

Gardener's Blether - October 2015

What a lovely autumn we've had so far - everybody at the garden has been enjoying the sunny and calm weather of the last few weeks, and the onset of autumn colours.



Autumn colours in the garden

With the weather (finally!) smiling upon us, we got some big jobs done: our raised beds are marching towards completion, which will make it easier for people with limited mobility to enjoy the garden and to learn about growing veg. And I'm looking forward to a bit less stooping, too! Community Payback has shifted several tonnes worth of gravel and manure to fill the beds, a big job indeed. We've opted for a mixture of well-rotted manure and seaweed to fill them – this should give next year's crop a pretty bright start, and us some very, very good soil indeed.

Speaking of seaweed: our lovely volunteers from Carr Gomm and I had a lot of fun lifting the potatoes - and an impromptu competition about who could lift the most! While there's some debate as to who really did win, it's pretty clear that both our soil and our tatties benefited from the seaweed trenches we planted them in this spring. Not only is the soil nice and crumbly, we also

found some truly gigantic earthworms. The former tattie patches are now sporting a fresh crop of green manure, which will not only suppress weeds, but also prevent all the goodness from being washed out of the soil during those soon-to-come winter storms.

We spread what must be the largest pile of woodchips I've ever seen during our last Volunteer Action Day – a great job by everyone involved, and it made the children's area look great for our Harvest Fair the following weekend.



Veg stall at the Harvest Fair

Speaking of which: I was excited (and a wee bit proud) to sell our very own veg in a wee greengrocer stall, and on top of this got to press the very first apples from our own orchard. So all in all, I had a great day, and I hope that everybody who came down for a visit did, too.

We are still enjoying the fruits of our veg plot labours in the form of soups and salads, and continue to sell produce at the Strone Post Office and at the EcoHealth Shop in Dunoon.

At the moment we're stocking up the polytunnel with delicious winter veg: salad leaves, kale, cabbage, leek and peas. If you'd like to learn more about how to make the most of your polytunnel during the colder months, join me for the next Gardening Masterclass on 22nd November.



Digging up the tatties

Good news for us and good news for the bees: we will be a Bee Cause bee site soon! Friends of the Earth have awarded us 200m² worth of wildflower seeds to create a bee-friendly meadow. We'll start sowing during our next Volunteer Action Day on 31st October, 11am to 3pm. Join us if you like – there'll be hot drinks, home baking, and lots of laughter! To find out more about the Bee Cause, check

https://www.foe.co.uk/what_we_do/bee_worlds_39332

I was also very excited about helping the kids from Strone Primary School with their Health Week project. They came down to the garden to see what's new, taste some beetroots, peas and kale, and to discover the worms in our wormery. As part of learning about healthy eating, they'll make a yummy veggie soup from some of our produce.

We are currently thinking about building an enclosed yard for all those pots, crates, tarps and various other bits and bobs that are lying about. It would be great to do this as a series of woodworking workshops. So if you are an experienced woodworker and would like to share your skills with our volunteers, please get in touch! We are also looking for chicken wire (for a leafmold heap) and old windows to build more cold frames. As always, do come down for a blether or to see what's new on Thursdays.

*Happy gardening,
Franziska*



Great day to be in the garden!