

President Kennedy School



Building Brighter Futures

Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden



Busy times in the Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden...

The garden space has really developed over the winter months, let alone the continuing bulb planting that has taken place, more fruit trees provided by Smart Learner Driving School are starting to bud up, indeed we now have a significant fruit tree orchard which in time will provide both cooking and eating apples in abundance, plus the blackcurrant bushes should provide plenty of fresh currants. Also, we are continually looking to add to the bio - diversity of the garden space. To add to the bio - diversity we have developed some ponds and some mini ponds with lots of aquatic plants and marginal plants all planted up. Once these pond areas establish and the plants establish themselves, the water - based element will add to the garden space.....

So, follow the garden development as we push ahead with our work.....

Narcissus are stunning.....



Here you can see some of the stunning Narcissus that are providing so much pleasure, let alone some really stunning colour.....

The colourful flowers have been accentuated by the glorious sunshine that we have been experiencing now that spring has well and truly sprung.....

Spring is here.....

More spring colour.....

**Snowdrops come first, then aconites and the crocuses followed by narcissus..
Now we have lots of tulips which really are colourful indeed.....
Continuing the red theme, there is a single red anemone in this photograph....**



More tulips.....



Here you can see a really stunning tulip that has some really distinctive colouring in the petals.....

When they open fully, the flowers will look absolutely amazing!

Rhubarb forcer has done its job!

**If you go back to the last edition of the newsletter [March], we had set up our rhubarb forcer so that we could make an early rhubarb harvest.....
The rhubarb stems that have been forced are a light pink colour and are super sweet – indeed forced rhubarb stems have a high - end price.....
Below you can see the stems have reached the top of the forcer, after we have taken the top off the forcer, you can see the leaves are a light green colour.....
Plus, the long rhubarb stems are a gorgeous pink.....**



**On the left you can see the stems coming out of the top of the forcer when the lid has been taken off – contrast the stems coming out of the forcer with another rhubarb plant that is growing behind the “forced” plant.....
Note the leaves are much darker.....
At the top you can see the super sweet pink rhubarb stems that have come from the rhubarb forcer.....**

Forget – me – knots come up literally anywhere.....



**There are plenty of plants that just seem to disappear at various times of the year.....
One such plant are the forget – me – knots.....
Aptly named, they just seem to crop up anywhere.
Note the delicate blue flowers.....**

Pond development.....

Here you can see the stages of our pond development – this is the second of our ponds that we have built. Start by marking out the area where the pond will be set up. Measure your liner at the same time, allow for the depth of the pond and make allowances for the “weight” of the water as it moves into the overall shape of the pond. Here you can see the starting point.....

Step One..... Step Two.....



Here you can see that we have removed the grass and we have dug out the soil to the required depth..... Also, a key point here is that we must remove all of the stones so that the pond liner does not get punctured.....

Step Three..... Now we have placed the pond liner into the pond outline – we have weighted the sides down with some slabs and logs. We have also positioned a planting basket into the pond which we are going to fill with aquatic soil ready for planting.....



The next stage is to fill the pond with water..... We are using rainwater that is collected off the poly tunnel in the “Old” Bridge Garden.....

Pond development....

Pond development continuing.....



Here you can see the pond has been filled with water, the aquatic planting basket has been filled with soil and planted up.....

A solar powered water pump has been installed as well, which with the welcome spring sunshine has been put to good use.....

We just need to be patient now and wait for our aquatic plants to establish themselves....

Marginal Pond Area has been set up too.....

The second pond that we have built is adjacent to a marginal planting area that we have also built – this is an area where we can plant plants that do not need to be completely immersed in water but will thrive in moist soil.....

One such plant is *Gunnera Manicata* which if or when it establishes itself will become a really spectacular garden plant.....



**Gunnera
Manicata..**

Absolutely stunning tulips.....

