

Garden Newsletter December 2024.....



Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden



Last month of the calendar year.....

Now that we are into December, this is probably the least productive month in terms of growth simply because it is either too cold, or it should be, or the poor light levels are not conducive to growing. Also, trees are either in a state of dormancy or are rapidly heading towards it.....

Changing seasons.....

Below you can see the oak tree that is the centrepiece of the Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden and the Willow Dome – both almost bare after losing virtually all of their leaves.....



Planting work continuing.....

With all of the planting work that has been going on including lots of trees plus lots more spring flowering bulbs, the Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden will be such a vibrant, colourful place come the spring as the bulbs come into flower and the trees start to produce some new growth plus the blossom that will follow – this area will hopefully come alive. Below you can see some more bulb planting that has taken place, and if these tulips look anything like the photograph on the packaging, they will look stunning.....



Pamplona Tulips.....

This is a stunning variety of red tulips that produce a double flower, which if the photograph on the packet is anything to go by, they will really add some really spectacular colour to the garden area.....

The tulip bulbs have been planted in the grass, this is done by lifting the turf up, the soil is loosened and then the tulips are planted before the bulbs are covered over with the soil and then the turf is replaced back on top. This planting method stops the squirrels from scratching the bulbs up.....

More late autumn – winter colour.....

As deciduous trees enter the dormancy period, which is when they lose all of their leaves and basically take a rest until the spring, as the trees lose their leaves, they often throw up some really spectacular colours as the leaves stop photosynthesising before they lose their leaves completely.....

Below you can see an example of some stunning leaf colour.....



C
O
P
P
E
R

B
E
E
C
H

More late autumn – winter colour.....

Another shrub that we have growing in the garden is called cornus or dogwood. This is a shrub that has some really - bright vivid stems – orange, red and an acid green colour. The branches contrast against any frosty or snowy weather... Below you can see the dogwood that we have growing in the “old” Bridge Garden at the bottom of the school.....



D
O
G
W
O
O
D

Horrendous weather.....

The week – end of December 7th and 8th saw the British Isles absolutely battered with Storm Darragh unleashing heavy rain and serious gusts of wind..

With the strength of the wind, you always worry that garden structures can be damaged and poly tunnel covers are susceptible to tearing and in some cases ripping off completely!

Thankfully, Coventry and more specifically the school gardens got off lightly with the only “damage” done was lots of tree branches and twigs coming down, plus the rainfall has flooded some areas of the garden, this is really, absolutely, nothing in terms of the damage and devastation to very mature trees across the country and sadly the loss of life with trees falling on vehicles and killing people. Very sad, indeed.....

One thing to always bear in mind is that you cannot mess with nature, it will always find a way to come back and leave a mark!

Fallen Tree Clear Up!



Here you can see a wheelbarrow full of logs and twigs that we have sawn up from some of the fallen branches that came down during Storm Darragh.....

We will put these logs, branches and twigs to good use.....

Tree Clearance Continuing.....



Twigs and sticks put to good use.....

When we get inclement weather, we also need to keep a look out and provide some shelter for our insects which all play a part in our garden spaces, plus at this time of the year lots of insects are sheltering from the weather.....

Something as simple as a pile of sticks or a pile of leaves will provide a habitat and shelter for the tiniest of insects.....

This pile of twigs and sticks is up against the trunk of the big oak tree.....



Calendula is still flowering [Monday December 9th]



Rosemary is in flower too.....



Thyme is another favourite herb.....

Amongst the many herbs, both culinary and medicinal that we have growing in the school gardens there are a couple of herbs that stand out for both their versatility and how tough they are as they withstand all kinds of weather.....

The two herbs in question are Thyme and Rosemary, now these are two herbs that have many different varieties too.....

Both of these herbs have both medicinal and culinary uses.....

Here you can see our Common Thyme that has a gorgeous aroma.....



Common Thyme

A VERY VERSATILE HERB

HAS BOTH

CULINARY and MEDICINAL USES

More Tree Planting Work Underway.....

As we continue the development of the Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden, this work includes a significant spring flower bulb planting programme plus a more important development concerns planting more trees.....

