



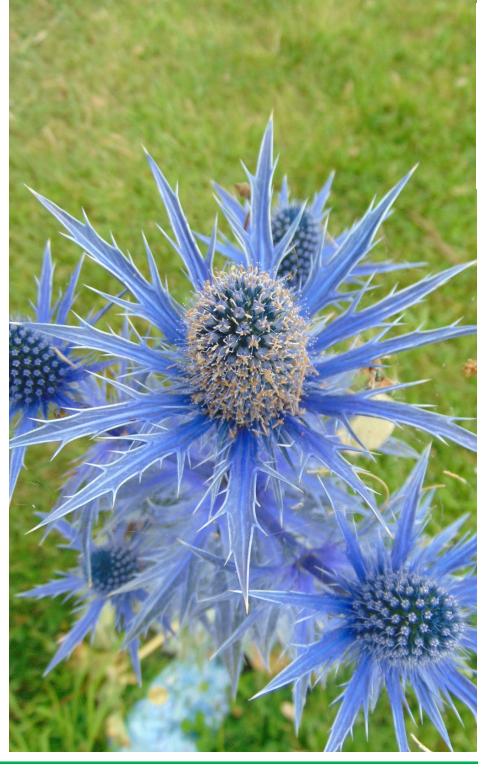
Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden



Weather continues to be a talking point.....

Once again the weather has been the topic of conversation with so much inconsistency marked by some very cool temperatures at the start of the month, but we really need to be thankful for small mercies with the weather that the Caribbean Islands have had to face up to – frightening probably sums it up simply because you cannot beat nature. But, knowing the resilient nature of the Caribbean people they will re-build and bounce back, given time they will get a smile back on their faces. Indeed, having spoken to family in Jamaica as the hurricane was happening, I am not going to complain about the weather in this country anymore but just embrace it and make the best of it.....

Stunning colour – Eryngium Big Blue.....



Here you can see a stunning plant that we have growing in the allotment – garden.....
Appropriately named – BIG BLUE.....

Striking colours – Calendula.....



Cucumbers are looking good.....

Here you can see some of our cucumber plants – growing in the poly tunnel which offers a good deal of protection and when the sun eventually shines the poly tunnel does warm up very quickly, coupled with plenty of water these plants are producing some fruit – home grown cucumbers taste great.....

Mini Munch



Cucumbers

Sunshine is needed soon!

Below you can see some of our tomato plants that we have growing inside the poly tunnel – as you can see, we have plenty of fruit set plus there are also plenty of plants with lots of flowers. What we really need now is some sunshine to not only warm the temperatures up but also to help the ripening process of the tomatoes plus the sunshine will add to the flavour of the fruit...

Lots of water is being given to the tomato plants daily but we really do need some warm sunshine!



Lots more fruit growing in the gardens.....

The original Bridge Garden has lots of both fruit bushes and fruit trees all growing and producing plenty of fruit – these are bushes and trees that are well established as opposed to the bushes and trees that we have planted in the Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden, these are new bushes and trees that given time will establish and hopefully will produce lots of fruit.....

Below you can see one of our Bramley cooking apple trees that has lots of fruit which hopefully will give us a big crop to harvest later in the summer.....



Blackcurrant bushes are laden with fruit.....

The Blackcurrant bushes that we have growing in the original Bridge Garden are absolutely laden with fruit – these are well established bushes that have produced heavy crops of fruit for a few years now. The newly planted bushes that have been funded by Smart Learner Driving School will establish themselves and hopefully will produce some fruit next year.....

Here you can see some of the blackcurrants



Fresh Fruit



Blackcurrants....

More fruit growing in the original Bridge Garden.....

Effectively we have two school gardens – the original Bridge Garden and the rapidly developing Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden.....

In the original Bridge Garden there are plenty of fruit trees, here you can see our Braeburn apple tree which has some tasty looking apples growing.....



Here you can see one of the trees in the old Bridge Garden which has plenty of hazelnuts.

We will have to compete with the squirrels.....

Nuts



Yet another fruit tree in the old Bridge Garden.....

This is a plum tree that has plenty of fruit.....

Hopefully we will get some sunshine to ripen the fruit.....

Plums...

Nature at it's finest.....

Below you can see that one of our Solitary Bee Nesters has been put to good use by Leafcutter Bees. Female solitary bees lay their eggs in the chambers within the bee nester – once the eggs have been laid, the female solitary bee will seal the chamber off with leaves which you can see in the photograph.....

Absolutely fascinating and very, very clever.....



Plants are also very, very clever too.....

Not only can plants manufacture their own food through photosynthesis, plus they provide us with oxygen but some plants grow in a manner where they twine themselves around any support structures put in place.....

The classic case here are runner beans that you can see have twined around the support canes. Some other plants produce tendrils, very strong growing shoots that support the plant as it grows – cucumbers as you can see here are growing and supporting themselves by wrapping the tendrils around the growing supports. Peas also produce tendrils to act as growing supports.....



