

**August
2020**



**The Bridge Garden
Newsletter No 40**

Phew!! Once again, the weather is a talking point.....

Well, once again the weather becomes a major talking point as the first week of August has seen temperatures up in the high 20's even up into the 30' too.....
Indeed, with this hot spell of weather, our pumpkin vines are romping away all across some of the growing beds – nestled in amongst all this vegetation, there are some big fruits starting to form so hopefully they will continue their growth...



Atlantic Giant Pumpkin.....

Tomatoes are finally starting to ripen.....

Now we are into the first week of August, finally we have some tomatoes that are starting to ripen – there is nothing better than the taste of homegrown tomatoes that are picked fresh from the vine.....

Below you can see the juicy bright red fruits.....



Subway continue to support our schools growing work



Schools growing work

Pond development continuing.....

The pond development work is continuing with lots of preparation work taking place before we actually lay the pond liner – first up, we have covered the whole of the pond surrounds with weed suppressant membrane which we have also used to cover the actual pond area. This weed suppressant membrane will be an extra layer of protection before we line the pond with the pond liner..... Indeed, we have added another layer as well so that when the pond starts to fill up and settle into the dug - out area, there is added protection so that there are no stones or anything that will pierce through the pond liner.....

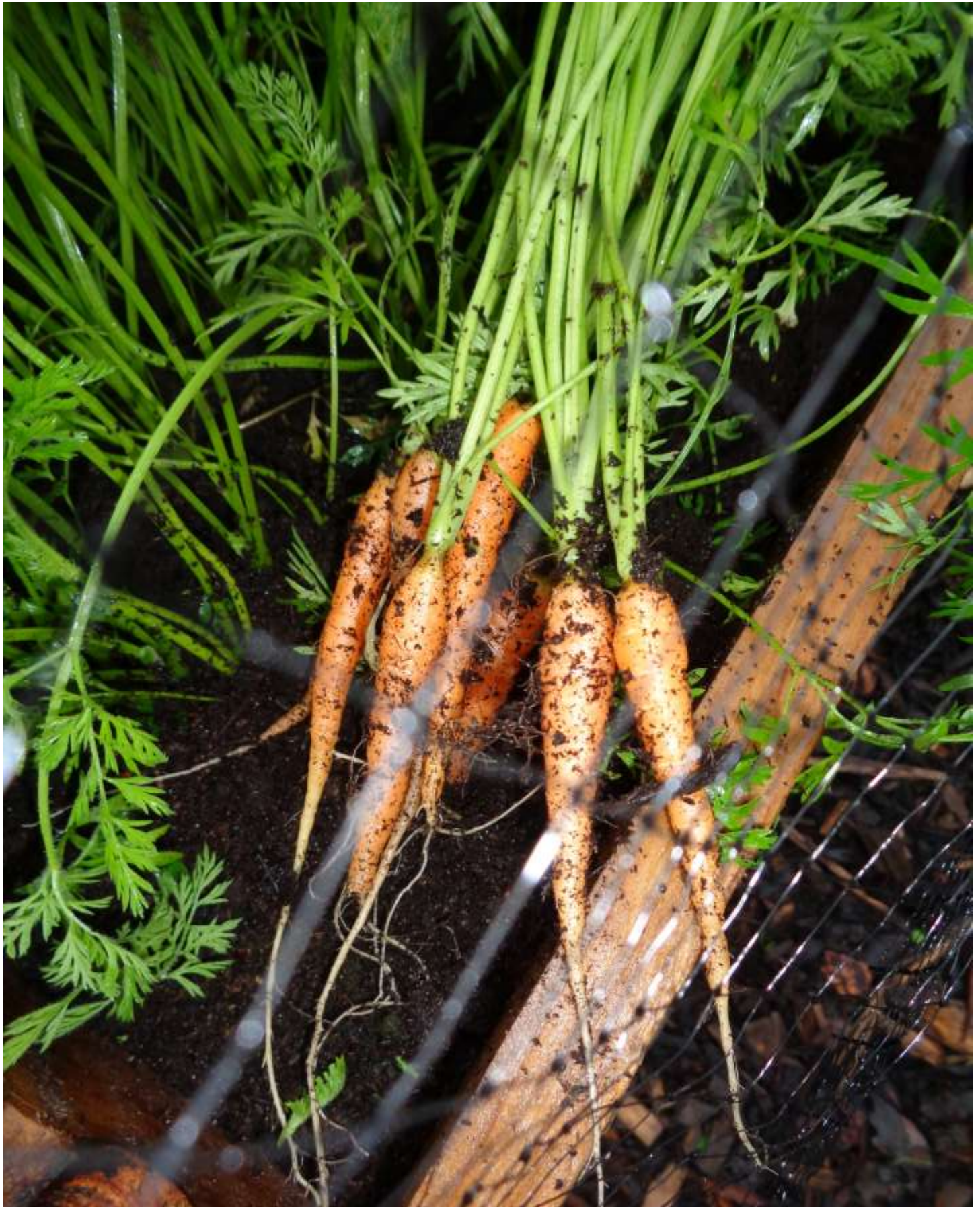


Garden Pond Development.....

Fyffes Growing Box Carrots.....

We have lots of different size Fyffes growing boxes which are set up to grow lots of different crops – shallow boxes for quick growing salads and deeper boxes for root crops such as potatoes and carrots. Below you can see just a few carrots that have been harvested from one of the growing boxes.....

You really cannot beat the smell of freshly dug carrots and the taste either.....



Dwarf French Beans have produced a heavy crop.....

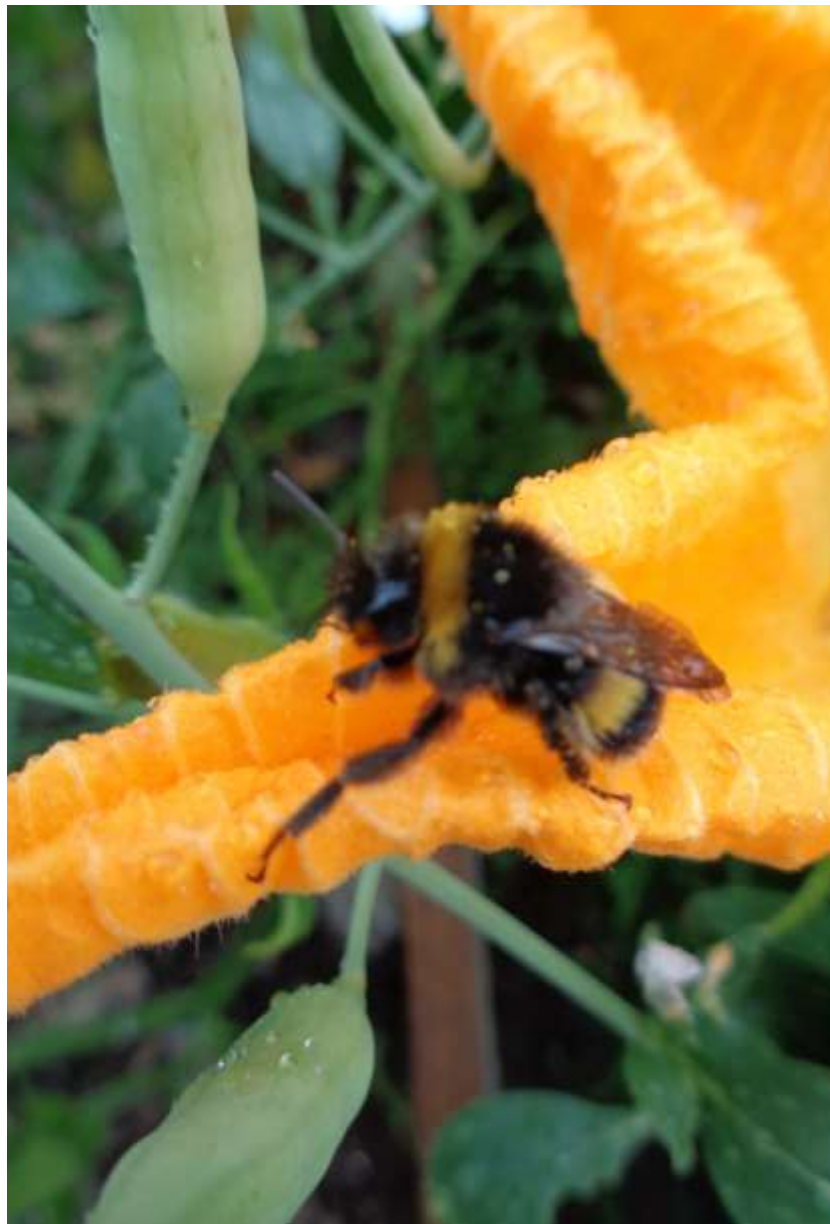
The really good thing about growing Dwarf French Beans is like the name says, they are a small plant but they really are a heavy cropper as you can see from the photographs below. Plus, they taste great too.....



