

**June
2020**



**The Bridge Garden
Newsletter No 38**

Dry weather continues.....

With May going the same way as April in terms of the dry weather and record lows in terms of rainfall, the gardens are parched and in need of some rain..... Seed germination and plant growth relies on a combination of both warmth and water, the warm weather has most definitely been with us but the dry ground has slowed natural germination, this has meant we have had to water more which in turn has meant with the prolonged dry spell that our eight water butts that were full to bursting after the incessant rainfall through the autumn and winter months are now empty!! This is always the problem in this country, the weather is never consistent or predictable. But as we have said many times before, nature will find a way to balance itself out.....

Stunning colour.....



The beautiful warm sunshine has most definitely lifted spirits and at the same time has really brought out plenty of colourful flowers with lots of borage, Californian poppies, cornflowers, calendula and the more traditional field poppies..... Also, as well as giving us a big boost of colour these flowers have also provided a rich source of food for the pollinators.....

Colourful....

Stunning poppies.....

The endless days of sunshine have most certainly brought out lots of stunning colour including plenty of poppies of lots of different varieties all possessing absolutely stunning detail and delicate flower parts.....



Lots of herbs enjoying the warmth.....

As well as lots of bright colourful flowers enjoying the warm sunshine, it has also been perfect growing conditions for herbs – we have a huge herb garden plus we have some specific growing areas where we have some more herbs growing.....

Two of these herbs are great for making herbal tea – these two herbs are Moroccan Mint and Lemon verbena – herbs that both have very strong aromatic leaves which are also very easy to grow as well, in fact they can be very invasive if you allow them to be, indeed our Moroccan mint is growing very quickly.....
Here you can see our Moroccan mint growing area.....



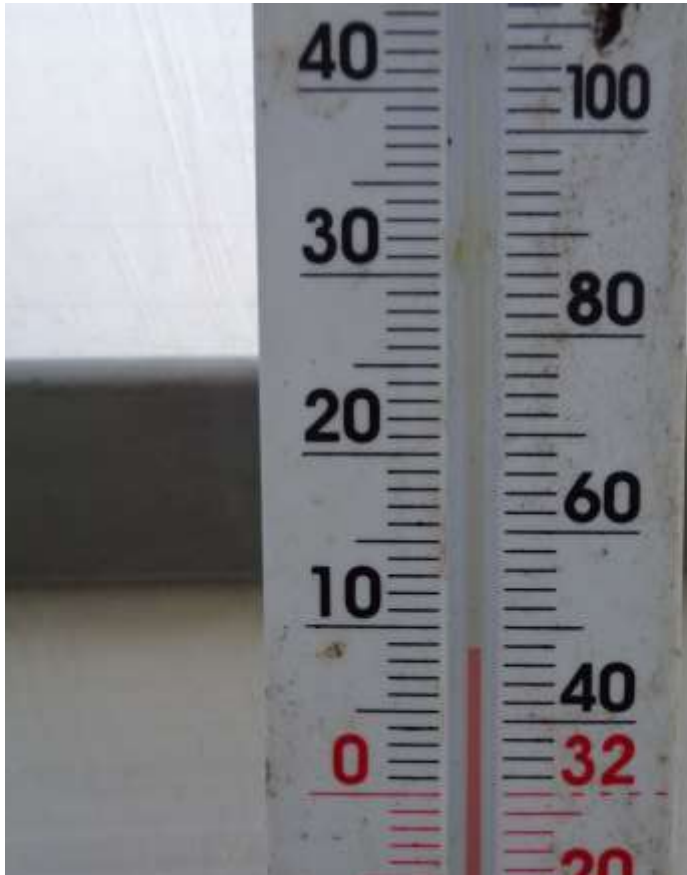
Lemon verbena..... Fennel is growing well too.....



Herbs

Extremes of weather.....

What a difference a couple of days can make – after what seems endless days of warm June sunshine, all of a sudden we get a big change in the weather and the temperature drops almost overnight – from high temperatures of 70 degrees, take a look at the thermometer – yes, the temperature has dropped and this was taken from the thermometer inside the protection of the poly tunnel.....



Cooler

Temperatures...

A significant drop!

