

**April  
2020**



**The Bridge Garden  
Newsletter No 36**

## **Spring flowers provide some much needed cheer.....**

During these unprecedented and uncertain times, it is a welcome relief to see the early signs that spring provides us especially with all of the spring flowering bulbs that are providing some spectacular colours.....

## **Stunning red tulips.....**





## **Trees are starting to bud.....**

**Another sure sign that spring is definitely with us is that the trees are starting to bud up now with our hazel trees making some really strong growth.....  
Below you can see the hazel trees starting to grow after their winter dormancy.....**





## Planting preparation continuing.....

Although it is still too cold to plant out a lot of crops, there are plenty of areas of preparation that can be taken care of such as setting up runner bean canes and preparing areas for pumpkins to grow in. Follow this preparation work below.....



## Pumpkin bed prep....



Pumpkins are hungry crops which need lots of organic matter to feed on.....



## Pumpkin bed prep continuing.....



So, for starters a trench has been dug across where the pumpkin plants will be planted – in the trench has gone two bags of well-rotted organic matter which has been spread out, this layer of organic matter has now been topped off with a bag of multi-purpose compost.....

All we need to do now is to sow our pumpkin seeds in readiness.....



## **Food growing issues.....**

It is very much an understatement to say that farmers and food growers are facing some challenging times with perhaps bigger challenges to come yet..... Leaving aside but most certainly not forgetting the impact that the current virus pandemic, add to this the incessant rainfall and the floods that many areas of the country suffered which rendered sowing winter wheat and associated crops well nigh impossible, add to this the state of flooded fields, now you can see the bigger picture could be problematic in terms of the usual food supply that we rely on and almost take for granted. It is perhaps time to start growing more of our own crops on allotments and in our back gardens, or if you do not have a garden then you can use containers – there is no excuse when needs must. This situation is almost evoking memories of the Government led Dig for Victory campaign in war time..... Indeed, garden plant and seed suppliers are reporting incredible demand as many people look to grow their own food.....

## **Seed sowing is underway.....**

As the soil temperatures appear to be getting warmer, we are starting to see some signs that seeds are starting to germinate, some of the seeds that we have sown so far are starting to push up through the soil – below you can see radishes and turnip seeds pushing through the soil. Hopefully if the weather continues to warm up then our carrot seeds will germinate too.....



**Seed  
Germination**

**Turnips.....  
Radishes.....**

## Peas have been sown.....

As part of our seed sowing work, we have sown two different varieties of peas.... Meteor is one variety that we have sown, the other variety is called Shiraz which is a purple podded variety that produces some stunning purple flowers followed by what we hope will be a bumper crop of fresh peas..... Below you can see the pea supports set up along with the seed packets.....





# **Tulips are looking even better.....**

**The tulips that have been planted at the front of the garden area are getting better and better – they really are stunning – a bright spot in troubled times.....**





## **Soil is warming up slowly.....**

One of the keys to getting plants to grow is to warm the soil up particularly for seed sowing – one way you can do this is to lay some horticultural fleece on top of the soil which is what we have done in one of our growing beds.....

We are planning to plant out our seed potatoes in this growing bed.....



**Subway continue to support our schools growing work**



# **Schools growing work**



# Tulips look amazing!!.....

We really have some stunning spring flowering bulbs that are flowering at the front entrance to The Bridge Garden – some of these tulips really are stunning with the sunshine making them look even more stunning.....

Here is a selection of photographs of these tulips.....



## Tulips





# Seed sowing about to start very soon.....

Now that we are starting to get a period of warmer weather, these warmer temperatures will give us the opportunity to get started on our outdoor seed sowing and planting work, although it is still relatively early with the chance of frost still highly possible, so what we do sow, we still might need to protect with some protective horticultural fleece.....



Below you can see some of the Fyffes Growing Boxes that we have started to fill with growing compost.....





## Poly tunnel strawberries are in flower.....

The strawberry plants growing inside the school poly tunnel are making lots of new growth accompanied by lots of flowers which will be followed by lots of fresh sweet strawberries in a couple of weeks - time.....