It always amazes me when you see that there are so many different varieties and colours of different plants. Here you can see a variety of tulips that are called Rasta – the colourings are simply stunning. So, to think that these bulbs have been developed to produce such an array of colour..... They really do look spectacular particularly in the spring sunshine.....



More stunning colours.....

Here is another tulip variety which is called Sun Lover – well, you can see that these absolute stunners are enjoying the sunshine. When you look closely at the detail inside the flowers then you start to realise what can be done by very clever plant breeders and plant scientists. These really are stunning flowers....



Garden entrance area developments.....

The entrance area to the garden has undergone some developments to make it a bit more appealing and inviting with some planting work sorted out, a herb planter has been built and set up plus some quirky little herb additions. See below for this planting work.....



Ceanothus or Californian Lilac as some people call it. Has masses of blue flowers that the bees are attracted to.



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Lemon Balm.....



Bay.....

Bay is a culinary herb used in meat and soup dishes.....



Seed Potatoes set – up.....

Now that we are into spring, it is the time to plant out our seed potatoes.....
The seed potatoes are called Rocket which are what is called a first early variety which simply means it will crop early in the potato growing season.....
We have been chitting these seed potatoes in a dry protected environment, chitting means that we are encouraging the seed potatoes to start producing some growing shoots before they go into the ground. In this case, we are planting our seed potatoes in buckets and containers rather than directly into the ground. Also, we have some main crop potatoes to plant out but these are a main crop variety which produces its potato crop later in the potato growing season. These main crop potatoes will be planted directly into the ground.....
Here you can see the stages of the planting process.....



Here you can see the various stages of setting up our seed potatoes – once the seed potatoes are placed into the growing containers, they need to be covered over with compost and kept frost free before they start growing.....

New approach to sowing carrots.....

For the first time, we are trying a new approach to sowing our carrot seeds..... Carrot seeds are like tiny specks of dust which often makes it difficult to both sow them and keep some spacing to allow the carrots to grow and produce good sized carrots. So, what we are trialling is using seed tapes.....



Here you can see that we have set out our seed tapes with our carrot seeds..... Setting these tapes out on a windy day is not a good idea! ... Another real benefit of sowing carrot seed using seed tapes is that there is no disturbance when the carrots germinate..... Often it is necessary to thin out the seedlings which will alert carrot fly with often really devastating consequences.....

Carrots..



So, on the left you can see the carrot seed tapes set out, a much simpler and easier way to sow carrots.....

The final stage is to cover the seed tapes over and water them in.....

Then, wait and watch as hopefully our carrot seeds germinate to give us a fantastic crop of carrots.....

Seed sowing and seed germination is underway.....

Now that we are into spring and the temperatures are warming up, it is time to sow lots of seeds including runner beans, dwarf French beans, courgettes and pumpkins. Having the school poly tunnel also helps in a big way because night time temperatures can still be cold, so, the poly tunnel protection does help...

Seed germination is a fascinating process which we need to embrace.....

Here you can see our runner bean seeds that are germinating.....



Runner beans.....



Courgettes.....

Foxes continue to wreak havoc!

We are continuing to face problems created by foxes – cunning, daring, all of these descriptions come to light, but the damage they do is extremely annoying and frustrating to say the least – but there is not much you can do but persevere and hope that the seeds and plants will survive the damage.....



Here you can see the foxes have got into our peas, now these have been sown twice now.. Indeed, the last sowing was completed by setting up a “web” of support string but the foxes still found a way in to dig up the seeds up to create a complete mess! We will persevere and make a third sowing of peas, perhaps even look to cover them with some chicken wire or mesh.....



More fox damage!!

Stunning tulips.....

We really have been treated to some stunning tulips this spring – the bright sunshine in March has certainly accentuated these colours and textures.....



Wild tulips



Weeding has to be done.....

Probably the least enjoyable job in a garden is weeding, weeds conjure up all kinds of descriptions – plants in the wrong place or just plants that often get blown on the wind by way of their seeds which seem to find a space where they are not wanted. Anyway, removing them is necessary to stop them competing with the plants that you want in your garden.....