Grape vine is growing fast!



Our grape vine is making lots of growth as it climbs up the framework of the poly tunnel plus it has climbed up the extra growing supports that we have put up.....

Also, you can see the tiny grapes that are starting to form, coupled with the protection of the poly tunnel plus the extra watering that the poly tunnel gets, hopefully we will get a bumper crop of grapes to enjoy in the late summer, early autumn months.....

Tomatoes producing flowers.....

Inside the poly tunnel we have six different varieties of tomatoes all growing well, indeed one of the varieties is producing lots of flowers so it is now time to start feeding the plants to help the fruit set.....

Below you can see some of these flowers.....



Courgettes have flowers too.....



On the left you can see that our courgette plants are starting to produce flowers.....

These are male flowers that the plants produce first to notify the bees and other pollinators that female flowers will be available soon so that the female flowers do not get wasted.....

Black podded peas are growing quickly.....



Here you can see that the black podded peas are growing quickly in another one of our Fyffes Growing Boxes. These plants will grow quickly given the warm June temperatures coupled with plenty of watering, we should be able to harvest a tasty crop of fresh peas, when eaten straight from the pod they taste delicious.....

**Fyffes Growing
Boxes.....**



Blackcurrant bushes are loaded with fruit.....

**It looks like we are going to be able to harvest a bumper crop of blackcurrants as some of the bushes need staking because they are carrying so much fruit.....
If we get plenty of sunshine and some rain, this harvest will be huge!.....**



Subway continue to support our schools growing work



Schools growing work

Stunning perennials.....

We really do have some stunning perennial plants growing in our garden areas none so more than the verbena bonariensis plants which given time will disperse and self – seed into any space. Considering how tall these plants grow, they will self-seed into concrete or tarmac pathways producing beautiful flowers that the bees and other pollinators love. Here you can see some of the plants in flower.....



Lupin seeds can be collected.....



Here you can see that our lupin plants are setting seed, now we can either leave these plants to drop their seed or we can collect this seed, dry it and then sow it elsewhere.....

Some welcome rain.....

The first week-end in June has finally seen some rain, a welcome sight to for farmers and gardeners, probably not that significant for farmers but at least it has put a little bit of moisture back into the soil. Now with an increase in the temperatures this should create almost perfect growing conditions.....
The weather over the last ten days has most definitely changed compared to how it was in April and May but the recent rainfall has been welcome.....

Time to dig up our rainbow chard.....

Below you can see our rainbow chard that was planted last year, has grown all through the winter into the spring, but now with the warmer temperatures it has bolted so essentially we need to dig it up now and sow some more seed.....



Busy planting time.....

We have been very busy in The Bridge Garden planting out our courgettes and pumpkins, we have lots of tomatoes all planted inside the poly tunnel, also in the poly tunnel we have cucumbers planted, butter beans are all planted up and they are growing fast as they wrap themselves around the support canes.....

Lots of runner bean plants have been planted out too – water and sunshine will be needed to help all of these crops to grow and produce for us.....

Also, we have some water melon plants growing inside the poly tunnel.....

What we need now is for the cloud cover to disperse, the sunshine to return and then an increase in the temperature will ensue so add the recent rainfall putting some moisture into the ground, then our plants should grow quickly, we hope.....

Peas have lots of flowers.....

We have three different varieties of peas growing in The Bridge Garden –

Meteor, Shiraz and Round Podded Peas.....



Here you can see the Meteor peas that are producing lots of flowers. Very quickly, these flowers will produce some pea pods that will swell up ready to be picked.....

Fresh peas straight from the pod – you cannot beat the taste of freshly picked peas....

Meteor Peas.....

Busy bees.....

In and around The Bridge Garden area we have plenty of plants that are grown not only for the colour that they provide but more importantly they provide lots of food for the pollinating insects particularly the bees.....
Below you can see the bees all over our scabious flowers.....

