

**November
2020**



**The Bridge Garden
Newsletter No 43**

Autumn is a time for tidying up and preparation.....

There is always something to do in the garden – lots of people think that come the autumn everything stops, not so, if it not tidying up jobs, there are lots of crops that can still be planted – broad beans, garlic, onion sets and this year we have also sown some barley, with some wheat also ready for sowing.....

Strawberry patch has been tidied up.....

Once you plant strawberries, as long as you look after them, they should last for a long time because the plants when they have finished fruiting will put out lots of new growing shoots called runners – if you pot these up, then you will have lots of new strawberry plants. Below you can see our strawberry patch has been tidied ready for the winter – then we will hopefully see plenty of new growth come the early spring and then we can look forward to another crop of deliciously sweet strawberries. You cannot beat the taste of super sweet strawberries.....



Blackcurrant sage looks great.....



Blackcurrant sage is a super herb that is still growing strong with a really strong distinctive blackcurrant aroma.....

Broad Leaf Thyme.....



Broad Leaf Thyme is another super herb that we have growing in our garden area..... It is a really tough herb that grows through most temperatures.....

Forward planning – pumpkin patch for 2021.....



Here you can see some forward planning ground preparation work that we have done..... This growing bed will be our pumpkin patch for 2021..... So, in this bed we have added bags of well – rotted organic matter plus a liberal dressing of REMIN ROCKDUST to get this bed ready for our hungry pumpkin plants next summer....

REMIN
SOIL AND COMPOST REMINERALISER
volcanic rock dust

Barley has germinated.....

We are always looking at different crops that we can grow but also at the same time it is very important that growing beds are not left open to the elements as the wind and heavy rainfall will damage the soil, so if we can either grow crops that will tolerate any colder conditions or alternatively we need to cover over our growing beds so that the weather does not cause any major issues.....

Below you can see the barley that we have sown has germinated quickly.....



Subway continue to support our schools growing work



Schools growing work

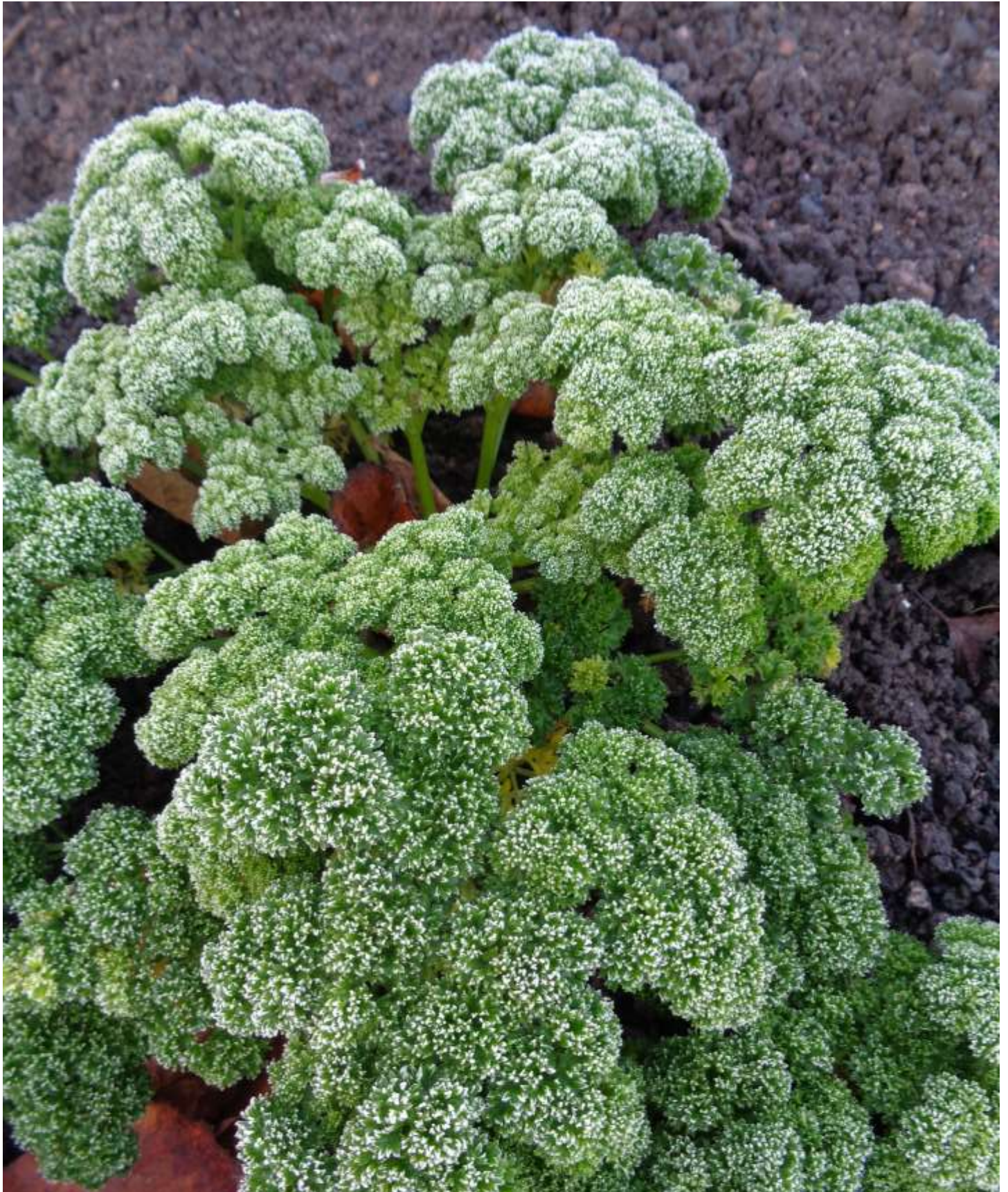
Growing bed covered with cardboard.....