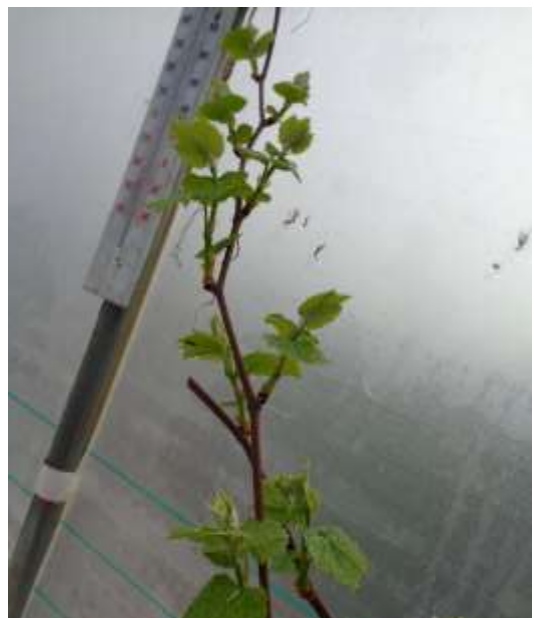
Below you can see the strawberry plants with their flowers.....



## Grape vine flourishing.....



## More growth.....





More spring colour.....





## More daffodils.....



## Pansies have self-seeded.....

Below you can see lots of pansies that have self – seeded in the border at the front of the entrance to the garden area.....



## Pansy.....

## Black Eyed Susan.....





## Seed potatoes ready to be planted out.....

Below you can see our tray of Jazzy seed potatoes that are ready for planting out...



## Seed potatoes planted in the ground.....



Here you can see the start of our seed potato planting into the ground..... We have prepared a growing trench...

**Jazzy**  
**Potatoes..**



## **Lots of different mint varieties growing.....**

**We have lots of different varieties of mint growing in our garden area including Garden mint and Moroccan mint which you can see below.....**



## **Moroccan Mint.....**



**Pictured above is our Garden mint which is producing plenty of strong growth.....**

**On the left you can see our growing bed of Moroccan mint.....**

**This particular mint really has a strong minty smell that can be used to make tea.**



## **Angelica is growing fast!!.....**

The angelica plant which is another herb has certainly made lots of really strong growth particularly with the period of warm sunny weather we have been experiencing at the start of April - angelica which has medicinal, culinary and cosmetic uses needs plenty of growing space as it can reach a height of 1.2 metres. Below you can see our angelica plant growing in our herb and sensory space.....





**Oregano is another herb growing well.....**

**Another herb that is growing really well in our raised herb garden is oregano which also has lots of medicinal and culinary uses.....**



Here you can see that our oregano has really started to grow and spread very quickly.....

**Oregano**

**More stunning tulips coming into flower.....**





**Tulips are absolutely stunning!!.....**





# **Fruit trees are full of blossom.....**

**Below you can see that the fruit trees in The Bridge Garden are full of blossom.....**

**The cherry tree really is loaded with blossom as you can see below.....**



**Apple blossom..... Pear blossom.....**



**Lots of blossom**

**Hopefully**

**Lots of fruit....**



## More tulips coming into full bloom.....

With the warm early April sunshine that we have been enjoying, this has seen more and more stunning tulips coming into full bloom. Some of the colours that the tulips are displaying are to use a word that we have used a lot in recent weeks, absolutely stunning! To think that a small bulb that we planted into the ground during the wet weather that we experienced during the autumn and early winter periods has now rooted, produced leaf and then the beautiful flowers that we have been able to enjoy and wonder at. Below you can see more of these flowers..





## Peas have started to germinate.....

The peas that we sowed a couple of weeks ago have now started to germinate..... Although the daytime temperatures have started to warm up, some of the night time temperatures are still cold, indeed, we are still getting frost some nights so there is still plenty of time for our seeds. Below you can see the peas.....



## Seed potatoes are growing.....



On the left you can see a photograph of one of the buckets of seed potatoes that we are growing inside the poly tunnel – the bulk of these potatoes have been planted outside but we also have two buckets planted inside.....

Every time the growing shoots push through the soil, we then need to cover them over, we will continue this process until the plants reach the top of the bucket, then they will grow as a normal plant would.....



**Spinach has germinated too.....**



On the left you can see the Spinach Red Kitten that we have sown in one of our old water butts has started to germinate.....