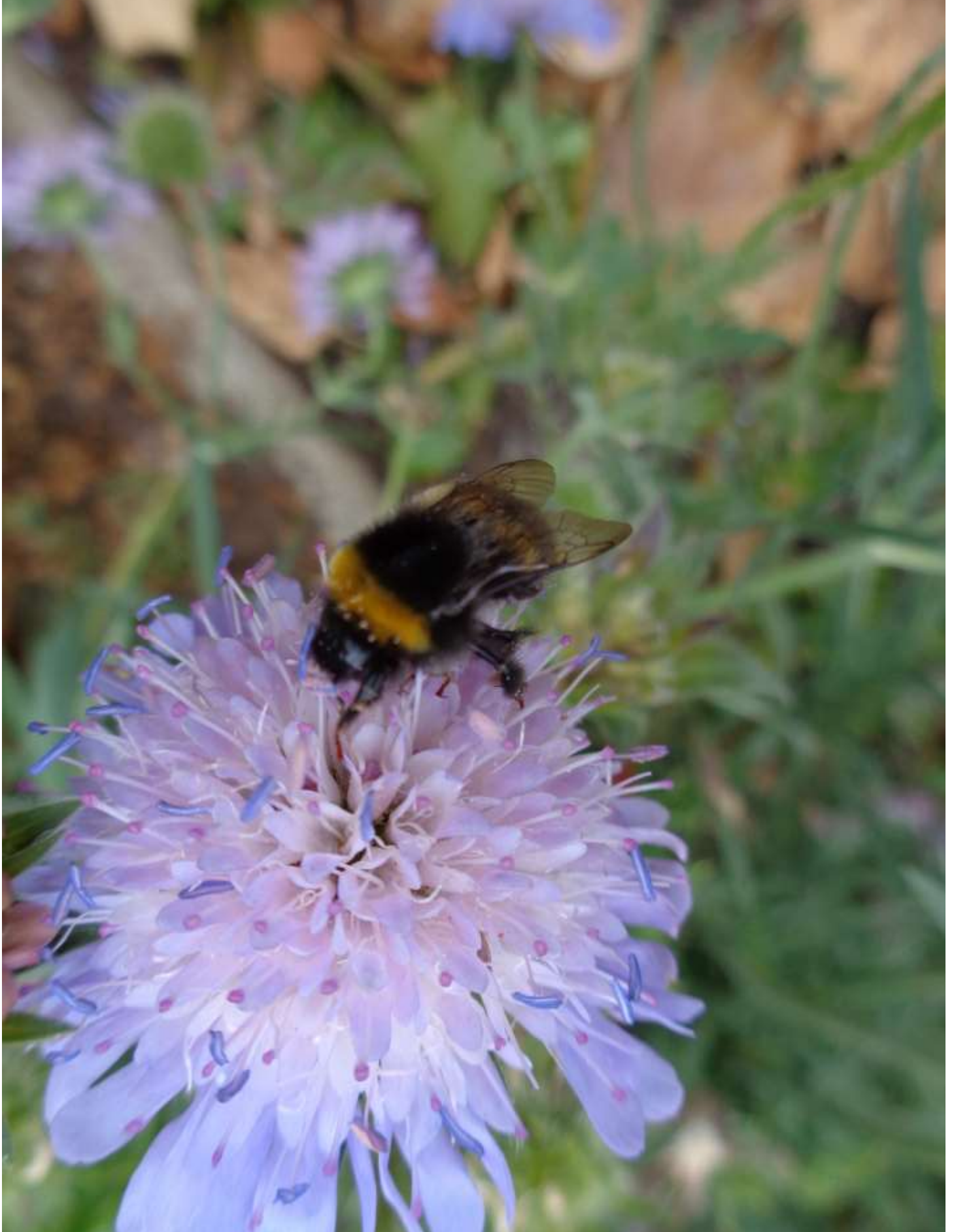


More bee activity.....



Bees are vital to our food production.....

Without the bees and other pollinating insects, our food production will be very difficult and in lots of cases impossible so the more we can do for the bees then so much the better. No chemicals and pesticides are used in our garden.....



Green leaves are looking good.....

We have plenty of really lush looking green leaves which we have growing in some old water butts, we have wild rocket, chard and spinach – red kitten.....
Below you can see the wild rocket and the chard.....

Wild Rocket.....



Chard.....



Peas are forming quickly.....



