

My next season's supply of peat, fertiliser and compost has arrived. I still find there is nothing better than a good quality sphagnum moss peat for growing my exhibition potatoes. Mind you it is certainly becoming more expensive and now retails at around £14.00 for a 200 litres bale.



A friend of mine, Darren Blick, had great success this year using Tref peat. This retails at £9.92 + vat and is available from Fargro. Darren won both the coloured and white potato classes at the prestigious NVS Southern Branch Championships this year.

Talking of exhibiting it is now time for me to get some **Pendle Improved** blanch leeks under way to provide the new stock for 2017. One way of promoting new root growth is to start off the prepared leek in water.

First of all cut off the bottom 6" of the leek, 'you can eat the rest'.

By the way, cutting the tops at an angle was not intentional, just my dodgy eye sight.

Mind you, when I was asked about it, 'rather tongue in cheek', I explained that it allowed the rain water to run off the top of the leek and thereby reduced the risk of rot.



In the next photo you can see that I have trimmed off some of the blanch tissue until it is the size of the root plate.

Some of the new roots will come from this exposed area.

Pop the leeks into jars of clean water and make sure you change it every couple of days.

In a few days the roots appeared.



Pot the rooted leeks up in a medium strength compost. I like to use Levingtons M2 but any decent compost will do. The leeks will rapidly throw new foliage. They can be left out in the garden for the time being. I put them into a cold greenhouse if the weather is bad. You don't want the compost to become water logged or the leeks frozen in the pots.



The 'Aquadulche' broad bean seed was soaked for 24 hours before potting up. I used old exhibition potato compost and 3" pots. By mid November these will be ready for planting out. They will be quite happy in a cold greenhouse until then.

Big Tony was hopeful of turning over the topsoil of one of his allotments with his handy Alko cultivator. Tony's jokes are bad enough, I did not hang around to hear the expletives when the contraption failed to start.





Instead I popped up to the top of the allotments to feed the pigs. I have featured them again because Amy Plumb likes pigs.



Back to matters horticultural, I wonder if these globe artichokes will produce something edible. I think it may be too late in the season for something worth while.



Something I did not mention earlier was the Christmas potatoes. I set these away in late August. All I did was retain some of the first early seed potatoes and kept them in the fridge. This stopped them producing sprouts. I took them out in early July and potted them up. By growing them in the conservatory they have avoided the blight. We can now look forward to new potatoes on Christmas day.

Whitefly has been really bad this year on the allotment. The foliage on the sprouts was black with their excrement. So I took it off and binned it. In fact this helps the sprouts to bulk up. There will be plenty to harvest up to Christmas.





Here is a row of **Greensleeves** spring cabbage alongside a row of **Rosetta** lettuce.

Because of the blight the tomatoes have all been harvested. They are now stored in my apple rack and will ripen slowly giving us fruits for another month or so.

So the job of the month is greenhouse cleaning. In the next article I shall be potting up young blanch leeks.

Speak to you then.

John Trim

The cool autumn days will not bother the lettuce in the polytunnel. There is still time to sow a winter variety.

