Garden Newsletter September 2024……

Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden

Plenty of garden projects still to complete……

After a summer of hard work, there are still plenty of garden projects that are ongoing – the major project to complete is the raised bed pond which needs plenty of painstaking work to set it up properly. The picket fence gate needs fixing – another summer project that will be completed soon. A new pathway is in the process of being set up creating another entrance point for the garden.

Follow the progress of these projects……



Home grown……



T O M A T O E S

More cucumbers growing……

We have another variety of cucumber growing in the poly tunnel – as well as the Mini Munch variety, we also have another variety called Marketmore…… This variety produces longer fruits – here you can see the skin texture is different too……



Home grown harvest – colourful too……

Tomatoes……



Cucumbers……



Raised bed pond build is continuing…….

Below you can see that we are working on the sand base – the sand we have put down is not the best as it still has a lot of stones In it, something that we need to correct as any stones could potentially puncture the liner given the weight of the water when it is filled up…….

So, a painstaking job to sieve the sand but it will be worth the time and effort..

A job worth doing, is a job worth doing well!!



Plenty more herbs to add to our collection……

New herbs planted up……

We have added a number of new herbs to our herb collection today planting up Garden Mint, Rosemary, Bay, Buckler Sorrel, Sorrel, Black Peppermint and Feverfew Double Flower……





Rosemary



Garden Mint…

Bay…….

Buckler Sorrel and Sorrel……





BLACK PEPPERMINT…..



H E R B S

FEVERFEW DOUBLE FLOWER…



Raised Bed Pond Set Up is continuing……..

Here you can see the next stage in the raised bed pond set – up – all of the sand has been sieved through to remove any remaining stones to give us a very smooth base ready to lay our underlay…….



Sand base has been laid down…….

Underlay base has been laid down





Tell – tale signs of autumn……

Now that we are into the early part of autumn there are some tell – tale signs illustrating this, not least the change in temperature, light levels have all of a sudden decreased plus take a look at what is falling on the ground……..



Cabbages growing well….



Here you can see some of our cabbages that are growing well…….

They are growing under our mesh cloche which is protecting these plants to stop them being ravaged by hungry pigeons……

Ladybird's so important in our garden space…….

One of the most important insects that we want to encourage into our garden, alongside the bees who are so important we need lots of ladybird's in our garden space – ladybird's have a ferocious appetite acting as a natural pest control as they will eat other plant eating insects particularly aphids……

Aphids if they get a hold – green fly and black fly will absolutely decimate plants in a very short space of time as they suck the life out of plants……

Ladybird's will eat literally hundreds and thousands of aphids so the more ladybird's we have in our garden space, then so much the better…….

Below you can see ladybird larva on our fennel plants……



LADYBIRD LARVA



Plenty of fruit to come……

We will have plenty of fruit to harvest very soon – fruit that is growing in various different parts of the garden. There are black grapes growing in the poly tunnel, pears are growing in the Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden and Braeburn Apples growing in the "old " Bridge Garden. All fresh! Fruit, you cannot beat it!







GRAPES

Apples look good to eat! ……..

This Braeburn apple tree is a third year tree which has produced a decent yield of fruit – as the tree grows bigger, hopefully it will produce plenty more ripe juicy apples……



Pears are looking good too……

Like the apple tree on the previous page, the conference pear tree here is the first year that these two fruit trees have produced some fruit……

Both the Braeburn Apple tree and the Conference Pear tree have produced some fruit that really looks good – a few more weeks and then we can pick the fruit and find out how good it tastes……







P
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Bramley Cooking Apples…….



Lots of different herbs growing in the garden…….

We have such a varied range of herbs growing in our Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden – these herbs are all at different stages with some flowering, some are producing seed heads. Below you can see a bee enjoying the herbs in flower….



Feverfew in flower……

When these Feverfew plants stop flowering, we will endeavour to collect some seeds so that we can re – sow them in the spring or perhaps we can sow them in a tray inside the poly tunnel…….



More herbs……



Fennel Seeds……

Here you can see some of our fennel seeds that we need to harvest and dry ready for use……
Fennel seeds have many health benefits which have a liquorice type taste although too many seeds are not good for you…….

