

**July
2020**



**The Bridge Garden
Newsletter No 39**

Weather inconsistencies.....

The Great British climate is always a talking point – none more so after the record breaking April and May in terms of being so dry! Well, June certainly made up for the previous two months with a mix of almost everything bar frost and snow..... We have experienced extremely hot temperatures, followed by the inevitable thunderstorms, heavy bursts of rain plus really cool temperatures too..... Our plants must be confused – it seems like they really get going growing wise and then we get some cooler weather and they almost stop again..... Mind you, like we have always said – Nature will catch up – re-adjust etc. etc.

Perennials really coming into flower.....

Here you can see some of the perennials that we have growing in the garden space that is just outside the entrance to The Bridge Allotment – Garden..... Featured here are verbena bonariensis and golden rod.....



Blackcurrant crop is huge.....

The blackcurrant bushes that we have in the garden have produced the biggest crop of fruit so far – the warm spring weather followed by the wet start to the early part of summer might explain this bumper harvest.....

Below you can see a small sample of the fruit that we have picked so far.....



More blackcurrants.....



Raspberries look good too.....



Myton Hospice Fundraising.....

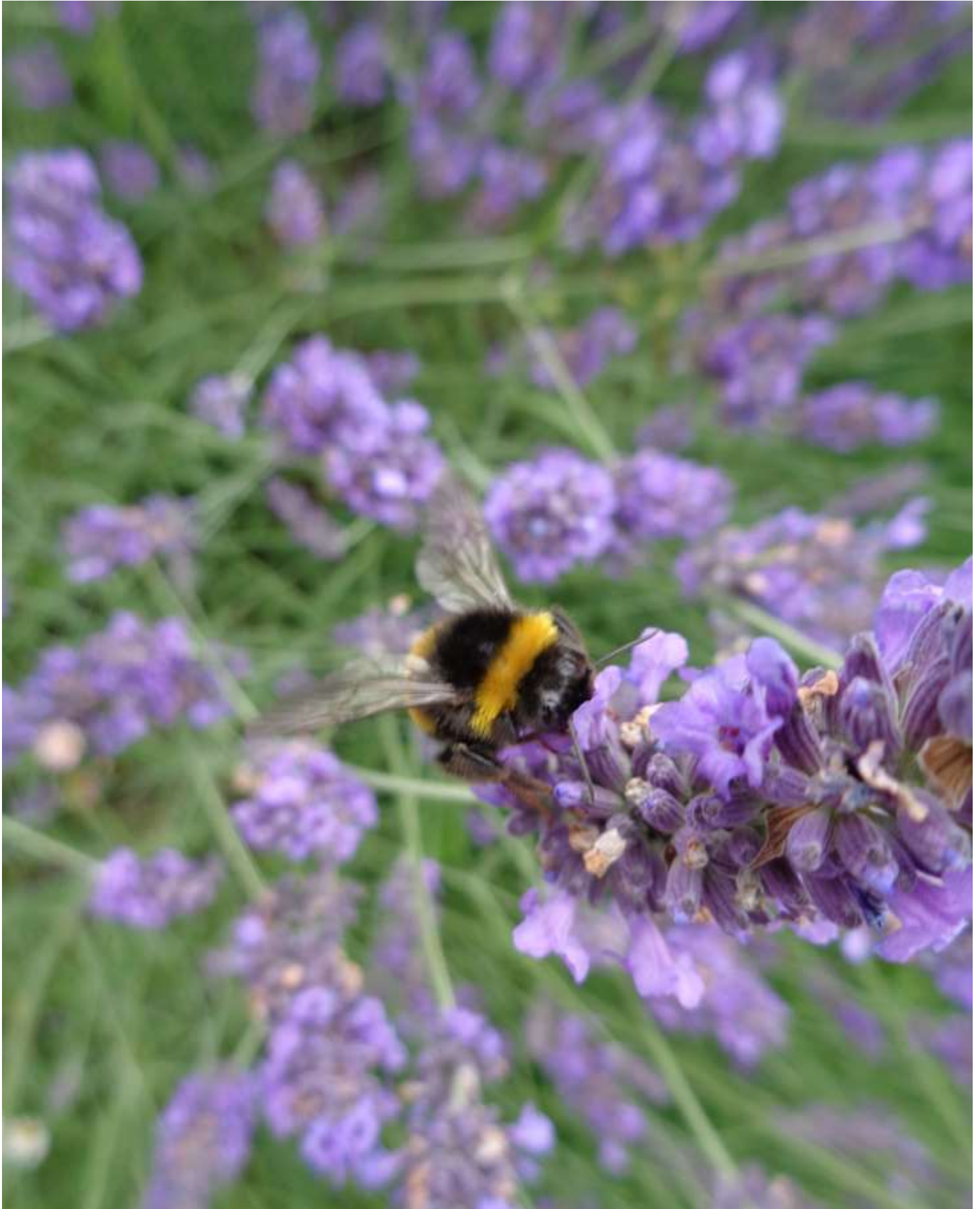
During the month of July, we have been raising funds for Myton Hospice through allotment produce sales, plant sales and cake sales.....