Rather than throw away a water butt that had a split in it, we have filled it with compost and put it to use.....

**Spinach....  
Red Kitten...**

**Fig tree is growing fast!!.....**

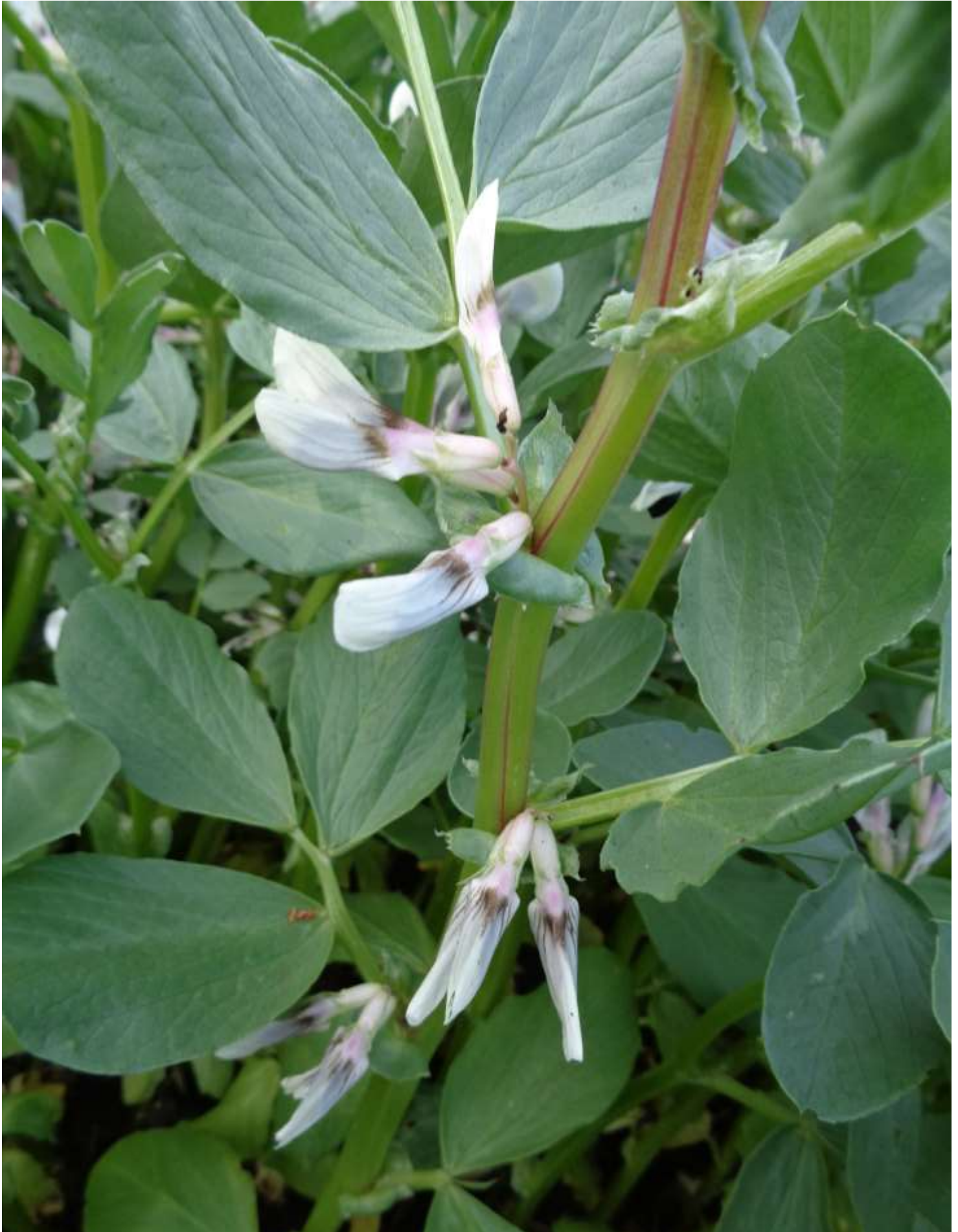


**Figs....**



## **Broad Beans are in full flower.....**

**We have a super growing bed full of broad beans which have produced a mass of flowers – hopefully these flowers will produce a huge crop of fresh broad beans...**





## Strawberries producing fruit.....



## Vibrant Rainbow Chard.....



Above you can see some of the rainbow chard leaves that have been growing all through the winter – the colours that this plant produces really are spectacular, indeed these plants would not go amiss in a flower bed simply because the colours of the leaves really are spectacular.....

