

**September
2020**



**The Bridge Garden
Newsletter No 41**

Challenging growing season.....

After the extremely wet autumn and winter, followed by the extremes of temperatures throughout spring and into the early part of the summer, these weather patterns have then all been compounded by so many fluctuations in temperature throughout the summer. Now that we are into autumn, who knows what the weather will bring, but like we have always commented, nature will always take care of itself. Read on to see what has actually grown well.....

Kale crop has been decimated!!



As you can see from the two photographs, our crop of kale has been decimated by very hungry caterpillars. They really can inflict a massive amount of damage almost overnight. The joys of growing.....

Schools gardening – growing support continued.....

We are delighted to announce that Subway will continue to support our Schools Growing – Gardening work for the next year – in these difficult times for business, we are indebted to the continued support that Mr Daljit Nahil from Subway is offering our work. With not only some financial support offered, also we always have a ready supply of incentive vouchers for the children and students to achieve, plus we also have a big supply of Subway Cambro's that are ideal for seed sowing. Every time a Subway store is re-fitted it creates a supply of the containers that are passed on to us to use. So, there are lots of different ways that Subway give us support.

THANK YOU to Subway – your support is truly appreciated.....

Subway continue to support our schools growing work



Schools growing work

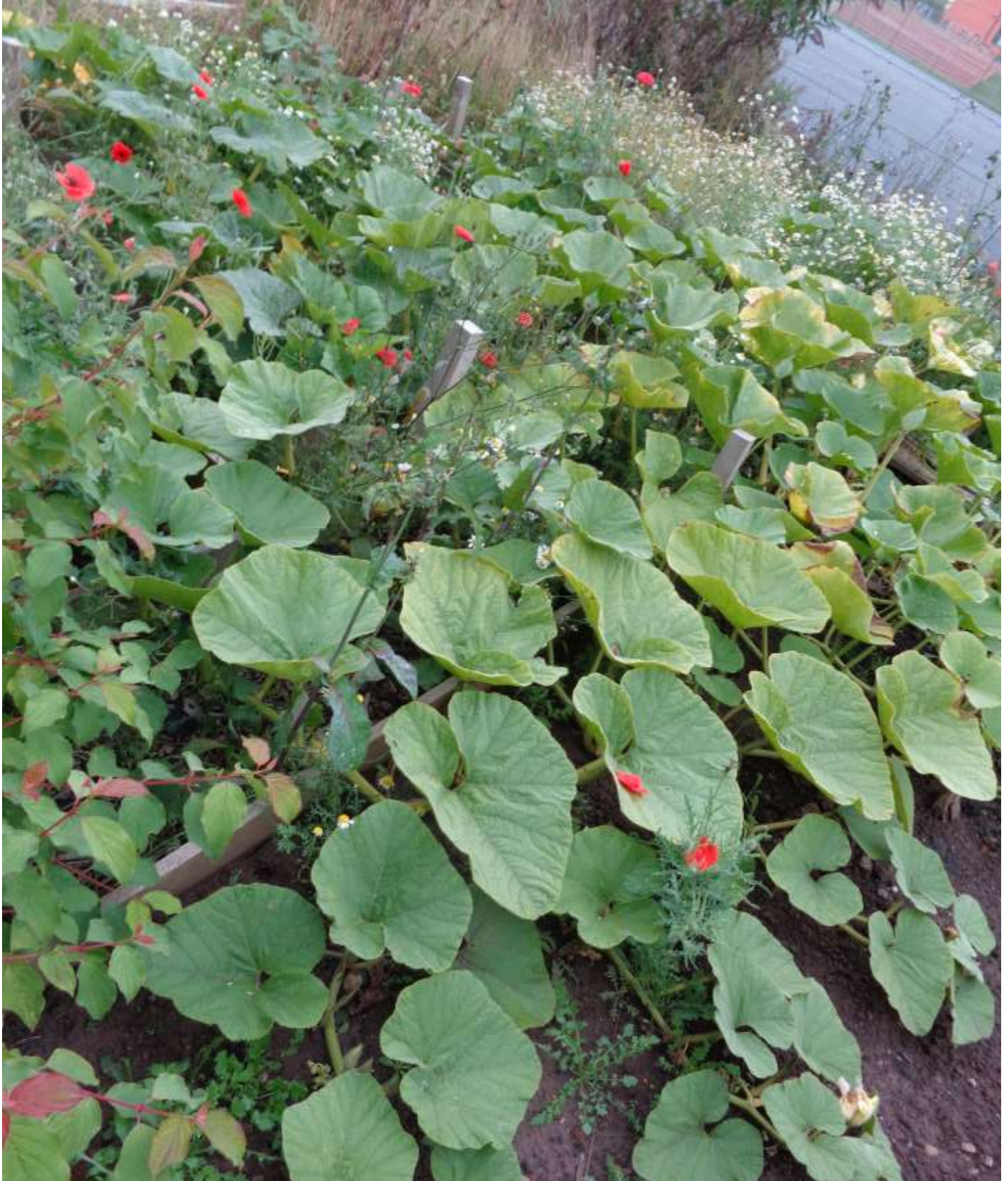
A real mix of tomato varieties and different colours....