A pathway that needs to be cleared of the weeds.....



A real sense of satisfaction when the pathway is cleared of grass and weeds.....

Ladybird's are thriving in our garden space.....



Lots of weeding done!

It really is full steam ahead in the Echo Eternal Curriculum Garden space as we move through spring with lots of preparation work in hand including seed sowing, weeding and general growing bed preparation taking place.....

All of this work is being done so that we are ready for planting out as the weather improves and finally the threat of frost passes.....

Weeding has been a major focus with a good few hours of work done with five full wheelbarrows of weeds deposited into our compost bays.....



Wheelbarrow full of weeds!



Weeds will be Composted!!

Pathways clear...

Spring blossom is gorgeous.....

There is no doubt about it, spring - time is such a vibrant time as trees start to awaken from their winter dormancy with many producing such stunning blossom – here you can see the cherry tree blossom from the cherry tree that was planted by Peter Lantos.....



More stunning blossom.....

Fruit tree blossom, particularly apple blossom is absolutely gorgeous, you can see some great examples of apple blossom from the many apple trees that we have growing in the garden. Let us hope that they all bear fruit.....



More stunning apple blossom.....



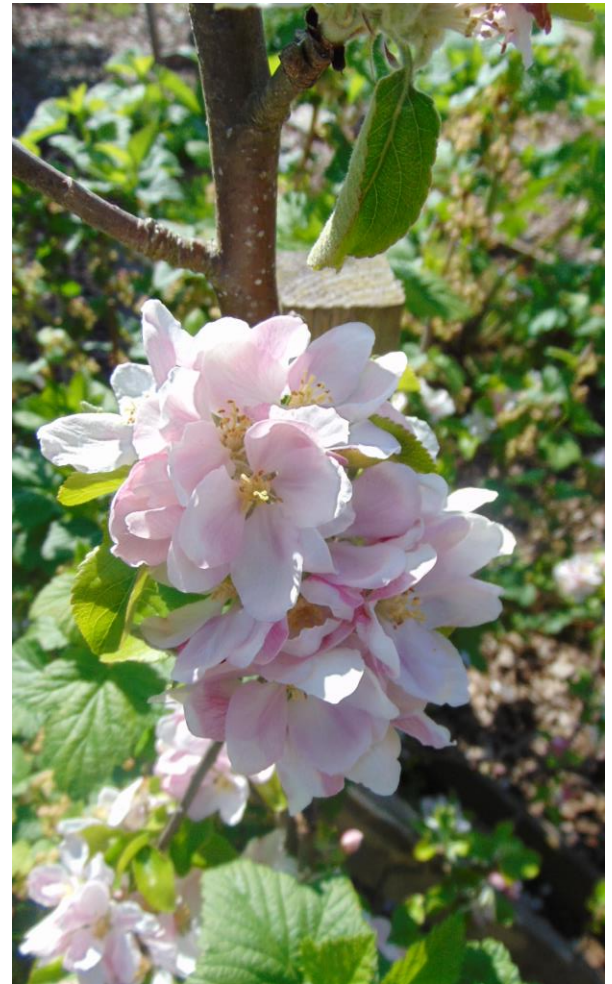
Late April sunshine is so welcome.....

We have experienced a very warm and sunny end to April with temperatures way above the average, indeed it seems like the sunshine has replaced the more traditional April showers.....



The warm April sunshine has also encouraged many flowers to bloom, not least the beautiful red field poppies that have sprung up in the gravel pathway that stretches around the garden area.....

More fruit blossom.....



Here we have some more examples of fruit blossom – directly above is an apple variety called Appletini which produces small apples which are about the size of a golf ball.

Top right, we have strawberry flowers which will very soon turn into lots of delicious sweet strawberries.....

Bottom right we have more apple blossom.....