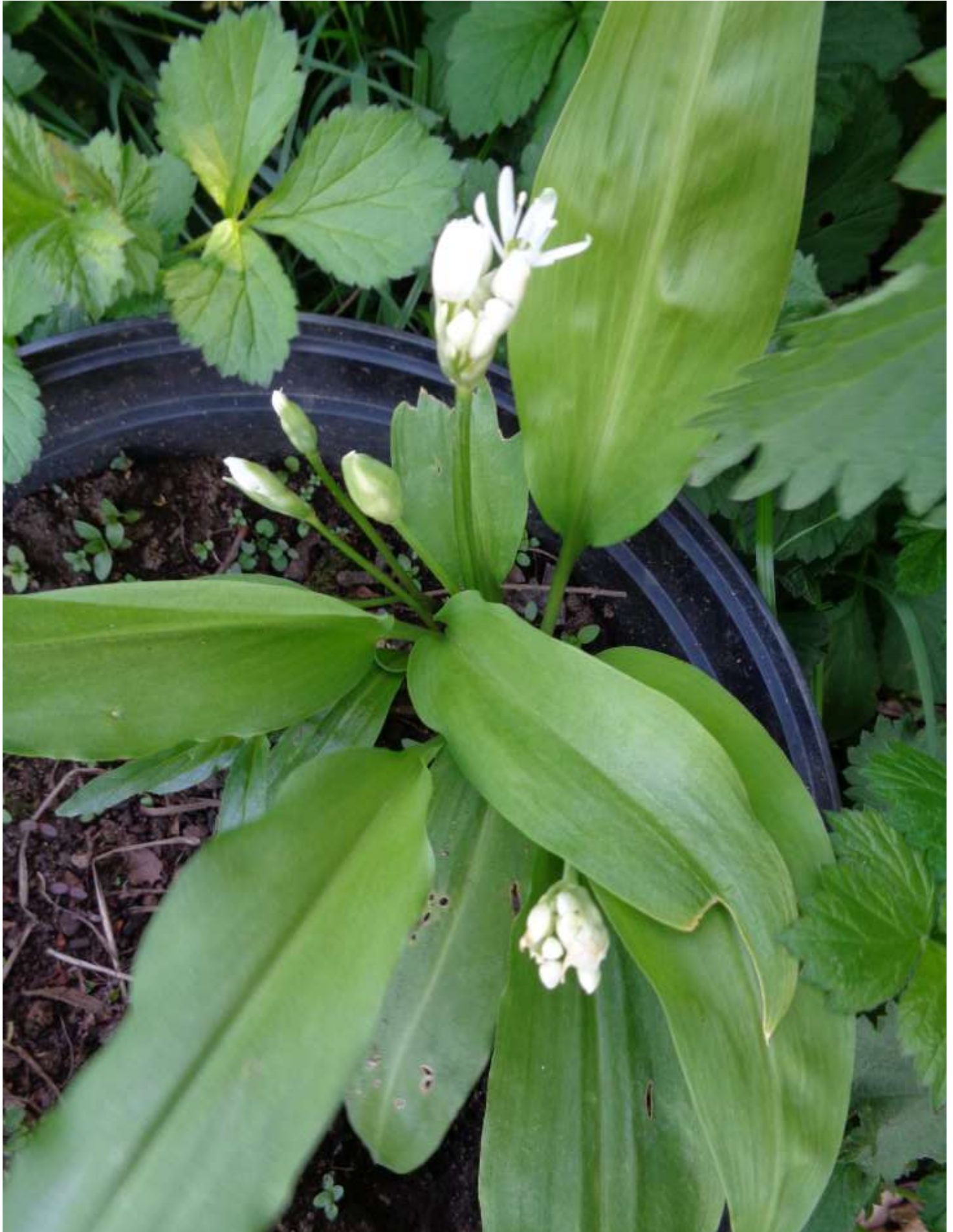
## Rainbow chard.....



## Wild garlic is in flower.....

Below you can see the pot of wild garlic that we have growing in The Bridge Garden, the garlic is in flower now as you can see.....

