

**January
2021**



**The Bridge Garden
Newsletter No 45**

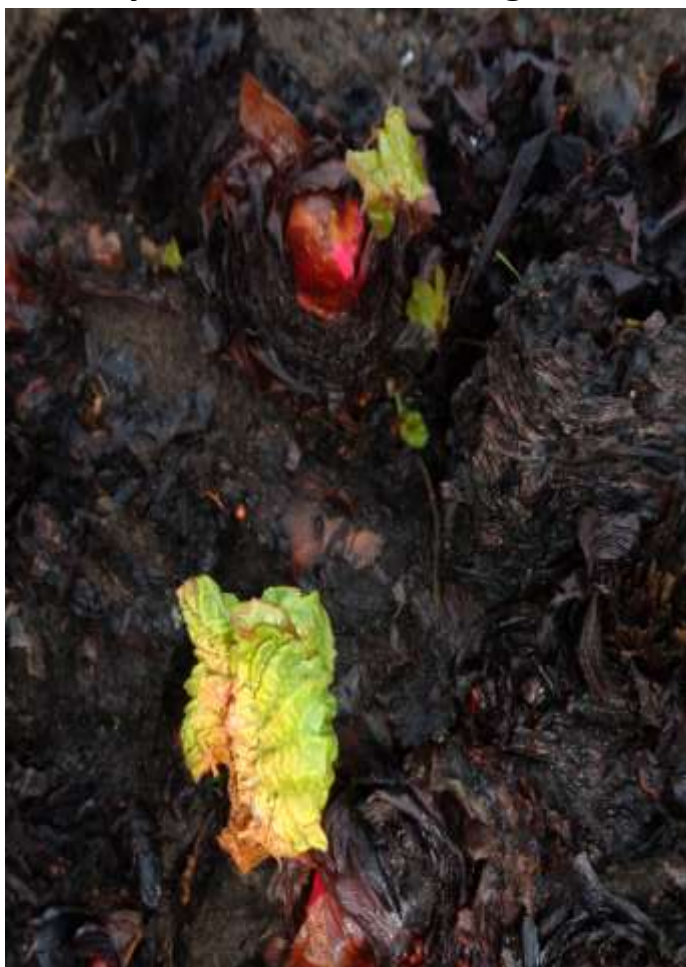
New Year Growing Preparations begin.....

Not only is the start of a new calendar year, it is also the time to start preparing growing areas and planning, going through seed stocks and ordering seeds where necessary. In fact, this is the time of the year when gardeners and growers start to get excited again as they anticipate what lies ahead.....

Rhubarb crowns are starting to produce new shoots....

One of the first early signs of new growth in the garden aside from our spring flowering bulbs is the appearance of new growth from our rhubarb crowns.....

Below you can see the emergence of this new growth.....



Growing preparation work.....

It is generally ill advised to try to work on ground that is wet and very soggy after the recent rainfall and indeed snow that we experienced through the Christmas and New Year period but today [January 4th] we have been able to work on a growing bed which was actually in excellent condition, testimony to the work that we have done on this area over the last couple of years. Lots of organic matter, multi-purpose compost and REMIN Rock dust has been worked into this area. Plus, we will now be looking to adopt a No-Dig philosophy on this area which will allow the earthworms and other associated organisms to improve our soil..... Below you can see the preparation work that we have done today.....



Soil health is absolutely paramount to not only the overall yields of the crops you are trying to grow but just as, if not more important is the quality and the taste of the crops that you are growing.

So, look after your soil and you will reap the benefits of your work.....

Growing bed preparation...

Poly tunnel growing bed preparation.....

All of our poly tunnel growing beds have all been prepared ready for seed sowing and planting – fresh multi-purpose compost has been added to some of the beds plus a dressing of REMIN Rock Dust has also been applied to all of the growing beds.....



REMIN ROCK DUST

Spring flowering bulbs are growing fast.....