Lavender……



Broad Leaf Thyme……

Below you can see our Broad Leaf Thyme – this is what it says, a variety that has broader leaves than the more traditional Thyme. Used extensively in Caribbean cookery, these plants have the same aroma as the regular thyme.



Anyone for foraging……

Below you can see a big bunch of ripe elderberries – elder can be found in many places, this bush is part of our fruiting hedge but elder can be found in lots of different places growing naturally. The berries are packed with vitamins particularly vitamin C and anti – oxidants, also they contain lots of fibre although they should not be eaten raw. Elderberry Cordial and in a syrup form are both refreshing with lots of health benefits too……



More “wild” fruit……

Below you can see more plants growing in our fruiting hedge – this is our wild rose that is well established now producing masses of flowers during the summer months which then turn into rose hips. Now, if you want to forage for food, one of the “safest” and easiest fruits to identify are rose hips…….

Rose Hips have so many uses including teas, jams, jellies, bread and even wine. You can dry them out, boil them and stew them. Turning them into syrup is one of the easiest ways to use them. Also, during World War 2 rose hips were a substitute for oranges which were difficult to source……



Foraging – a STARK WARNING here……

Rowan Berries – more "wild food" …….

There is a stark warning here regarding foraging – make sure you know what you are doing here otherwise there can be dire consequences…….

Another "wild" fruit that is readily available if you look and forage, Rowan Berries can be found in plentiful supply – get them before the birds do……

Now, DO NOT! eat them raw because they contain toxic parasorbic acid which can cause kidney damage, indigestion and congestion……

Once cooked, the parasorbic acid is converted into harmless sorbic acid which is digestible and safe to eat……

Rowan berries have a bitter taste but are high in Vitamin C, they can be used to make jam, syrup and even wine……



Lots of colourful tomatoes still ripening……..







The marvel of seed germination……

One of the marvels of nature is how seeds germinate – start to grow! …….. Pop a tiny seed or a big seed for that matter into a growing medium whether it be compost, water or even damp kitchen roll, then watch and marvel at how a seed then produces a tiny seedling. Usually, a seed needs dark growing conditions although some seeds will germinate in the light, water and a source of oxygen found within the confines of the seed itself. Warmth is usually required for seed germination to occur although again some seeds will germinate in colder conditions, indeed, some seeds need to be put into a fridge before they will start to germinate… Once the seed has produced a seedling, then the tiny seedling needs light in order for it to photosynthesise and produce its own food so that it can start to grow…….. Below you can see a very good example of a container of Rocket seeds that have germinated but the container has been covered over so the seedlings are yellow because they have been unable to photosynthesise without any light….





Without Light…….With Light……..

A difficult growing summer……

This summer has proved to be a difficult growing season, indeed the past twelve months have proved very difficult with the autumn , winter and spring seasons being very, very wet making it difficult to sow seed through these periods of the year. Many commercial farmers are stating that the overall quality of the grain that they have been able to harvest is of a poor quality with a lot being of animal feed quality only which inevitably will lead to both shortages and the need to import grain which will add to the price……

Below you can see some of our Runner Bean plants which have taken a long time to produce any flowers. These are plants reliant on plenty of sunshine and water – so these plants have struggled to produce much of a crop……







RUNNER BEANS

Autumn is approaching fast! ……

With autumn approaching fast, we have cleared away the summer bedding plants in readiness to plant up some autumn bedding plants……

Below you can see the area that has been cleared…….





Autumn colour……

Winter Pansies……





More super autumn colour…….

Here we have an old wheelbarrow planted up with some more autumn colour..
We have a mix of yellow pansies and cyclamens giving us some colour…….



More vibrant autumn colour……..

Another plant that always provides some much needed autumn colour is sedum – the colourful flowers also provide some late summer – early autumn food for the bees if the weather allows them to come out and feed…….



More stunning cyclamens……









CYCLAMENS

Autumn colours..







Colourful Salad Greens……

Here you can see some of our colourful salad greens that are growing inside the poly tunnel – these seeds have germinated fairly quickly within the confines and protection of the poly tunnel. Indeed, some plants have adapted to cooler growing conditions. The biggest problem during the autumn and then into the winter months is that the light levels are both less in terms of hours and the level of brightness…….