Without getting into politics and planning regulations, it seems that once was Green Belt land is no longer so, locally when you look out from the school site, it seems that what was once green belt land with mature trees and hedgerows that supported an abundance of wildlife and birds has been absolutely devastated, indeed, it feels like the bricks and mortar are getting closer by the day – to counter this we are trying to plant as many new trees as we can to create our own green space. To date, we have planted 50 Flowering Cherry Trees supplied by Smart Learner Driving School, 25 Norway Spruce Christmas Trees plus lots of other mixed species of trees supplied by Trees for Cities.

Also, again supplied by Smart Learner Driving School, we have planted a fruit tree orchard that comprises of 12 apple trees and 2 sweet damson trees.....
To add to this fruit tree orchard, Smart Learner Driving School have this week supplied another 10 apple trees that will be planted very soon.....

SMART L EARNER



02475 092 784



www.smartlearner.com



4 Wheelwright Buildings
Hen Lane, Coventry CV6 4LB



Over 100 New Trees Planted

We need to plant more.....

More Apple Trees to plant this week.....

Here you can see the 10 Apple Trees funded by Smart Learner Driving School...

THANK YOU! once again for your invaluable support – it is truly appreciated....



New Apple Tree Varieties.....

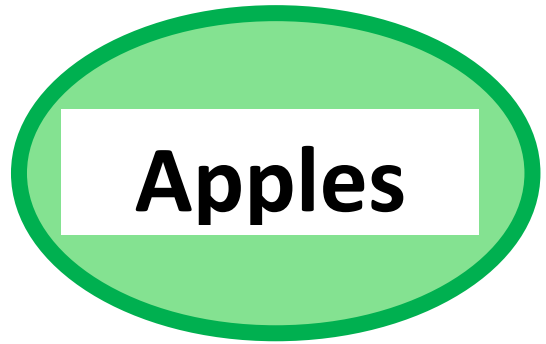
These are the varieties of the trees that will be planted in our Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden – these will be added to our fruit tree orchard.....
The trees have been supplied by Smart Learner Driving School.....

Bramley x 2 = Cooking Apples

Discovery x 3 = Eating Apples

Cox Self Fertile x 3 = Eating Apples

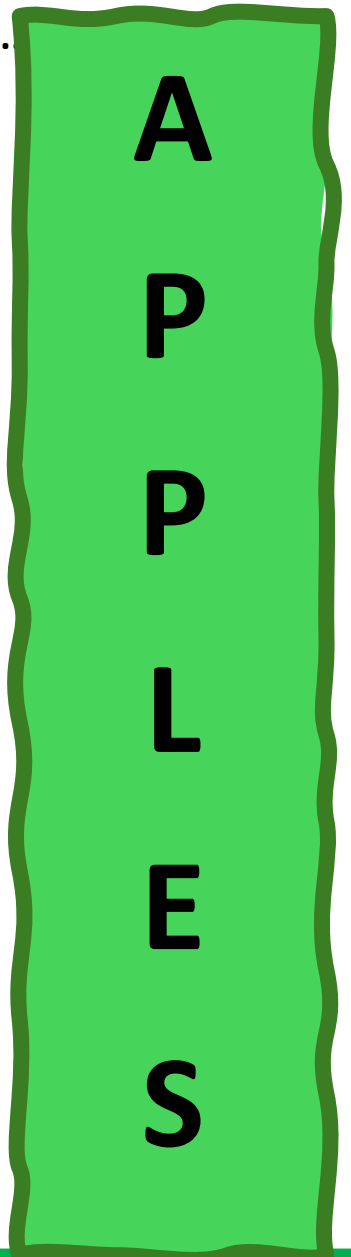
Bright Future x 2 = Eating Apples



Apple Tree Planting Underway.....

We have started to plant the new apple trees – these trees are delivered as bare root trees which means they are lifted from the ground and dispatched without soil as opposed to pot grown trees.....

The sooner you get these trees in the ground, then so much the better so that the root system does not dry out.....



Smart Learner

Driving School.....

Garden Landscaping Work Underway.....

All around the area where we have planted lots of trees and spring flowering bulbs, we have created a pathway using landscape fabric which makes for a "dry" walkway plus it defines the areas where the spring flowering bulbs are coming through the grass so that we do not walk on them and trample them! ...