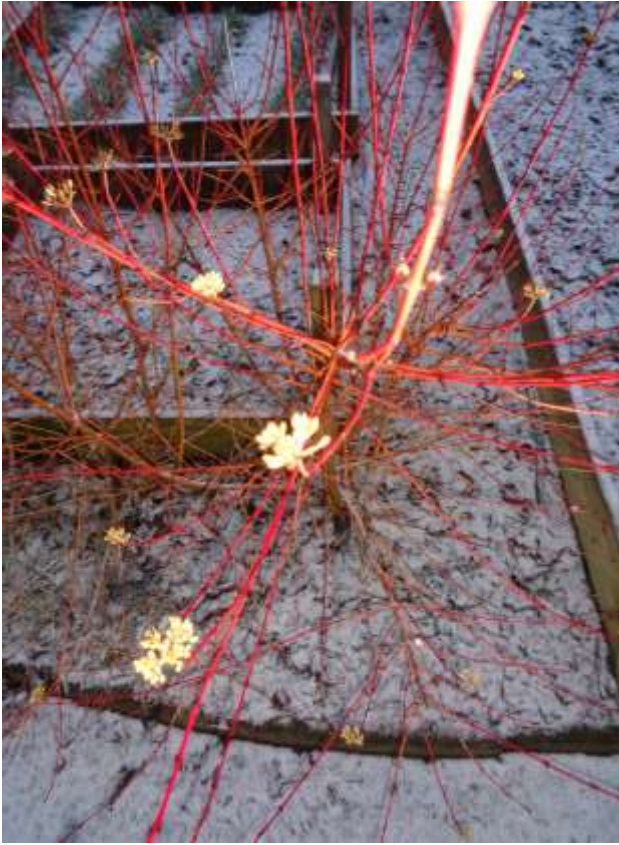


Cold days continue.....

The first full week of January has been more akin to the kind of weather that we have come to expect with a mix of cold daytime temperatures and frosty overnight conditions plus this week we have also had some snow to deal with Below you can see some of the views across the garden area.....



Snow creates some stunning backgrounds.....



Garlic growing through the cold weather.....

It is thought that garlic develops a stronger taste when it is exposed to a spell of cold weather – well so far January has been cold so hopefully our garlic crop which you can see here is growing well. Come early summer when we harvest this crop will be the time that we find out how strong the garlic tastes.....



Garden tidy up and preparation continuing.....

The second full week of January [January 11th] has seen tidying up and ground preparation work continuing as we get ready for the spring – indeed, spring is just 68 days away from today so the countdown is on. Below you can see that we have tidied up our Herb and Sensory garden area.....



More growing bed preparation.....



Lots more growing bed weeding and preparation work has been done today in readiness to start growing again in the spring.....

Subway continue to support our schools growing work



Schools growing work

Broad beans are making good progress.....

Below you can see our growing bed of broad beans, the difference in the levels of growth is simply because of the gap between when the seeds were sown.....

There is probably about a month's difference between the two sowings.....

This variety that we have sown is called Aquadulce Claudia which is a variety that has been adapted to grow through the autumn and winter months which will then hopefully give us an early crop of broad beans.....



Preparation work continuing.....

At this time of the year there is very little to be done surrounding seed sowing and planting simply because it is too cold, so it is the ideal time to work on lots of preparation and tidying up ready for the time when the weather allows us to start actual growing work. Below you can see work we have been doing on the raised beds inside the poly tunnel – we have been building these beds up to make them deeper allowing us to grow more deeper- rooted crops plus we can work on making the growing mediums in these beds healthier by adding more compost and organic matter plus adding more REMIN ROCKDUST.....



Clearance work taking place.....

Along with the preparation work that we have been doing, we have also used this time to do lots of tidying up and clearance work keeping The Bridge Garden in the best possible shape that we can. Weeds are always a big bug bear of any garden or growing area so we have been clearing weeds from the main pathway that leads into and through the garden.....



As well as clearing the weeds away and tidying up the garden pathway, we have also taken the opportunity to cut back our lavender crop as well. If you leave lavender and never cut it back, the plants become tough and woody which eventually leads to a poor crop.....

Pathway Clearance...

Pathway cleared.....



Crops still being harvested.....

There are still some crops growing in The Bridge Garden – crops that will grow through the winter weather albeit slowly but they can be harvested as and when. Below you can see some kale and fennel that we have harvested.....



Significant snowfall.....

Sunday January 24th 2021 saw the most significant snowfall since the winter of 2018 when the Beast from the East left us with snow, ice and bitterly cold temperatures. The snowfall over the week end was the largest that we have experienced for a number of years, indeed it left a thick white blanket as you will see from lots of the photographs that have been taken.....

Monday January 25th – 7.00am...

Site clearance underway.....



Water butt frozen solid!!



Poly tunnel or igloo?.....

Here you can see the poly tunnel roof that has a thick covering of snow on the roof plus the snow that has blown against the sides almost making the poly tunnel look more like an igloo – indeed, inside the light was relatively dim with the covering of snow on the roof.....



Snow creates some stunning images.....

Below you can see one of our ornamental grasses covered in snow along with our cornus shrubs with their stunning red stems plus our Christmas tree.....