On the left you can see that the Meteor variety of peas are starting to produce some pea pods.....
Following on quickly from the flowers the pea pods form quickly so with the recent rain and the warm temperatures there will hopefully a crop of fresh peas to harvest very soon.....

Fresh Peas.....

Blackcurrants are ripening fast.....

**We certainly have a huge crop of blackcurrants that are ripening very quickly!!
Hopefully we can keep the birds off them!!**



Lots of seed sowing.....

The month of June is probably one of the peak times in the growing calendar in terms of seed sowing – producing plants for not only the summer months but also looking ahead to both the autumn and the winter.....

Also, the weather conditions are really conducive to seed sowing particularly with the warm and wet conditions we have been experiencing in June – a far cry from the extremely dry April and May that we experienced.....

So, we have been busy sowing lots of seeds in some more of our Fyffes Growing Boxes – after we have finished sowing, we have covered the Growing Boxes over with netting to deter the squirrels and hopefully the birds from scratching up the freshly sown seeds. Below you can see the boxes that have been sown so far.....



Seeds sown.....

Spinach.....

Pak Choi.....

Broccoli.....

Calabrese.....

Lettuce.....

[2 Varieties]

Valvaine

Lollo Rossa

Carrots.....

[2 Varieties]

Early Nantes 2

Royal

Chantenay 3

Butter Beans are climbing up the canes.....

This is the first time that we have grown butter beans but they are certainly climbing up the bamboo support canes very quickly indeed – they are growing in a deeply well filled raised bed that has lots of organic matter added to it, so with lots of watering it will be interesting to see what the flowers are like and how the pods form after the flowers. This all adds to the intrigue of growing.....



Runner Beans.....

Below you can see our runner bean plants that are growing outside on the Bridge Garden allotment have just started to produce some flowers, so again given plenty of water, this will be another crop that will hopefully produce plenty of beans that we can harvest soon.....



Busy times in The Bridge Garden.....

The middle to late June is most definitely the time when your growing space should really be alive with plenty of plants growing, indeed autumn or winter sown crops will be close to being harvested. We certainly have plenty growing in both the allotment areas and also inside the poly tunnel where crops like peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers and butter beans are all growing really well.....

What a contrast.....

The start of June was a continuation from the warm, dry weather that we all enjoyed right through April and May and then what a contrast as the second and third weeks of June have seen thunderstorms followed by some heavy downpours of rain – at least some rain water is back in our water butts now..... After all of this rain we need some warm sunshine and then all of our summer crops will grow very quickly indeed – we live in hope of the sunshine returning.... Below you can see what we are talking about!



Pumpkins are starting to flower.....

Now that our pumpkins are established and have rooted, they are starting to produce some flowers – the normal sequence is for the male flowers to form first to provide a signal to the pollinators that the plants will have female flowers that will need pollinating very soon – plants are very clever. Usually the female flowers will form a couple of weeks later. The flower in the photograph is a male flower because it has no fruit forming behind the flower stem.....



Cucumbers are starting to flower too.....



On the left you can see that our cucumber plants that are growing inside the poly tunnel are starting to produce some flowers so it will not be long before we will see some fresh tasty cucumbers starting to form on these plants.....

Cucumbers

Schools Growing Work Support.....

THANK YOU to Jennifer Brodie. Director REMIN [Scotland Limited] for providing the bags of rock dust to assist our schools growing work.....

I have had an association with Jennifer for over ten years so this is yet another fantastic addition to the organisations that really appreciate and support the work that we are doing.....

Our school allotment – garden has received a massive boost after we have taken a delivery of Remin volcanic rock dust.....

Remin volcanic rock dust is a fantastic product that really makes a significant difference to the quality of the soil and ultimately the quality, yield and taste of your crops.....

Take a look at the information on the next page, and better still take a look at the website. This really is a super product that does work!



More Schools Growing Work Support continued.....

REMIN[®] volcanic rock dust

SOIL AND COMPOST REMINERALISER

100% freshly crushed and finely screened, ancient rock from Scotland containing the full range of MINERALS & TRACE ELEMENTS to help produce fertile soil and compost and healthy, health giving plants.

ORGANICALLY APPROVED



MINERALS & TRACE ELEMENTS are the smallest of our soils 5 components and they are in decline in our diets.

