

CORONA-YOUR-OWN

Helping you to get organic growing despite the disruption
e-Newsletter 13 3 July 2020

Welcome

Drove through torrential rain in Leamington early Thursday afternoon and thought "great for the garden". Got home – bone dry, then a few big drops of rain and it stopped; it is raining lightly this afternoon, though.

Update on growing so far this year from Stuart

Photos from the garden.

Loads of cherries taken off already, with last left to get a bit sweeter on tree.

Red and white currants have done really well this year, and bees really go for the small flowers during pollination. Plums less so, as they have been affected by frost, as have some apples

The mulch covering under the onions has really worked well. I have just weeded twice around the holes where the onions are planted - very easy, it also keeps the ground moist. Waiting now for onions to bulb up after longest day to see how final crop fares in the coming weeks. Also giving them a boost with organic liquid feed.



More cherries from William

Cherries have featured in some recent editions of the newsletter. You may be interested in these pictures. I was led to believe that 'birds go mad for cherries'.

The cherries picture taken on Sunday 28th shows cherries growing on the back wall of Coventry Quaker meeting house. This is in the centre of Coventry. As you might guess it is currently locked up but one of two

of us have been going in to check on it and do some odd jobs. So over the last couple of weeks we have been able to help ourselves to a couple or so, leaving some cherries for other people. The birds do not seem to have noticed them! All rather interesting.

At home we have just planted some cherries and knowing the bird problem, selected a wall so the mesh protection was designed into the place. The 10mm mesh comes in 1metre wide rolls and the frames are just simple laths. The mesh is stapled on. As you can see it is just three similar frames and two triangular panels. Loosely held on by string. Out of season they can be just lifted off and extra ones added if needed in future years. Certainly they look tidy.



More unusual veg from Chris

A few weeks ago I had a lot of fun looking through the Chiltern Seeds website and decided to try a few experiments. I think my germination skills might need polishing up!

Salsola

This was very reluctant to germinate under cover in my little polytunnel but I now have two tiny plants which I'm nursing along. I love samphire so I've high hopes of this. Any tips please about the best way to germinate this would be much appreciated! *I accidentally soaked mine for 72 hours, instead of the recommended 24 hours, and they germinated well! GMCg*

Callaloo

As per the instructions on the packet I sowed these seeds outside. About six germinated and despite all the warm weather back in May they didn't do very well. I potted them up and put them in the polytunnel where they're now coming along pretty well. They're really big enough now to go back outside but I'll wait for the weather to warm up again

Tomatillo

These went off like a rocket in a seed tray in the polytunnel and I've now got three outside about a foot high plus a good few more to give away. More than I can say for the tomato seeds that I bought from a well known hardware shop - not a tomato in sight! Anyway my tomatoes from last year came to the rescue as they've germinated and popped up all over the plot - this was from the compost I spread over the ground in February. Surely a lesson there about seed saving! *Chris has 2 spare tomatillo plants. If you would like them and are able to collect from Kenilworth, contact us at enews@heog.org.uk.*

Chickpeas

Not a chickpea here! I've tried getting them to germinate under cover in the polytunnel where the temperatures are very kind. And I've planted them outside as well. As ever, when all else fails, I'll just wait and see. I wonder if soaking them first might help?

Pest control

from Gillie

To beat the slugs and enjoy your lettuce, plant them in hanging baskets and hang in a tree or on a fence in the shade. To have a continuous supply of lettuce, snip off the outer leaves when you want them – they will continue to produce more.

For brassicas, to stop cabbage white caterpillars and pigeons devouring them, plant with a chicken wire cylinder round them, cover with netting and peg at the top – this is for those who are growing just a few in a small area. Holes in the netting? Just clothes peg them up.

from Gillian

For covering larger areas of brassicas, I've used scaffold netting (bought from a car boot years ago), supported on canes and anchored at the bottom – works well, and the mesh is fine enough to stop the butterflies squeezing through.

I've been using a soft paintbrush to remove the aphids on the chillies and peppers in the greenhouse.

Thank you Judy & Barry from Ann

TBH, I have no idea if the peppers were F1, they were Morrisons organic. I don't think it was the compost, as other crops grew well. But I'm glad I'm not alone! I bought some peppers, and potted them on in Melcourt, they are doing brilliantly.

I gather that my carrot compost might not be deep enough. It's mainly sand, soil & old compost, so not much organic matter. Will keep trying.

Thanks again.

Young gardener with lots of interesting tips

Huw Richards, a young gardener from Ceridigeon has an amazingly active YouTube channel with over 300,000 followers. Patrick Holden interviewed him for a Sustainable Food Trust podcast (<https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/podcast/episode-14-with-huw-richards>) a few weeks ago. Here is a link to Huw talking about free veg gardening hacks https://youtu.be/3vN5Mn_-5MM

POSTSCRIPT

Feedback from our readers is important, so if you have ideas, news or tips you would like to share, please let us know.

If you have any questions related to organic growing which you think our members might be able to answer, let us know and we will try to include the questions and replies in our newsletters.

You can contact us at enews@heog.org.uk .

Gillian McGivern