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



Lavender is a magnet for the bees.....

We have some big beds of lavender plants that are set up to not only attract the bees into our garden space but also, so that we can use the flowers when they have finished flowering to dry and then make lavender bags to again raise extra funds for Myton Hospice. Below you can see what we mean about the bees.....



More Bridge allotment produce.....

Another selection of garden produce including a mixture of red, white and yellow onions, spring onions and rhubarb – all harvested fresh ready for sale.....



First early potatoes harvested.....



Here is a small tray of first early potatoes that we have harvested – what could be better, freshly dug potatoes cooked with fresh herbs.

Here there is a selection of fresh herbs with a choice of rosemary or garden mint.....

You cannot beat freshly harvested crops.....

Fresh potatoes

Bridge garden fruit trees have plenty of fruit.....

If the blackcurrant crop is anything to go by, the fruit trees at the bottom end of the garden look like they will also provide a big crop of fruit to harvest.....

Below you can see plums, apples and pears.....

Plums.....



Apples.....



Pears.....



Fresh fruit.....

Unpredictable weather causing problems.....

The unpredictable nature of the weather that we have been experiencing through June and now into July is not helping some of our crops – our poly tunnel crops which include tomatoes, cucumbers and butter beans all have produced plenty of flowers – fruits are forming albeit very slowly but what is needed is a period of consistent warm sunshine, also it appears that night time temperatures are cool too especially for July. Below you can see lots of tomatoes but all very green!!



Fyffes Growing Boxes producing plenty.....



Fresh salad leaves.....

More crops growing.....

We also have some root crops growing in the Fyffes Growing Boxes – Carrots and Potatoes are growing well, but these will need to stay in the boxes longer so that the root crops can develop. Below you can see one of our boxes of carrots.....



Fyffes Growing Boxes

Weather slowing down harvest times.....

Normally at this time of the growing calendar, you would expect to be harvesting plenty of runner beans and courgettes – not this year. With the unpredictable weather with significant temperature drops plus lots of cloud cover, some crops are a long way behind but let us hope they will catch up. Courgettes usually once they start producing fruits do not stop so with the first fruits just forming let us hope they will not stop plus our runner beans have lots of flowers but again they are slow to turn from flower into beans, patience is a virtue.....

Courgettes are just starting to produce fruit.....

Courgettes are another crop that are slow to start producing fruit, but once they start you generally get an abundance of fruits – this is what seems to be the case as our All Green Bush variety of courgettes have all of a sudden just started to give us plenty of courgettes. Below you can see some of the courgettes.....



Pumpkins are on the move!!



On the left you can see that our Atlantic Giant pumpkin plants are putting out some big, long vines – there are several small pumpkins growing along these vines, so we will need to make a decision soon regarding whether we allow these vines to continue to grow or do we cut off the growing tips and then focus on getting the pumpkins that have formed to swell out more.....

Atlantic Giant Pumpkins

Do the weeds ever stop growing?

This is probably a question that anyone who likes or tries to grow their own plants often asks – weeds never seem to stop growing, plus slugs and snails never seem to be interested in devouring them unlike young tender seedlings.....