Without them plants, like us, become weak and susceptible to pests and diseases.

As well as BETTER YIELD, FLAVOUR, COLOUR etc gardeners and allotmenters are noting a SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN PESTS AND DISEASES.

SOIL'S 5 COMPONENTS



- 1 AIR
- 2 WATER
- 3 DECAYED ORGANIC MATERIAL
- 4 LIVING ORGANISMS
- 5 MINERALS AND TRACE ELEMENTS

“Like adding a **HUGE VITAMIN PILL** to my garden.”

Moira Davidson



Whilst J VON LIEBIG, 1803 to 1873, said “The yield of the crop is limited by the nutrient in shortest supply” it would appear REMIN’s success is based on the healthy interactions between 4 LIVING ORGANISMS and 5 MINERALS & TRACE ELEMENTS.

Have a look at the website: www.reminscotland.com

Stunning flowers.....

There really are some stunning flowers growing in and around The Bridge Garden, indeed, a lot of these flowers have self – seeded from flowers from last year.

The wonders of nature!

Here you can see calendula – pot marigold that has self-seeded.....



Cucumbers are starting to form.....

Below you can see that the cucumbers are starting to form on our plants that are growing in the poly tunnel in a raised bed that has been filled with well – rotted organic matter so there should be plenty of nutrients in this growing bed.....



Butter Beans are growing fast!!

The butter bean plants that are growing inside the poly tunnel are growing at a rate of knots, so much so that we have had to extend the support for these plants, they have reached the top of the canes so we have attached some string down from the top of the poly tunnel roof. Also, these plants are producing lots of flowers which we hope will form into lots of butter beans.....

Below you can see some of the flowers.....



The wonders of nature.....



**Solitary Bee
Nesters.....**

Solitary Bees are fascinating – very clever too.....

In The Bridge Garden we have two Bee Nesters that have been set up for two or three years now but this year is the first time that these nests have been used so it is exciting and fascinating to see that the solitary bees are making use of the nesting boxes. Solitary bees are as it says solitary in how they live – they do not live in hives, have no queen and are not aggressive because they have no honey to protect, indeed the males do not have any sting and the females will only sting if handled roughly. Solitary bees have a short but busy life cycle, the males will always emerge from the nests first, indeed the males will wait for the females, they will mate and then the males die. After mating the female will find a nesting space, collects material to create a cell for her first egg: a ball of pollen stuck together with nectar for each larvae to eat until it develops into an adult bee..... She places the ball inside the cell and lays an egg on top, leaving enough space for the larvae to grow into an adult bee. She then builds a partition wall and repeats the process until the whole tube is filled. At the entrance to the tube, the female bee will leave a space empty before closing it off, then the female bee will move on. The female bee will choose whether to lay male or female eggs..... Male solitary bees will emerge first so the female eggs will be laid first at the back of the tube with the male eggs laid at the front. Solitary bees will spend their early months hidden in the nest growing, they spend the winter as a cocoon [pupae] emerging the following spring or early summer as an adult. The solitary bees that we have in our solitary bee nesters are leafcutter bees because they have sealed the tubes with leaves, other solitary bees like Red Mason Bees seal their nests with mud, Wool Carder bees seal their nests with plant hairs. So, like we have said, they are clever and fascinating too.....



A leafcutter bee.....

Solitary bees....

Hazel tree has lots of nuts.....

The hazel tree that is growing in The Bridge Garden is not only making lots of growth but it is also loaded with lots of nuts – hopefully we will get the chance to harvest some of these nuts before the squirrels get to them!