Here you can see a real mix of different varieties of tomatoes which are also as you can see a real mix of many different colours..... The wonders of plant genetics and plant science.

Pumpkin plants are rampant!!

Our Atlantic Giant pumpkins have almost taken over a major part of the garden area as their vines “travel” across the area – we have seven decent size pumpkins that are nestled in all different parts of the garden. When we harvest these fruits they will provide plenty of food – from a personal viewpoint, I do not subscribe to growing pumpkins so that they can be carved up for Halloween and then all you see is a mushy mess of wasted food when they are left outside to just rot away!!



Pumpkins are everywhere!!.....

Here you can see a selection of the pumpkins that are growing in the garden.....



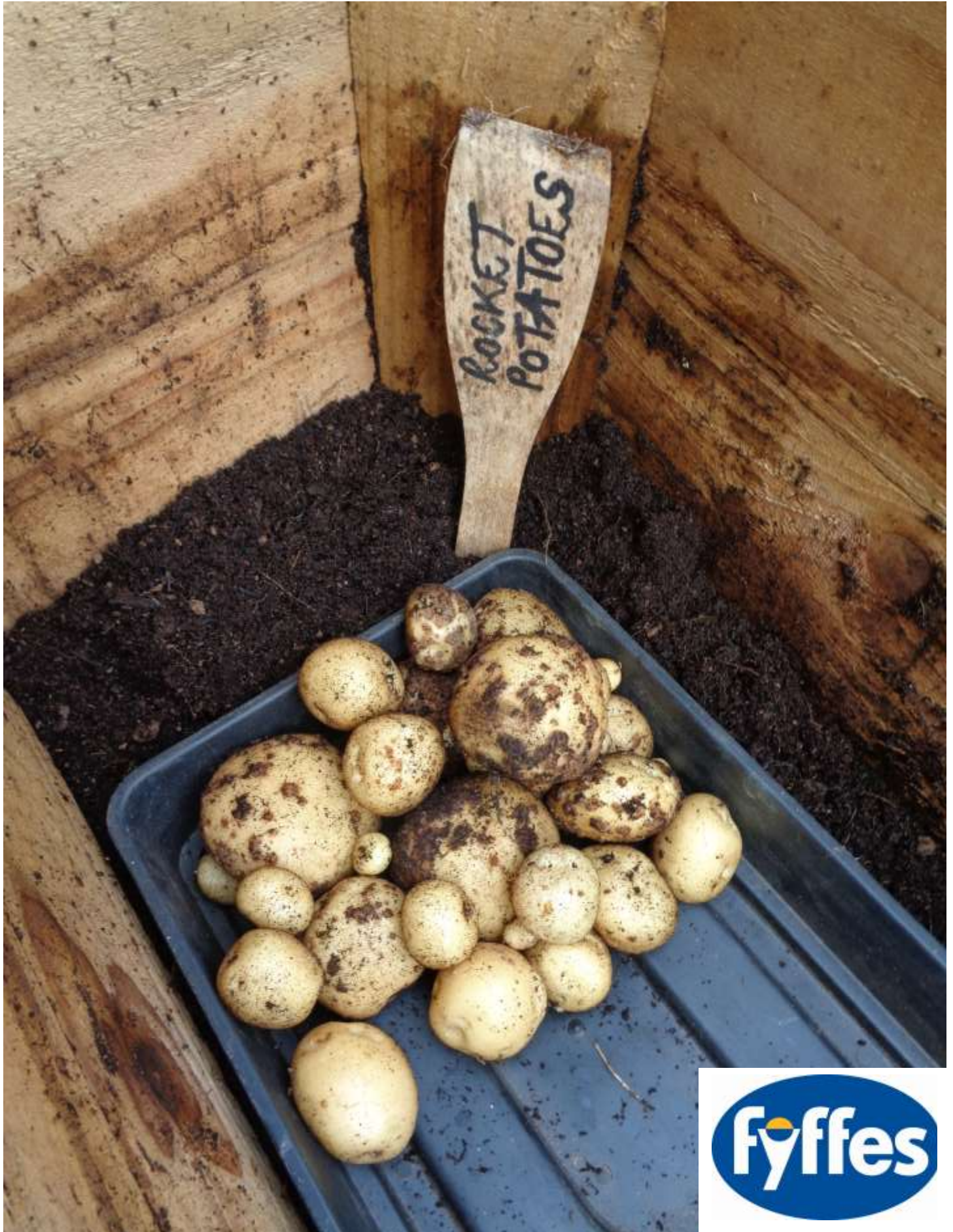
Harvest time in the garden.....

