

The first weekend of the month found me in Partridge Green, West Sussex. The venue for the NVS judges exams in the Southern branch region. A bumper entry of 14 people were gathered somewhat nervously for the seminar on Friday night, prior to the exams proper to follow on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

It's Saturday and the participants have just completed the theory exam, now the practical is to come. It is a nervous wait as only a few are allowed into the hall at any one time. It takes on average an hour to complete the judging.

The vegetables are neatly laid out on the tables. They were prejudged by myself and Richard Hilson. There were eight different classes to judge plus two collections and the "identify the fault" table where three kinds of vegetables display



a fairly common fault. The exhibits are neatly laid out by the pre judges.

Richard Hilson checks that all is in order before the first applicants are admitted to the hall.



Barry Newman the exam moderator assess an applicant.



Judging the collections is something that the applicants must get right.



Lining up the potatoes to better assess uniformity. At the time of writing the fate of the applicants is yet to be revealed. Good luck to you all.



Once back from a show I dibber all the stump rooted carrots and parsnips back into the deep bed in my polytunnel. If you plant them carefully the carrots will regrow a new top of foliage and the colour will become a deeper red.



Make sure the hole is deep enough so that the tap root hangs down straight. Then back fill with compost so that there is no chance of an air pocket alongside the carrot. Failure to do it properly could result in cavity rot, so take your time. This method will allow you to exhibit the carrots at another show in a month or so time. Very handy if you don't have a great number of specimens to pull.

As I mentioned in the late September article, October is the best month to plant up your garlic. Here are some good specimens of

**Elephant garlic.** Don't split these until you are ready to plant them up.

I pop them into 3" square pots and keep them in the cool greenhouse for a month until they are well rooted.

This year I bought in new stock of **Provence Wight garlic** as my stock from this year's harvest was not of high quality. As you can see in the photo the new stock has good fat cloves.

Always use the best of the outside cloves to grow on. Discard the small inner cloves as they rarely make any size.



**Elephant Garlic clove.** Mild & Mighty.

Another Autumn job is shucking and sorting the runner bean seed. Each bean has its own pile. I only keep pods that have produced at least 7 beans and of the right shape. Once shucked they are packed into strong brown paper bags and stored in the crisper section in my the fridge.



This is the **St George** bi-coloured runner bean. Grown in the polytunnel this will test its ability to self pollinate. No sign of beans setting so far.

Late blight has made its way into the polytunnel. This is no surprise because the doors are left open to improve ventilation. My next job will be to take off all the foliage and bin it. The tomatoes can be left on the plants for the time being. If they start to suffer with botrytis they will be harvested, washed and stored in the conservatory. That way they will keep until Christmas if kept cool.



This is a great way to draw your fellow gardeners together to share stories and maybe enjoy a glass or two. Perhaps that's why they are looking so happy.

At the top end of our allotments we have twelve porkers. Nine are mainly Tamworth/Gloucestershire cross, plus 3 large whites. They love their apples.

As the main productive season draws to a close it is time for West Street allotmenters to celebrate.





Big Tony, Helen and Nurse Sister Wendy.

Last of the summer wine.



Phil 'The Welsh' and Maddy, aka 'Sea Biscuit.'



A great afternoon thanks to you all. Special thanks to ace organiser Bobby Payne.

Back again in late October. John Trim