Here is another way that we can prepare our growing areas – this particular bed has a lot of weeds so rather than dig it over with some deep digging which ultimately damages the soil structure and disturbs the work that the earthworms do, as you can see we have covered this growing bed with cardboard which will block out the light so that hopefully the weeds will be “killed” off, plus as the cardboard eventually breaks down we will be left with a growing medium that will be weed free plus the worms will love this damp, dark environment.....



A frosty start to November.....

The first week of November has certainly seen a significant drop in the overnight temperatures with some frosty mornings followed by some very pleasant sunny daytime hours. Days like this in the garden are a treat especially when the sun shines – provided you keep on the move, it is refreshing both in mind and spirit to be outdoors particularly with all the troubles that the world is facing..... Below you can see our crop of parsley that is frosted but looks spectacular.....



Fennel looks spectacular too.....

This photograph was taken on the same morning as the parsley photograph but looks equally spectacular – fennel is a very attractive crop in its own right but with the frost covering the leaves it looks even more spectacular.....



Fennel bulbs nearly ready to harvest.....



We have two Italian varieties of Fennel growing which are nearly ready for harvest.....

The bulbs are nearly at the right size for digging up.....

Fennel has many different culinary uses including soups, stews and chicken and fish dishes, plus the fennel seeds can also be utilised.....

**Fennel di Parma
and
Fennel
Montebianco**

Cornus produces spectacular colours.....



Holly provides evergreen colour.....

Holly that is growing in the perimeter hedge in The Bridge Garden provides some evergreen colour plus the bright red berries add to that colour.....



Kale crop looks amazing.....

The bed of Kale that was absolutely decimated by cabbage white caterpillars during the summer has made a great recovery and the crop looks amazing now. Kale is a really hardy crop that will survive really cold temperatures and will grow through the winter – full of iron, it really is a super vegetable crop..... Below you can see some of the Kale growing in The Bridge Garden.....



Garlic is growing quickly.....



Here you can see some photographs of the garlic that is growing very quickly..... Marco is the variety..... The recent cold weather will help our garlic as it is reckoned that colder weather adds to the taste of garlic.....

Hardwood cuttings progress.....

Below you can see a bundle of hardwood blackcurrant cuttings that we have taken from our blackcurrant bushes. Taking cuttings and propagating new plants is such a simple way of generating new plants and it really is a simple procedure.. If only a small percentage of these cuttings “take”, then we will have a batch of new plants that we can plant out in the spring.....