Late August going into September is a bountiful time in the garden, it is also a satisfying time too as hopefully all of your endeavours have produced plenty of crops that have that special mark of being home grown which usually tastes much better rather than something that has been sprayed with pesticides and packed in plastic. You can almost smell the earth when you harvest your crops..... Indeed, carrots just dug or pulled out of the ground smell divine..... Below you can see some of the produce that we have grown.....



Fyffes Growing Boxes still producing.....

Here you can see some potatoes that we have harvested from one of our Fyffes Growing Boxes – growing in multi-purpose compost these potatoes are almost ready to prepare without scraping and washing off mud.



Plenty of onions have been harvested.....

A staple part of preparing and cooking many different meals are onions – we have both red and yellow onions that we have harvested, right now we are drying them off so that they will store better. Here you can see some of these onions.....



Lots of shallots harvested too.....

Shallots are almost the same as onions, perhaps just a bit sweeter to the taste.....



Shallots are just like onions in that they can be used in many different ways, either as a stock to start a meal off or they can be roasted or even caramelised.

Some people eat shallots raw too in salads and garnishes.

Growing bed preparation.....

This is not really a secret but the way you look after your soil determines not only the quality of your soil but at the same time it determines the quality and the taste of the crops that you grow. Each time you finish growing crops in your beds or pots or buckets or wherever you grow your crops, you need to replenish the goodness back into the soil – there is no better way than adding some much needed minerals back into your soil by using REMIN Rockdust.....

We use it on our growing beds – easy to apply and it works too!!.....
Below you can see a growing bed that had peas, onions and shallots growing in, so after they have all been harvested, we have replenished the soil.....



REMIN volcanic rock dust replaces all of the minerals and all of the trace elements back into the soil.....

A fantastic natural resource that gives your soil a great natural boost, also can be added to both wormeries and to compost heaps to again boost your soil.....

Sedum looks stunning.....



On the left you can see some of our sedum plants that are just coming into flower, it is always great to see these plants due to the fact that they flower in the autumn. Very easy to grow, these leaf succulents really do not need much attention at all, but once you have them in your garden they will quickly grow, also, they will spread over a big area providing some super ground cover as well as providing some flowers that will provide food for the pollinators particularly in the autumn when the weather can be a bit hit or miss. A perfect boost for the pollinators before their food supply diminishes.....

Lavender harvest has begun.....



Here you can see the start of our lavender flower harvest.....

These flowers will be dried and used to make lavender bags. The smell when you harvest the flowers gives off a very strong aroma.....

Last days of summer have been amazing.....

Autumn Equinox is here now.....

The last couple of weeks of September have really been amazing with very warm, sunny days but cooler nights and early mornings. Now we are entering the Autumn Equinox [September 22nd], the day when day and night are of equal duration before we move towards the winter months with shorter daylight hours and darker nights. In nature, the activities of the summer months slow down as nature prepares for the winter months that are ahead of us.....

Autumn is a time for harvest and reflection.....

