to seed: reminiscent of an Impressionist painting. Potatoes in full leaf; dig bed where Globe Artichokes failed in the icy winter and put in waiting sweet peas. The next evening (warm with swallows skimming by) plant more artichokes, sunflower and pot marigolds.

**29<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> May:** at home put tomato plants into grow bags and some in large pots by a warm wall; courgettes now ready to harden off before planting out; at plot put in climbing French bean plants (with supporting canes) and carrots.

**2<sup>nd</sup> June:** Sunny early evening, take a snack to plot and after doing general

tasks, sit watching the swallows, admiring the view and notice the patch of comfrey flowers abuzz with bees.

**4<sup>th</sup> June** is another lovely day and put in courgette plants (cover with fleece).

**9<sup>th</sup> June:** plant out sugar snap peas, weed herb bed and strawberry patch.

**14<sup>th</sup> June:** recent rain brought out slugs and snails and every one of the courgettes is stripped to bare stalks. Too bad! Get dibber and replant bed with waiting leeks.

Harvest winter grown onions and dig trial patch of First early potatoes which emerge clean and uneaten by wildlife. A few days later plant out several more courgette plants.



#### Midsummer Heat

**24<sup>th</sup> June:** A perfect day for Midsummer; I take lunch to plot along with some Winter Squash plants and Flat Leaf Parsley raised at home. Dig more potatoes and the winter grown garlic (after previous doubts the garlic crop is good). Some purple gooseberries are ready but wildlife has eliminated ripe strawberries; peas and climbing beans need water.

**30<sup>th</sup> June:** Very hot conditions in recent days mean more watering: I have one can and a plastic trug bucket. The Asparagus peas have been slow to develop but look lovely with subtle bronze-red flowers and mid-green leaves. Climbing French beans have struggled a bit but are producing pale lilac flowers. A few more gooseberries, strawberries and first raspberries picked. Leaf lettuce has suffered from dry conditions and my failure to water promptly!

#### Dilly Marigold