Runner Beans.....



Cucumbers..

Wildflowers are starting to flower.....

Despite the fact that these wildflower seeds were sown relatively late plus the distinct lack of consistent sunshine, we are starting to see some flowers giving the garden some more colour plus more importantly we hope they are providing some much needed food for our pollinators.....



Cornflowers



Marguerite

Daisies.....

Wildflowers....

Peppers are growing well.....

We have some pepper plants growing in the poly tunnel which are making really good progress – follow the development of the pepper fruit from flower to a small pepper onto a slightly bigger pepper.....

Lots of water is being applied but some sunshine would not go amiss.....

Although the poly tunnel offers a great deal of protection from the wind and the rain, it is the kind of environment that really needs some warm sunshine..

Watch the growth pattern here.....



Lettuces planted out.....

We have planted out two modules of lettuce plants outdoors – now with the weather relatively cool, hopefully these plants will grow quickly before any really hot weather does finally arrive because lettuce plants have a tendency to make too much growth too quickly – in essence, they bolt and will often produce a flower and a seed head very quickly indeed.....



Rose Garden Set Up.....

Another new development within the Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden is the set up of a rose garden – roses are flowers that give lots of people plenty of pleasure both from the stunning flowers they produce but also the fragrance that they give off. Also, roses always tend to be given names, often they are named after people or events. The three roses that we have planted in our rose garden so far are called The Generous Gardener, Bring me Sunshine and Golden Celebration. Two of the roses are bush type and the third is a climber.



Roses..



Rose Garden.....

Garden Tips.....

There are so many different tips and different ways that you can garden which you often learn by experience, successes and failures all contribute to your knowledge, often the really simple tips are the ways that help the most.....

Here we are going to share two very simple tips which are not only very useful tips but at the same time will not only re-cycle two items but will also save you some money too.....

The first tip is how to put any cardboard that you have to good use.....

Don't use the cardboard that has a waxy texture because it does not break down very well, also, remove any sellotape or staples.....

Cardboard can be used as a weed suppressant if you are looking to set up any new growing areas – here you can see we have lined a raised bed with cardboard, also, you can create a new growing area without the timber surround just by laying your cardboard down and then put your compost straight on top. Also, you can use cardboard to create pathways by laying wood chip or bark on top of the cardboard.....



**Re-cycled
Cardboard...**

Plant Food.....



Here you can see that we have put some bananas in the ground next to the roots of one of our roses.....

Whole bananas and banana skins are a great source of potassium which plants need.....

Bananas will help the rose stems and will increase the quality of the blooms.....

Banana skins are also useful for lots of other plants too.

Bananas.....

Another garden tip.....

Add the contents of your used tea bags to your compost heap if you have one, or you can spread the contents around the base of your plants.....

Note the wording – tip the contents out, the reason for this is that there is evidence that the “packaging” contains plastic which we do not want to add to our gardens.....

What a stunning flower.....

Here you can see a stunning Evening Primrose flower – the vibrant yellow is really a joy to see. These Evening Primrose plants have self-seeded, a real feat of nature, self – seeded plants can literally pop up anywhere.....



Evening Primrose

Evening Primrose is a very useful medicinal herb with the oil that is extracted from the plant providing many medicinal benefits.....

Bees will not be enjoying this summer weather.....

With something like 70% of our food requiring pollination by the bees and other pollinators, the distinct lack of consistent warm sunshine this summer will not be welcomed by these insects. We really do need some sunshine soon so that these pollinating insects can get to work but it really is getting to the point where so many plants such as pumpkins, courgettes and squashes are a long way behind where they should be – hopefully they will catch up soon.....



Colourful Calendula.....



Seed germination is fascinating.....

It always fascinates me that after you have sown seeds, whether they are big or small seeds, the process that takes place when the seed germinates is nothing but amazing – to think that the seed has everything it needs given the right conditions to germinate and start growing. It still excites me to see the seeds push there way through the compost or whatever growing medium you have sown the seeds in. Here you can see a row of Dwarf French beans that are pushing there way through the compost.....



Dwarf French Beans

Finally, we have a tomato that is turning red!

Past the middle of July, we finally have a tomato, yes, just a single tomato that is just starting to change colour. We desperately need some sunshine!



Pumpkins are tiny!

We have some very small pumpkins that have formed – indeed, they are small. Although the pumpkin plants were planted out relatively late coupled with the weather there is plenty of catching up to do. Let us hope that we do get some decent warm sunshine to help these pumpkins along.....

Add some sunshine to the rain and you have a perfect mix for pumpkin growing but we are not alone in experiencing slow pumpkin growth as I was recently hearing a pumpkin farmer who grows fields of pumpkins saying that he was experiencing a very slow start to the pumpkin season. So, we are not alone.....