Also, the flowers of the wild garlic have a really strong smell.....





**Lots of colour on display.....**



**Calendula provide some more bright colour.....**



**Stunning white narcissus**





## **Fennel looks stunning in the sunshine.....**

**We have both Bronze and Green Fennel growing in the area adjacent to the garden entrance – this is fennel that has self – seeded from last year.....**  
**The fennel plants look spectacular in the late spring sunshine.....**





## Entrance to The Bridge Garden is tidy now.....

Lots of weeding and clearance work has taken place to make the entrance area to The Bridge Garden a bit more appealing – lots of weeds have been removed but we now can see that there are lots of poppies and pansies, plus lots of verbena bonariensis that have all self – seeded into the pathway.....  
Below you can see this entrance area.....



## Angelica is growing fast!!.....



## Herbs love sunshine...





**Chocolate mint is growing fast too.....**



**Nature at work.....**



Warm late spring sunshine provides the perfect conditions for lots of insects to come alive into the garden area – here you can see ladybirds on the leaves of our blackcurrant bushes. Ladybirds are always welcome in the garden area particularly when they munch through lots of aphids that are not so welcome.....

**Ladybirds...**



## Potatoes are growing fast!! .....

We have plenty of seed potatoes planted up in two different areas of The Bridge Garden – there are two buckets planted inside the poly tunnel and then we have two full rows growing outside on the allotment. The two black buckets have made lots of growth aided by the warmth and the protection of the poly tunnel but the potatoes outside have just started to push through the soil covering them.....

### Jazzy potatoes growing inside the poly tunnel.....



Below left you can see one of the buckets growing in the poly tunnel – the growing shoots need covering over and below right you can see the potatoes in the ground.....



### Sedum and Lavender.....



### A mole is in residence..





## Butter beans have been sown.....

We have sown some modules of Butter Beans inside the poly tunnel to give them a head start – although April has been very warm and dry, we are still getting a sharp drop in temperatures at night, so we have sown the butter beans inside plus we have put them in insulated boxes to give them an extra push to germinate plus it will stop any mice from eating the seeds. Below you can see the Butter Beans.....



## Insulated box.....



## Butter Beans.....

## Red tulips.....



## More stunning colours.....



## Alliums.....





## Another variety of mint added.....

We have added another variety of mint to our herb garden area which is called Korean Mint – this is a white variety that is a real favourite with the bees.....

Below you can see the Korean Mint planted up in a container.....





## **Wildflower area is starting to bloom again.....**

In the wildflower areas that we have at the front entrance to both the school and The Bridge Garden, these areas are starting to come alive again with lots of these plants having self - seeded so they are starting to flower again. So far, we have lots of bright orange and yellow calendula, plus blue and white borage, Californian poppies plus lots of cornflowers. All of these flowers will provide plenty of food for the pollinators which we will be needing very soon to pollinate our pumpkins, courgettes and squash plants. Below you can see a bee enjoying the cornflower...





## Californian Poppies.....



## Blackcurrant bushes are loaded with flowers.....



## Gooseberry bushes.....



**More  
Fruit..**



## **Raspberry canes are established now.....**

After we moved the raspberry canes from another part of the garden late last summer, the raspberry canes now have really established themselves so hopefully come the autumn we will be able to harvest a crop of tasty juicy raspberries.....

Below you can see some of these raspberry canes.....



# **Raspberry canes...**

## **Lots of fruit.....**

When you actually write down how much fruit we have growing on the allotment – garden area, then you start to realise how much fruit there is here.....

We have apple trees, both eating and cooking apples, a pear tree, two plum trees, a cherry tree, strawberries, blackcurrants, gooseberries, raspberries, rhubarb, a fig tree and a grape vine. Now, that is a lot of fruit.....



## Another new herb has been planted.....

We have added another new herb to our collection with the latest edition called Anise Hyssop which is a member of the mint family. This variety produces blue flowers – is a favourite of the bees, has both culinary and medicinal uses, indeed it is thought that its usage goes back to biblical times. In medicinal terms herbalists use this plant to treat respiratory illnesses. Below you can see the new plant.....



**Feverfew...** another medicinal herb which is used to treat migraine.....



**Comfrey.....**