How true is this?

You really cannot beat the taste of home grown produce, not only is it fresh but you know exactly what you have grown and how you have grown it, let alone the satisfaction of what you have grown, you also know what you have used to grow this crop – no pesticides, no chemicals, just plenty of water, ideally rain water too!

Busy bees.....



We have mentioned many times about the importance of the bees in our food production, indeed without the bees we would struggle to produce a lot of the food that we often take for granted.....

Here you can see a bee at work!

The bees collect pollen and nectar from the flowers, the pollen is transferred from flower to flower enabling plants to form seeds and the nectar feeds the bees.....

Pollination

Onion harvest.....



Onions are relatively easy to grow, being almost a garden – allotment staple, you can do so much with onions. Plant a set[a small onion] in the ground in the autumn, make sure that the birds don't pull them out of the ground and then you can leave them in the ground all through the cold of the winter, they will grow slowly through the winter but then come the spring they will swell up right until the early part of the summer when they are ready to harvest, dry them thoroughly and then use them as and when you need them.....

Welcome caterpillars.....

It is not often that you here gardeners – grown making a statement like this but the orange and black striped caterpillars that have appeared in our garden are more than welcome simple because they are doing a vital job!

These caterpillars are from the Cinnabar Moth and they readily feed on weeds plus they feed on Ragwort which is found growing in lots of different places all over the countryside and on waste ground. Ragwort is extremely toxic to livestock so you can see how vital these caterpillars are to farmers.....



Hungry Caterpillars....

Apple crop looks good!.....

The apple trees growing at the bottom end of The Bridge Garden are looking like they are going to produce a heavy crop of fruit – indeed the wet and warm weather that we have been experiencing in the last month or so are almost perfect growing conditions. Below you can see some of these apples.....



Blackberries.....



At the bottom end of The Bridge Garden where some of our fruit trees are planted, there is also an area where there are lots of brambles – well to be more specific, these are blackberry bushes which year after year they die back in the winter only to re-emerge in the spring ready to produce plenty of blackberries – this year it seems like the crop is even bigger than usual. It means we will have to get some protection on and get picking.....

Apple and Blackberry Pie.....

Extremes of weather.....

We have gone from record months of dry weather all the way through to more and more rain, indeed farmers are saying that the grain crop harvests are going to be very low, this is on the back of the wet autumn and winter that hampered the seed sowing and then the dry spring which again restricted crop growth and now the rollercoaster of weather that we are experiencing this summer. Our water butts which were virtually empty during April and May are now overflowing!! One bonus is that outdoor watering on the allotment are has been reduced although watering still needs to be done inside the poly tunnel.....

Poly tunnel Fig tree is loaded with fruits.....

The Brown Turkey Fig tree that we have growing inside the poly tunnel has lots of fruit, given plenty of water and the warm sunshine, hopefully we will have some figs that we can enjoy!!



Lots of different tomato varieties.....

We have five different varieties of tomatoes that are growing inside the school poly tunnel that are all starting to ripen – the one variety that is not in picture is Moneymaker tomatoes. Lots of different flavours to enjoy very soon.....

A Peach tomato..... Black Opal Tomatoes.....



Alicante Tomatoes..... Tumbler Tomatoes.....



**Home
grown
tomatoes..**

Rugosa courgettes.....

This is an Italian courgette variety that grows in the Veneto region of Italy. Not the prettiest fruit to look at but it is renowned for its excellent flavour.....
Below you can see our Rugosa courgettes growing on the allotment.....