Here is one of our Solitary Bee Nesters with a thick covering of snow – hopefully any larvae inside are snug and warm.....

Monday January 25th 2021 temperature.....

Here you can see the temperature readings from inside the poly tunnel early in the morning and then later on the same morning – cold!!.....

Poly tunnel... Poly tunnel..

8.00am..... 11.00am.....



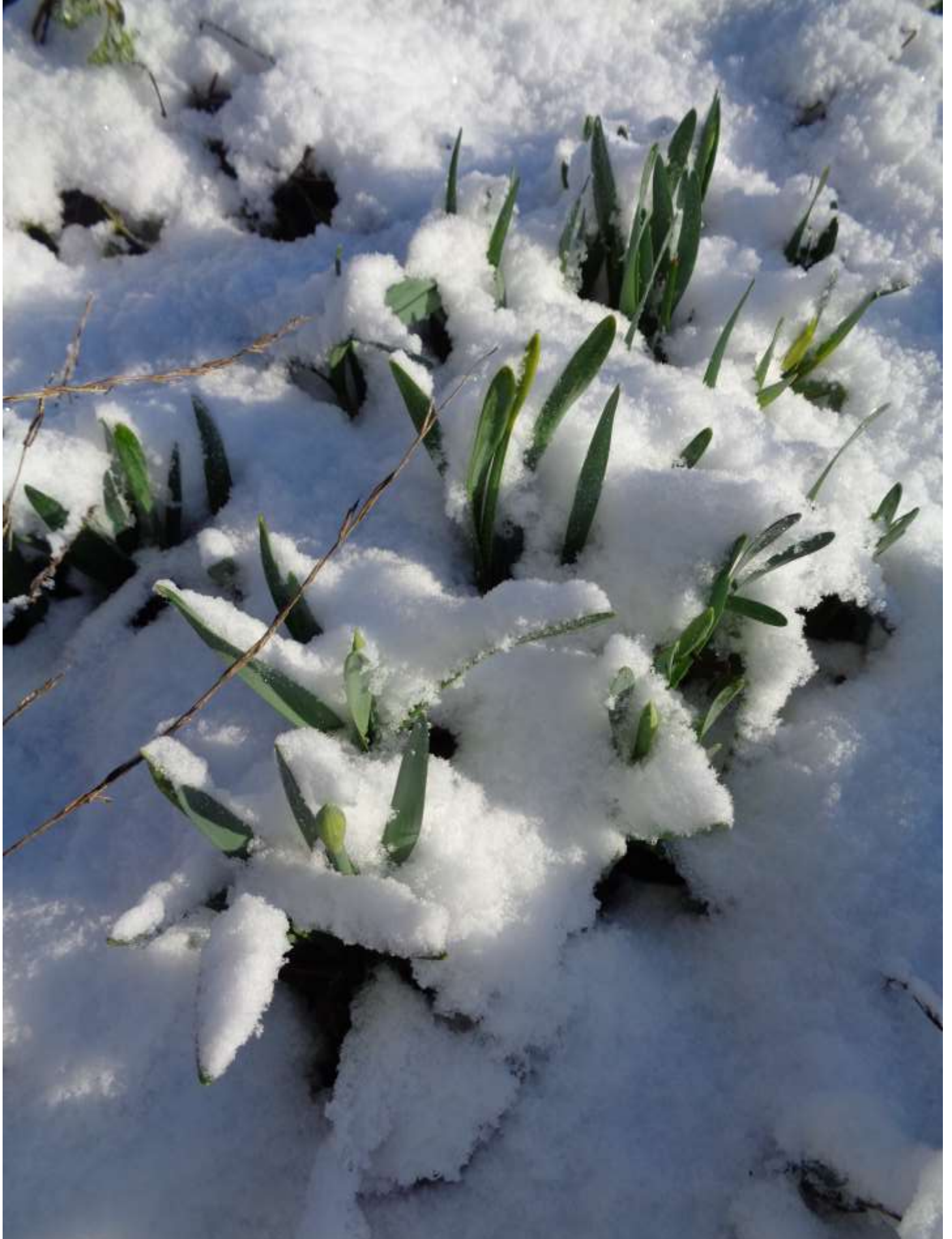
**Very
Cold!!**



**Still
Cold!**

Spring flowering bulbs – yes spring is 54 days away.....

We have lots of spring flowering bulbs making lots of growth – indeed it is a treat to see them poking their growing shoots through the snowfall. A timely reminder that spring is edging closer everyday.....