It is hopefully a bountiful time in the Autumn period but at the same time it is also a time for reflection – which crops were successful, what part did the weather play, did we sow or plant out early enough, what can we do better, all of these sorts of thoughts play a big part in what we look to grow next year..... Here is one of our big pumpkins that is ripening really well.....



Atlantic Giant Pumpkin.....

Lots more pumpkins – all shapes and sizes.....

Here you can see the rest of our pumpkins that we have moved out away from the shade that the big pumpkin plant leaves provide – we want these fruits to be able to ripen and harden their skins so that they store better.....



Courgettes have cropped well this year.....

Below you can see an Italian courgette variety which comes from the Venetian region – Rugosa of Friuli. Not the most attractive fruits but they have an excellent taste, also not your atypical courgette shape either.....
Here you can see the last of these courgettes.....



Courgettes.....

Rugosa of Friuli...

Cosmos flowers are stunning.....

The cosmos that are flowering in The Bridge Garden look absolutely stunning, indeed all of these flowers have self - seeded. After the original seeds were sown two years ago, they have self – seeded year after year to provide a super display of colour plus the flowers are great for the pollinators..... Below you can see some of these attractive and very colourful flowers.....



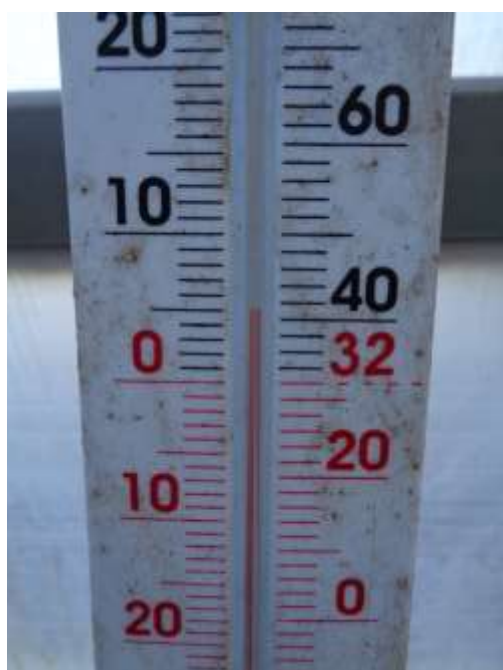
Cosmos close up.....

Below you can see one of the cosmos flowers in close up.....



Bananas helping our tomatoes ripen.....

Now that we are into autumn which brings with it decreased daylight levels and cooler temperatures, conditions that are not conducive for tomatoes to ripen naturally on the vine, so with these weather conditions in mind we are starting to pick our tomatoes even those still in a green state. To help these tomatoes to ripen we have put ripe bananas in the tray – bananas naturally give off ethylene which helps fruits to ripen, so hopefully this will help our tomatoes to ripen.....