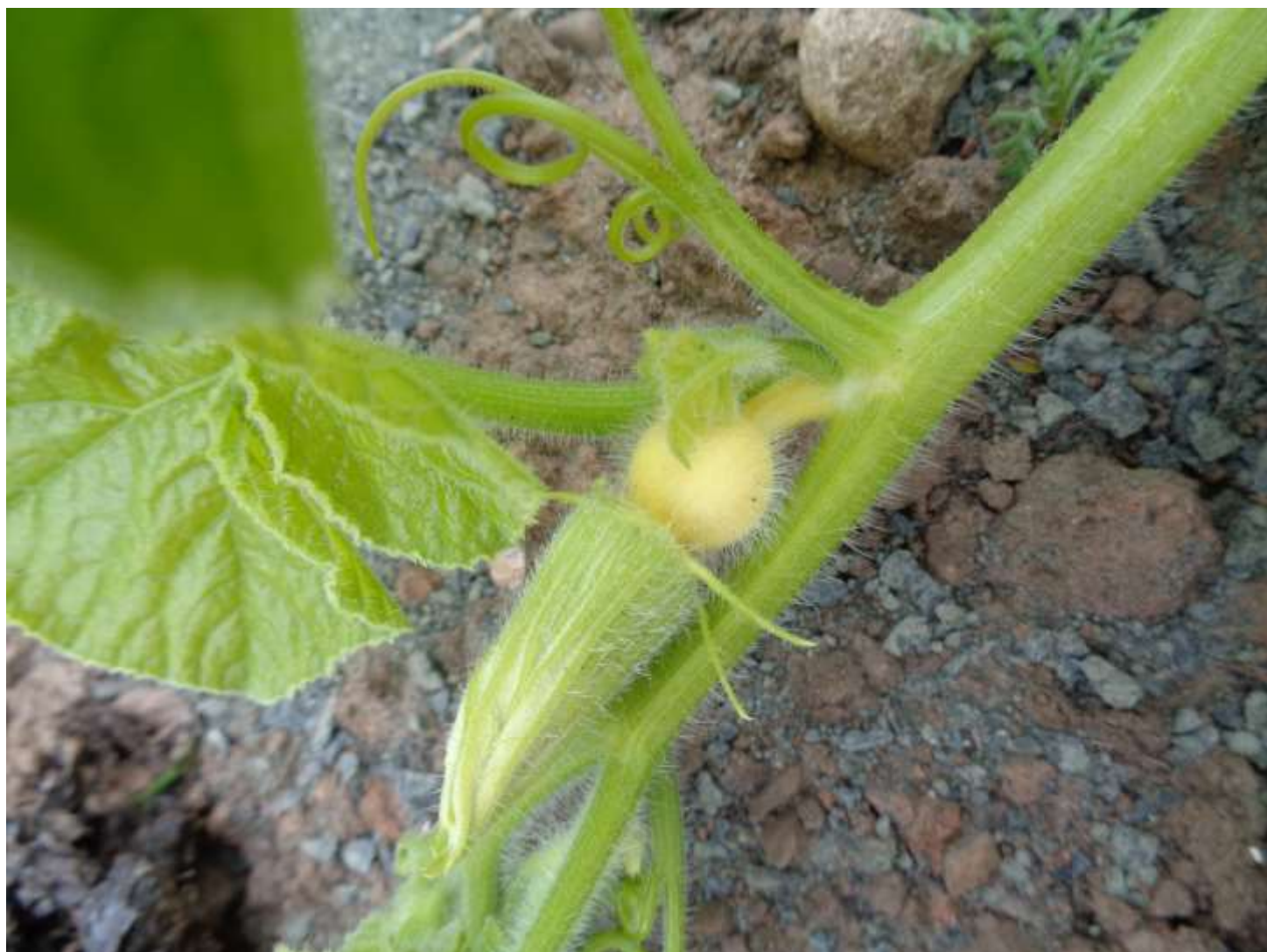


English Red Roses.....



Pumpkins are forming.....

The pumpkins that we have growing in The Bridge Garden are just starting to produce some fruit – this variety is called Atlantic Giant – indeed this is a variety that we have grown before so hopefully the plants will produce us some more giant pumpkins. This growing bed has certainly been set up to produce some big pumpkins – bags of multi-purpose compost have been added to this bed followed by bags of well – rotted organic farmyard matter, banana peel, plus a liberal dressing of Remin Rockdust – add to this plenty of watering and then we should be rewarded with some super – size pumpkins – watch this space.....
Here is the first fruit.....



Atlantic Giant Pumpkins.....

Lavender bed looks great.....

Here you can see another bed of lavender that was planted up last year, this is the first year that it has flowered and it looks great – it will provide plenty of food for the pollinators plus we will be able to dry it to make lavender bags.....

