

Allotment and Garden Jottings

Dilly's Diary

May and June were largely dry months, initially cool with overnight frosts then increasingly hot and arid. The lack of rain and bad timing of planting caused havoc for some crops, sawfly ate the gooseberry foliage and birds demolished the strawberries.

1 May: Extend a bed for King Edward maincrop potatoes and plant. Frosty night on 3 May and hope that first earlies already in leaf haven't been nipped (they were). A bad insect bite on lower leg (Blandford Fly suspected), puts me out of action for some days.



remember to add compost before planting. Do trial dig of several first-early potato plants: yield not high but there are enough for dinner. Delighted for plants at the plot as it rains on 6 June and it is wetter the next day.

Delicious in Stews

8-10 May: Dandelion removal still called for. Early potato foliage has been thoroughly browned by recent frosts and decide to put fleece over. Strawberry plants look lovely in flower: white petals and yellowy green centres. Fork out weeds proliferating in the bed and do the same in the raspberry row. Prepare beds for final maincrop potatoes ('Picasso') and a second batch of shallots (so delicious in stews and pasta sauces). Prepare ground for broad beans which are germinating at home in trays.

15 May: Put the two varieties of broad bean plants in (Sutton and a new purple one, 'Karmazyn'); these have already grown rather tall and need sticks to support them as well as watering a couple of times in their early days.

31 May: Weather has turned hotter. Extract leeks from a patch and fork over in readiness for runner beans, adding compost as I go. Put runner beans in and arrange canes for them, also feed some of the summer onions.

4 June : Notice cucumber ('Boothby's Blonde') seedlings sown four days ago are coming through. At plot prepare bed for 'Cobra' French climbing beans and

Leave a Strawberry or Two for Me!

12-13 June: Clear remaining leeks and use bed to put in tray of waiting sugar-snap peas. Dig more new potatoes, slightly better after recent rain. Radishes have fattened up too quickly and some are already going to seed. Attention turns to visiting blackbird which appears to have eaten most of the strawberries.

20-22 June: Warm afternoon spent planting up tomatoes and courgettes in large pots and cucumbers in grow-bag to put in sheltered spot near warm wall at home. At the plot more peas go in: the earlier ones are having a hard time in the drought and something (probably sawfly) has eaten virtually all the gooseberry foliage exposing fruit on bare branches.

29 June: At home, cucumber plants romping away in hot weather and potted courgettes have small fruits starting. But there are still courgettes waiting unplanted at the plot (though two butternut squash given by a friend are in and surviving!). Fork up the winter onions and set to dry. Water the peas, runner beans (in flower) and climbers. Pick broad beans; spinach going to seed in heat. Eat three strawberries kindly left by the birds!

Dilly Marigold