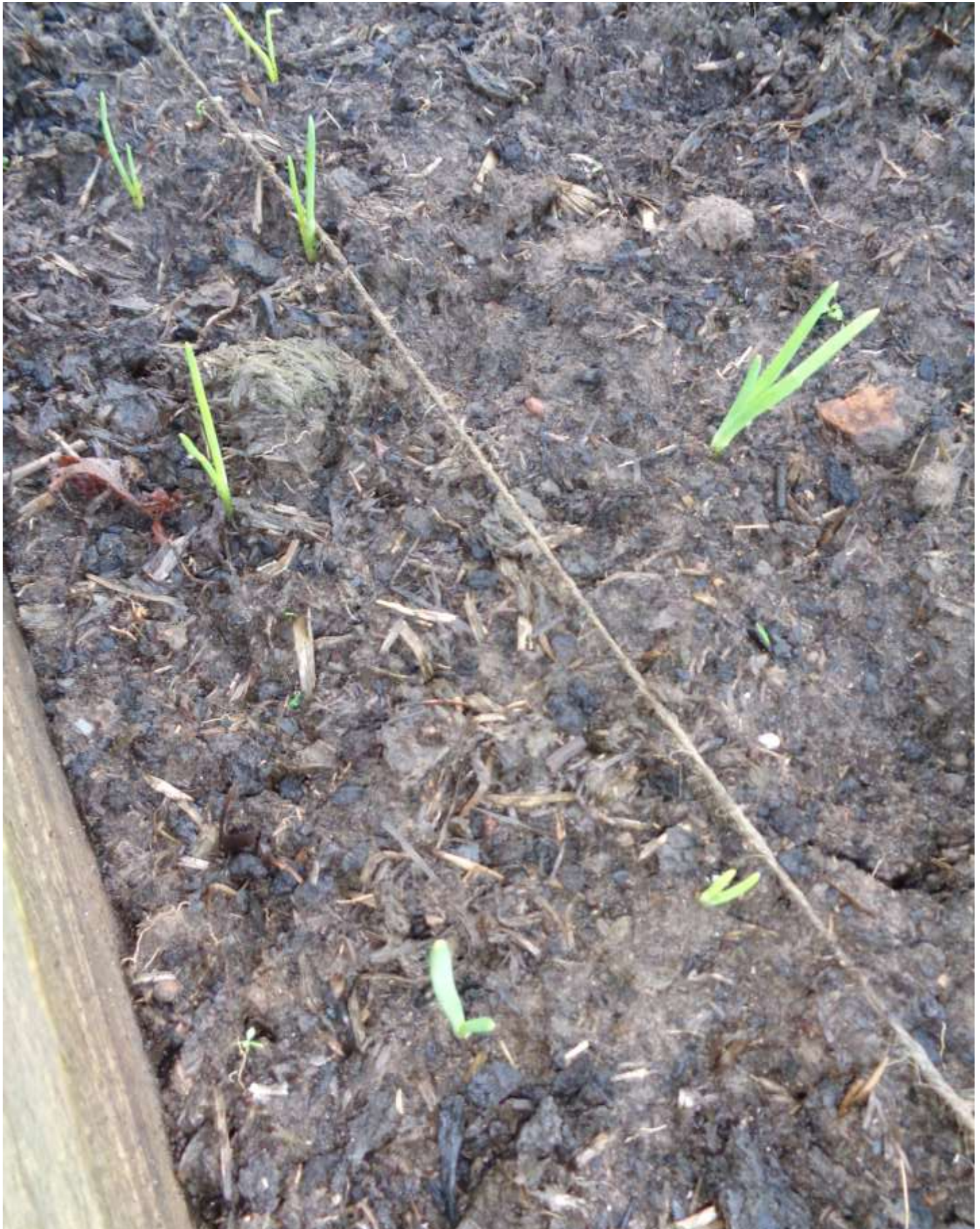


Friday January 29th.....

Onions making some strong growth.....

The onion sets that were planted by The Bridge Garden students before the Christmas break are making some strong growth.....

Below you can see some of this growth.....



More student planting work.....

Along with the onion sets and broad beans that the students planted before the Christmas break, they also planted some garlic which again has made some strong growth – it is thought that garlic develops a stronger taste if it is exposed to spells of cold weather – only time will tell on this one.....

Below you can see some of the garlic plants growing in The Bridge Garden.....



Beech tree is loaded with catkins.....

The big hazel tree in The Bridge Garden is loaded with catkins – catkins that form are how some trees are able to reproduce.....