Here you can see the pond area which we have been trying to develop over a long period of time – this summer, it will be set up ready to become part of our desire to continue to produce an eco – friendly environment.....

Below you can see the pond area that needs to be cleared.....



Subway continue to support our schools growing work



Schools growing work

Pond area development continuing.....

Here you can see the pond area development continuing with some of the weeds removed – once the rest of the weeds are removed a weed suppressant membrane will be put down which we are going to cover with plenty of stones to almost create a banked area of stones – in time we will plant this area up both using some pots and we will also plant some ground covering plants in a shallow covering of soil. Also, we might look at setting up some closed containers which will hold the moisture, then we can plant some marginal plants into these containers – again, we are trying to create a balanced environment that we hope will encourage plenty of damp, marginal type insects to inhabit these areas.....



Pond area is taking shape.....

Work is continuing on the pond area development – now that all of the weeds have been cleared, we have put down some weed suppressant membrane to block out the light for any weeds that try to continue growing, plus the membrane will create a base that we are going to cover over with stones that we have been collecting from all of the growing bed preparation that we have been doing Below you can see the next stage of this development.....



Courgettes are really starting to produce now.....

Once courgettes start producing fruit, they generally don't stop!! As long as you keep picking them so they do not end up getting too big like marrows, then you will get plenty – indeed you really have to be creative to use them up too.....



Pumpkins are growing fast now. We have two different varieties of



pumpkins that are growing in The Bridge Garden.....

This variety is called Jack of all Trades which is a smaller variety than the Atlantic Giant pumpkins that we have growing in a different part of the garden.....

This variety is producing plenty of fruit so hopefully we will have plenty to harvest in the autumn.....

Pumpkins.....

Pond area development moving forward.....

The pond area development is moving forward as we look to utilise lots of the stones that have been dug out from the growing areas all around the garden area. We are looking to use these stones so that we can create a natural looking area which we will set some pots up amongst the stones with some marginal areas created that will provide a home for all sorts of insects, this area is being set up and developed to add to the bio-diversity of the garden area.....
Follow the development of this area and the surrounds.....



Pond area development...

Stipa Gigantea looks stunning.....

This stunning grass is looking splendid especially when the wind blows – indeed the grass looks like long sheaves of oats.....



Stunning Grass.....



Sedum looks great.....



Here you can see a bank of sedum plants that are very close to flowering..... This is another plant that is a real favourite of the bees which have certainly been regular visitors to our garden space over the last few months. Indeed, the sedum plants are situated next to our lavender plants so once they finish flowering, the sedum will be in flower.....

Hydrangea Annabelle is in flower.....

Below you can see our Hydrangea Annabelle which produces absolutely stunning white flowers – big flowers too. Below you can see what we mean.....



Myton Hospice fundraising.....

The fundraising for Myton Hospice that we have been doing through July has raised £150.00 – this total comes from a joint effort by President Kennedy and Parkgate Primary School. So, the sales of garden produce, plants and cakes has helped provide some invaluable funding for such an important and very worthwhile cause – a cheque has already been sent off and a thank you card has been received from Myton already.....

A big THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to this fundraising.....

Kale is looking good.....

Here you can see a growing bed full of kale – this crop really needs protecting from the pigeons so we need to get that sorted out quickly before the pigeons destroy it – succulent leaves which are full of iron.....

Kale will grow through the autumn into the winter so we need to get our net cage over this crop very soon!



Atlantic Giant Pumpkins vines are rampant!!

One feature of Atlantic Giant pumpkins, indeed most pumpkins are the great big huge vines that they produce and put out – along these vines you will get pumpkins form so you need to make a decision as to whether you want lots of smaller pumpkins or do you want to concentrate on producing big fruits but less pumpkins. If you want bigger fruits then you need to snip out the growing tips of the vines so that all of the plant energy goes into producing bigger fruits.....

Pumpkin patch..... Remin Rock dust added.....



Here you can see that we have added some Remin rock dust to give our pumpkin patch an added boost as the big vines that the pumpkins put out take a lot of goodness out of the soil plus we want some big pumpkins to harvest.....



Another pumpkin patch receiving a Remin boost.....



Here is another pumpkin growing area that we have boosted with some Remin rock dust.....