Another pumpkin variety



We have two different varieties of pumpkins growing in The Bridge Garden. Atlantic Giant which produce lots of big pumpkins and the other pumpkin variety that you can see in the photograph is Pumpkin Jack Of All trades which will be a smaller variety. The fruit that is shown in the photograph has finished growing and is changing colour very quickly.....

Pumpkin.....

Fennel Montebianco is growing well.....

Below you can see our fennel montebianco plants that are making good progress on The Bridge Garden allotment.....



Runner beans are cropping really well.....

Here you can see that our runner bean plants are producing plenty of fresh tasty beans which again are all produced through sunshine and rainwater, not to mention the role that the bees and other pollinators play in pollinating the flowers which then turn into the beans.....



Signs of autumn.....

There are some tell-tale signs in the hedgerows that we are approaching autumn not least the rose hips that are forming, the berries on the hawthorne bushes and the elderberries that are just starting to change colour.....

Below you can see the elderberries that we have growing around The Bridge Garden area which we will need to pick as they ripen before the birds get to them so that we can make good use of these berries.....



Elderberries have many uses.....

It is amazing sometimes when you think about what is growing in the “wild” and what uses can be made from the berries and fruits that are growing, indeed there are lots of people who forage on a regular basis for all sorts of things..... Elderberries really have lots of uses, here are just a few of these uses..... Lower Cholesterol, Improve Vision, Boost Immune System, A Cough, Cold and Flu remedy, can be used as an Anti-Inflammatory, can be used for Bacterial and Viral Infections. Wow! Could nature have the answer to beating this Covid – 19 Virus? Elderberries can be used to make wine, cordial and fruity drinks, syrup, pies and lots of other uses too. Remember, these elderberries are growing in the wild!!

Rose Hips are another great wild source.....

Talking about other sources of wild fruits, there is none better than Rose Hips..... The hips are complete storehouses of Vitamin C.....



If you compare the nutritional content of oranges to rose hips – rose hips will contain 25% more iron, 20% - 40% more Vitamin C, 25 times more Vitamin A and 28% more Iron. Remember again, these fruits are growing in the wild..... Rose Hips can be made into Jams, Jellies and can be mixed with other fruits to go into fruit pies. Also, the fresh or dried hips can be used to make Rose Hip tea.

Wild fruits.....

Lavender flowers will be cut soon.....

There is a distinct autumnal feel in the air now as we move towards the end of the month – what with the very unpredictable weather with heavy rain and extremely high winds plus the nights are drawing in, although having said all this, there is still plenty of growth and lots of crops still to harvest.....

One such crop that we will need to harvest very soon are the lavender flowers that we will look to dry and then use the lavender to make lavender bags.....

Below you can see a big bank of lavender.....



Sedum is just coming into flower.....

Another plant that is a favourite of the bees particularly as it flowers relatively late on in late summer and into the autumn. Extra food for the bees to help them through the winter months.....

Here you can see the sedum flowers just starting to open.....



Peppermint chard is colourful.....

The different chard varieties produce some stunning colours, both the leaves and the stems do not look out of place in a flower bed such are the colours that these plants produce. Below you can see our peppermint chard that is producing some stunning colour. It tastes good too.....



Shallots need to be lifted and dried.....



Crucial time of the growing year.....

At this time of the year we are clearing our raised beds and growing areas that we have been using throughout the summer for our growing work. Now we are looking to prepare our growing areas ready to plant up crops that will grow over the winter months. Before we do any more planting work in this growing bed there is a really vital job that we need to do first.....

Anytime that you grow anything, crops will take out the goodness in the soil, so if you do not replenish the goodness back into the soil, then ultimately you will end up with poor quality soil and poor tasting crops.

It is imperative that we look after our soil.

Poor quality soil will lead to poor yields and poor tasting crops too.

Remin Rockdust does this job perfectly for us as it replaces all of the nutrients back into the soil allowing us to continue growing and producing quality tasting crops and productive yields.....



Growing Bed Preparation.....

Soil quality is all important in producing quality crops and heavy yields. If you continue to try to grow in the same soil – same growing beds without trying to replenish and add nutrients back then you will eventually have such poor quality soil that you will end up with poor quality crops and increasingly poor yields.....