More propagation work.....



As we have reported on the previous page, we have done plenty of propagation work so that we can hopefully see the benefits come the spring – we have been very busy propagating lots of hardwood cuttings which include buddleia, forsythia, photinia and we have also propagated some bramley apple cuttings off a tree branch that was snapped off in a recent storm.....

Peppermint chard looks stunning.....



Here you can see some of our Peppermint Chard plants that really do produce some stunning stems – the colours in the stems of the plants really are so colourful..... It is always amazing to see what a seed can produce.....

Temperature fluctuations.....

The second week of November is a marked contrast to the first week with mild temperatures mixed in with some rain showers, a contrast to the frosty conditions that we experienced in the first week. Here you can see the result of a small but significant shower of rain. This was a short sharp shower!!



Another way to improve our soil quality.....

There are many ways that we can improve and maintain the quality of our soil, below you can see one very simple way and that is to add some banana peel to our soil – bananas are rich in potassium which is a very important part of the make- up of soil, so this is a very simple but effective way of helping the quality of our soil....



Broad beans are making some strong growth.....



Early sowings of Broad beans are generally very beneficial as they produce an early crop before blackfly cause a problem. Provided the young plants survive any frosty weather, they will grow quickly come the spring.

Here you can see the first sowing that we have made which have made some strong growth, we have also made a second sowing which will hopefully germinate soon so that again they can make some growth before the colder wintery weather arrives. If it gets too cold, we can cover the plants over with horticultural fleece....

Fungus is fascinating.....

Looking around The Bridge Garden particularly when the weather has been or is damp and wet there is plenty of fungus evident in lots of different areas.....

A fungus is any member of the group eukaryotic organisms that include micro – organisms such as yeasts and moulds, as well as the more familiar mushrooms. These organisms are classified as a kingdom, which is separate from the other eukaryotic life kingdoms of plants and animals.....



More fungi.....



There are 15,000 types of wild fungi in the UK alone..... Here in these photographs you can see some examples of the fungus that is growing in The Bridge Garden.....

Another cold spell.....

The last full week of November has given us some cold frosty nights with probably the coldest night of this late autumn period – the temperature reading inside the poly tunnel on Monday November 23rd came out at minus 3 degrees with plenty of frost evident all over the garden areas.....

Below you can see some of these frosty conditions.....



Sedum looks spectacular in the frost.....

These sedum flowers look absolutely spectacular with the flower heads all covered in frost. Amazing what different weather conditions can create.....



Garlic is frosted too.... Here you can see our garlic crop that has made some really strong, healthy growth.....



Compare the growth that the garlic has made from the earlier photograph in this edition.....
The frosty, cold conditions it is reckoned help garlic because a prolonged spell of colder weather makes the garlic bulbs taste stronger – only time will tell on this one.....

Garlic.....

Variety - Marco

Cornus looks even more spectacular.....

Now that our deciduous cornus shrubs have lost most of their leaves, the colour in the branches is even more evident. The colours are truly spectacular.....

Below you can see some of this colour that we are talking about.....



Mahonia is providing some autumn colour.....

Here you can see our evergreen mahonia shrub that is providing some super autumnal colour, growing next to our cornus shrubs, the contrast of the yellow mahonia flowers and the green leaves is even more evident in the frosty weather.



Seed saving is in full swing.....

If you look through recent garden newsletters, you will see that we are trying to use as many different ways as we can to increase our plant stocks including propagation, planting up strawberry plant runners and the latest way is by collecting seeds which we will dry and then sow in the spring.....

Looking at the seeds in the tray below that we have collected there are poppy seed heads and verbena bonariensis seeds, both of these plants will readily self – seed as is evident in many different areas of The Bridge Garden.....



Chard has some vibrant colour.....

Shining through all of the gloomy November weather, there is no doubt that our Chard plants provide some vibrant colour – the simple contrast between the green leaves and the white stems is striking in itself. Added to this colour are the peppermint chard plants that have some stunning pinky, red stems, almost like a stick of pepper mint rock. Always amazing what a plant can produce from a seed.

