

I must say that this year I can hardly believe we are fast approaching the longest day of the year. At the end of the month I shall be keeping a close eye on the shallots. The moment that they stop producing a central shoot they will be lifted.

A few days ago I paid a visit to West Dean Gardens in West Sussex. It is always a pleasure but I was rather surprised when I found the tomatoes and peppers infested with white fly.



I am a strong advocate of using organic methods wherever possible to deter unwanted pests. Dwarf French marigolds do the job for me. Don't pick off the dead flowers as that's where most of the repellent odour comes from.

### Brassicas

Cabbages, cauliflower, calabrese and purple sprouting. All given the right amount of room to develop. The nets are very effective at keeping the pigeons and butterflies at bay.



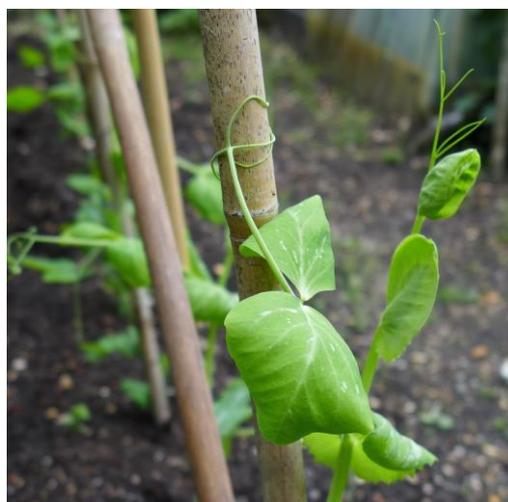
We are already picking summer cabbages like this **Greyhound** as they come up to a usable size. I grow several varieties at the same time as they all have different cropping periods. And not all will be left to grow on to full maturity.

November onwards. It has a great taste and will stand in perfect condition through the worst of weather for many weeks. **Tundra F1** is my winter banker for a reliable cabbage.

This weekend I shall be sowing seed of that superb winter cabbage, **Tundra F1**. It's a ball headed winter savoy. That variety will be ready for harvest around the end of

### Show Perfection Peas

The peas are certainly enjoying the moist warm weather. I have been attaching rings to the stems every few days but they will hang onto the canes quite happily by themselves. The only reason we put the rings on is because the exhibitor will remove the tendrils in the belief that more goodness will go into the peas. I am a little sceptical myself as I really can't see what difference removing a few tendrils would do. I may will conduct a little experiment. Those with and those without. And see what effect it has.



The 1<sup>st</sup> June and the **De Monica** broad beans are just a day or so away from the first picking. A gentle squeeze of the pod will tell you if they are developing nicely.

### Back on the allotment

This poor bumble bee is drying out on the chives after a night of heavy rain.



Sweet corn **Swift** sending up a seed head. Don't be tempted to snap it off or you won't get any cobs.



The strawberries have been strawed, Make sure you put a few slug pellets down before the straw. Now its time to put on the nets.



**Stenner** runner beans. Slugs are not the problem as they won't travel over the Bio Char. But I had a problem as a few beans were infected with black fly. Ants were the culprits carrying the aphids up the stems to suck the

life out of my beans. The ants milk nectar from the aphids, its what is know as a symbiotic relationship. I soon put a stop to that.

By the way Bio Char is the stuff left over at the bottom of the kiln after charcoal burning. My neighbour Bob is a woodsman and he can get loads of the stuff. Its great for trapping carbon in the soil, it retains moisture and lifts the pH of the soil. I use it all over the place. Especially around the **Hostas**.

Its time to revamp the herb garden.



This is curled leaf parsley. I don't bother growing from seed. Instead I pop along to the super market and buy a tub. I then give them a good soak and tease the individual plants apart. Pop them into 3" pots and three weeks later this is what they look like. Each pot is an individual plant. I don't know if it works with Tesco's parsley as I shop at Waitrose. I do the same with several other herbs that they sale. Saves me a lot of work.

Gogorez peppers. Its time to try a little experiment. Two of the plants will have all the small peppers removed leaving just two to grow on.



The Solito radish are proving quite a success. They have a good colour and are not too hot to the taste. To get them to show size I would give them five weeks of growth. And if showing radish this is the way to do it for the New Forest Show, which is held in conjunction with the NVS Southern Branch Championships at the end of July. 9 radish, tied in a bunch with natural raffia.

develop. The downside is you need a field of them for a decent meal. I find the side shoots from calabrese are far more productive.

Jobs for this week. Don't forget to sow the winter cabbage and winter cauliflowers. Also its time to make a last sowing of runner beans. I shall also be sowing a selection of lettuce.

And all being well I shall be making my new herb garden out of scrap wood standing on legs. I saw one at my local garden centre for £50.00. Mine will cost a few screws and my time. Hopefully it will turn out a work of art. 'Fingers crossed'.



Back in two weeks.

John Trim