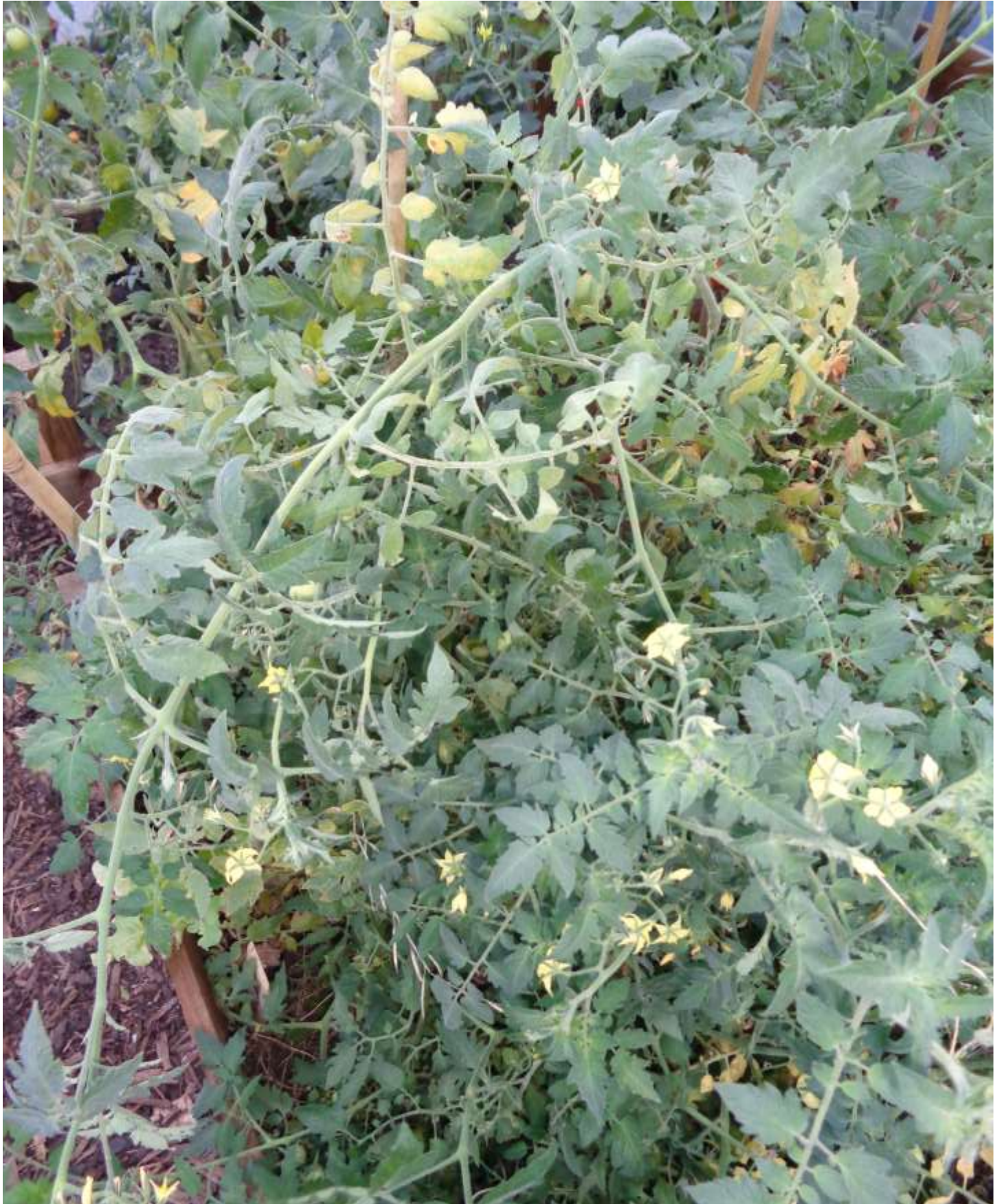


Autumn temperature drop.....

Here you can see the thermometer reading taken on Friday morning on September 25th..... Cooler temperatures are with us now..

Significant temperature drop.....

We are most definitely into autumn now with the temperatures dropping to a significant degree – indeed at 8.00am on Friday September 25th, the poly tunnel thermometer read 5 degrees, not very warm at all. So, we have now picked all of our tomatoes and have now started to clear all of the vegetation that our tomato plants have produced. Below you can see this clearance work.....



Wind damage.....

After a couple of days of strong winds, unfortunately one of our apple trees has been damaged – the main growing branch on our Bramley apple tree has snapped off, so we are hoping that the branch that is left in the ground will continue to grow – let us hope anyway. Below you can see the damage.....



Plenty of herbs growing.....



On the left you can see a big growing bed that is full of sage, add to this parsley which we also have growing in the garden plus two varieties of thyme, you have all of the ingredients that you need to make the perfect stuffing.....

Sage.....

Parsley and Thyme.....



Common Thyme.....



Broad Leaf Thyme.....



Colder temperatures.....



Onions have been dried ready for storing.....

Once you have harvested onions, to make sure that you get the best out of your harvest you need to dry them off completely so that they store well which allows you to use them as and when you need them. Also, keep them in a cool, dry place which again will prolong their use. Below you can see some of our harvest.....



Kale is recovering really well.....

At the start of the month when the weather was warm and sunny our kale plants were decimated by cabbage white caterpillars, if you look at the photograph at the start of this newsletter you can see the damage that was inflicted.....

Well, looking at the kale today [September 28th] , the plants have made lots of new growth and look almost like they were before the caterpillars descended on the plants. Now that the weather is much cooler, hopefully we have seen the last of the caterpillars, plus the plants are covered over with netting to keep the pigeons off them – the challenges of growing.....

Below you can see the progress that our kale plants have made.....

