

A couple of fine days has found me on the allotment doing mainly clear up jobs. The 'Tenderstem Brokoli' has been producing tasty florets for a good 6 weeks. Now the plants have finished cropping it was time to lift the old stalks. Because the allotments on our site suffer with club root I don't compost the whole plant. The infected root part goes into a bag for a trip to the local tip, all the rest can happily go into the compost bin.

The 'Hawkesbury Wonder' dwarf French beans, that were destined for Christmas dinner have started cropping. I am beginning to wonder if they will be finished before the festive season is upon us.



The back up variety 'Prince' was sown a little too late to make it for Christmas. Mind you they will be a tasty addition to our dinners come the New Year.

These are 'Pendle Improved' blanch leeks. They are just starting to show their sixth leaf, 'commonly called flags', where leeks are concerned. Growing leeks like this is for the dedicated exhibition grower. Most of these will eventually be shown at various events next year. Of course there were many young leeks that did not quite make the grade for showing. These are grown on in plugs and planted out in mid March on the allotment, which will give us leeks from June right through until November. Until the seed sown leeks come into season.





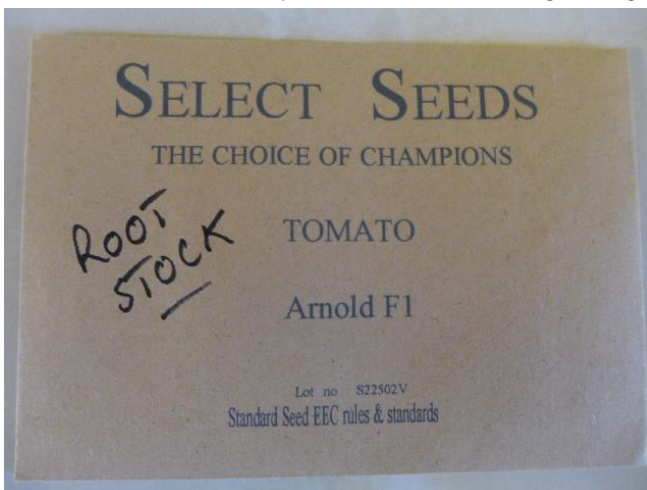


Grown from seed. This variety is 'Blue Green Autumn Neptune'. I can highly recommend this one.



This is a root stock variety of tomato used for grafting. I noticed that Select seeds did a packet of 12 seeds, which was just right for my needs. In January these will be

sown with the variety that I shall use for grafting on.



Remember, grafted plants are ideal for growing direct in the soil. They are not suitable for container growth like grow bag cultivation.

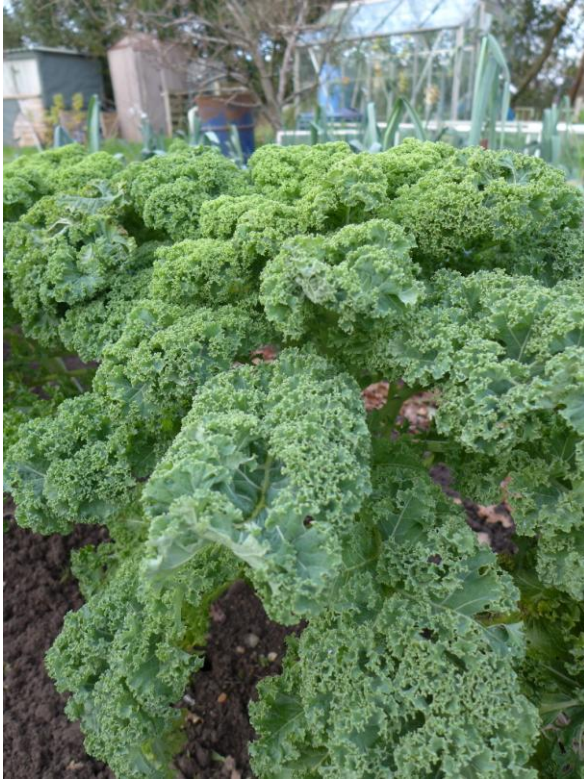
More on grafting in January.

And here are the 'Cedrico' tomato cuttings that I took in mid October. As they are getting a little leggy I shall take the top 4" off each plant for more cuttings. This will also encourage the plants to throw more side shoots, which of course will provide me with even more cuttings. From these 6 plants I will probably have 60 more come March.





I have removed the netting from the dwarf curly kale. I found the top leaves were yellowing. They look much better now after a tidy up.



A 6 month old avocado plant. This was a favourite thing to grow when I was a kid. The time honoured way was to suspend the seed over a jar of water. A faster method is to put the seed into the top of a compost heap and cover with a layer of grass cuttings, then a sheet of plastic. Check for germination after a month. If the seed has not germinated in 6 weeks it probably never will. If it does shoot, the seed can be potted up in a



peat free compost. Growing avocados is really a bit of fun. Don't expect them to fruit as that can take 10 years and quite honestly most plants raised in Northern climes die before then. A more attractive bushy avocado can be created by pruning it down to half its height when it reaches around 18" tall. Like the one in the picture, which is ripe for pruning.



The last of the 'Pablo' beetroot have been lifted and put into store. This is an ordinary plastic bucket. The tops have been twisted off then the beetroot are layered using damp peat. I find this keeps them quite plump.

They could quite happily have stayed in the polytunnel deep bed. Unfortunately for them I needed to get the bed ready for the next lot of vegetables.

This is Elephant Garlic. Of course not a true garlic it is closer to the leek family in origin. Mind you they do make very big cloves. They are initially very expensive to



buy at around £5.00 for each one and you will only get 4 or 5 cloves from the head to plant up. I started with a couple of heads and by saving my own stock now grow around 20 plants each year. They are very mild, just right for the non garlic lover where a little bit of garlic flavour is required.

More from me at Christmas time.

John Trim