

I spotted this family busy turning apples into cider whilst out on a walk near Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire. The chap in the straw hat treated me to a glass and very tasty it was too.



Not having a cider press myself, I tend to put all the spare damaged apples that won't store through our juicer. All the perfect apples are wrapped individually and depending on the variety can last for months in the apple rack.



This glut of caulis is the downside of growing F1 varieties, they tend to all head up together. Great if timing for a show, not so great when you end up with a dozen to eat in the space of a week. If you trim the foliage back and wrap with several layers of cling film, you can preserve them for a couple of weeks stored in the fridge.



We also make our own piccalilli which at least uses one up.

As the Autumn harvest continues this means drying off the storage beans. These Borlotti beans will be left on the bakers trays until the foliage is crisp.



Then it is just a matter of a few minutes to husk the beans and store in sterilised glass jars. This is a great bean to use in stews during the winter months. Borlotti are also very tasty used young in salad dishes before they are dried.

Its almost that time of year when we should be buying in our garlic for October planting. Here I have saved several bulbs of **Elephant garlic**. I always save my own as it is very expensive to buy fresh stock each year. On the 1st of October I shall split the bulbs down to individual cloves and plant each one in a pot of John Innes No3 potting compost. I have found that they prefer a soil based compost and it acclimatises the cloves to the garden environment. I will grow these on in the pots for a month to establish a good root system before planting out into the soil. Treat the soil to 4oz of potash per square yard before planting out. Plant the garlic about 9" apart with the tip of the bulb buried 2" below soil level. (For more information have a look at the article I wrote on garlic growing. It's on the NVS website).



The first sowing of runner beans that were set away on 14th March have now finished flowering. Time to take down the canes and put them away for the winter. I go along the row with a pair of secateurs snipping all the plants off at soil level. The roots are left in the ground so that the nitrogen stored in the nodules can return to the soil.

I then pull out the canes and slide off the foliage making sure I am wearing a good solid pair of gloves. 'You will know all about it if you get a bamboo splinter in your hand.

Like a fish hook they are almost impossible to pull out.)

Mind you, that's not the end of the beans, at home we are still picking from the third sowing and the forth sowing of **St George** bi colour runners are just beginning to flower in the polytunnel.

The best beans on the second sowing were left for seed and will shortly be picked off.

There are nine beans in this pod, an ideal candidate for next year's seed. It has been very wet of late, so I am going to pick off all the best beans and spread them out on newspaper on the greenhouse bench. When perfectly crisp I shall remove the beans, pop them into a strong paper bag and store them in the crisper section of the fridge to overwinter.



Of course there still are no shortage of beans. I need to save some of my best because I am one of the judges involved in running the NVS Southern branch judge's exams in October.



That means saving loads of veg to recreate a mock show for the potential judges of the future to cast their eye over. (I shall report on the judge's exams in the October article.)



On the NVS forum a member in Scotland mentioned that he had just picked his first ripe tomato! In the third week of September. My goodness, I started picking in the third week of May which just illustrates the wide seasonal differences there are in Great Britain.

In the polytunnel I continue picking tomatoes into January.

In the South of England with our warmer climate we are naturally ahead of most other parts of the country. But of course we have to contend with more pests and disease, so sometimes things do equal themselves out.

Looking ahead to next year, my potato order has been sent off. I did well this year in various shows and now all those potatoes that did not make the grade are in store to provide us through the coming months. In fact we rarely need to buy any potatoes at all for eating.

My friend Roger Farmer has brought over a bag of [Pink Fir Apple](#). I neglected to plant any this year. This was definitely an oversight on my part as it is the chef's favourite. Wonderful salad flavour and it will keep right through the winter.

One for the potato connoisseur.

So what are we looking to sow in October? Top of the list is the garlic.

Next is overwintering broad beans, try my favourite, [Aquadulce Claudia](#). Start these off in 3" pots and transplant out into the veg plot when the roots appear out of the bottom of the pots.



It's still not too late to get some delicious spring greens under way. Try **Greensleeves**. These can be picked as Spring Greens or grown on to provide a small cabbage.

One vegetable that does very well in low light and cooler conditions is winter lettuce. Try **Winter Gem** or one of the many butterhead varieties that are available. These will stand harvestable for many months so you only need to make one or two sowings to see you right through the winter.



This is **Valdour** a tasty winter butterhead. This one is the best replacement for my old favourite **Rosetta**, which was unfortunately withdrawn from sale a couple of years ago. Thankfully I still have several packets of seed left.

Until October.

John Trim