**Spring flowering bulbs
all planted....**

**Alliums, Crocuses,
Tulips, Narcissus and
Daffodils.....
Spring colour.....**

Poly tunnel Salad Leaves.....

Some salad leaves relish cooler growing conditions so the school poly tunnel environment is just perfect, with the threat of frost diminished, salad crops will grow albeit slowly due mainly to the decrease in the light levels at this time of the year. So, we have Wild Rocket, Rocket [Less Spicy], Land Cress and Mizuna all growing inside the poly tunnel.....



Looking after our robins.....

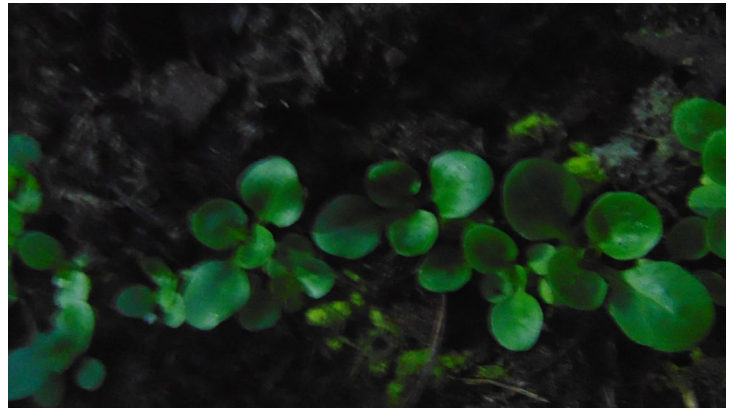


Within the Eco Eternal Curriculum Garden, we have plenty of birds including Crows, Magpies, Wood Pigeons, Seagulls who feast after break and lunchtime, Blackbirds and Robins.....

Now we are into Winter period, we have started to put out a dish of mealworms specifically for the robins that frequent our garden space.....

More poly tunnel salad leaves...

Here you can see our Lambs Lettuce – a salad crop that grows slowly through the winter.....



Cauliflowers are making plenty of leaf.....

We have some cauliflowers growing in the poly tunnel – they are certainly making plenty of leaf. Let us hope they give us some cauliflower heads.....



Gardening thoughts.....

Within the gardening and growing circles there are many different ideas and thoughts about when you should plant or sow different crops. We are going to share two of these “theories” here today. Garlic, many gardeners say, should be planted on the shortest day and harvested on the longest day. We are not far off this one as we have planted our garlic on December 19th as you will see below. Essentially, garlic needs a period of cold weather to improve its quality and its flavour.....

The other “theory” is that you should sow your onion seeds on Boxing Day, the reason for this sowing date is that this gives growers who grow their onions for exhibition purposes enough growing time.....

We will try the onion sowing date as well. Let’s see if we can grow some big exhibition size onions. The seeds are ordered so the countdown is on.....

The wonders of nature.....



Significant planting dates.....

As well as December 21st being the shortest day, it is also a significant planting date – people say that garlic should be planted on the shortest day and then harvested on the longest day. [June 21st 2025]

There is another reason for planting garlic at this time of the year, essentially it needs a period of cold weather to actually improve the taste.....

Another reason for not storing garlic in the fridge is that it will start to sprout and grow. Store your garlic in a cool, dry area.....

So, we have followed the “rules” and we have planted our garlic cloves on the shortest day – we will harvest on the longest day too. Follow the progress.....



Here we have split the garlic bulbs into their individual cloves ready for planting.....



Here we have planted the garlic cloves into the soil with enough space to allow growth.....

All set for garlic planting.....



Here you can see that some of our garlic cloves have already started to sprout – they will hopefully continue their growth.....

Garlic is believed to have originated in Central and Southern Asia although now it grows wild in many countries. We have wild garlic growing in our garden.....

Italian Red and White Garlic.....

New growth already!

Below you can see our Basil Mint, as we carry out our pruning and tidying jobs, you can see that there is plenty of new growth coming through already.....



**B
A
S
I
L
M
I
N
T**

Basil Mint making new growth.....

Landscaping Work Continuing.....

