

I am sure that non gardeners think we gardeners have an easy time of it as winter approaches. Of course we know that nothing could be further from the truth. Apart from raking up leaves there is still a tremendous amount of clearing, tidying and washing down to do.

My heated greenhouse is being cleaned after removing all the old tomato plants. As usual I use good old Flash disinfectant to wash down the glass and floor. Next job is to re install the growing cabinet and T5 grow light. 'More on that one in the next article'.



The broad beans 'Aquadulche' sown in mid October.



All the beans are grown in 3" pots. As soon as you see the roots emerging from the bottom it is time to plant them out. Don't delay because the roots are very thick and will break easily if you

leave them to get too long. Mine were planted out on 10th November. Don't forget to give a good scattering of slug pellets. Even though broad beans are quite hardy, in harsher parts of the country weather wise, it will be necessary to give them some cloche protection. Mine will be enclosed by a plastic screen with the top open to the elements.

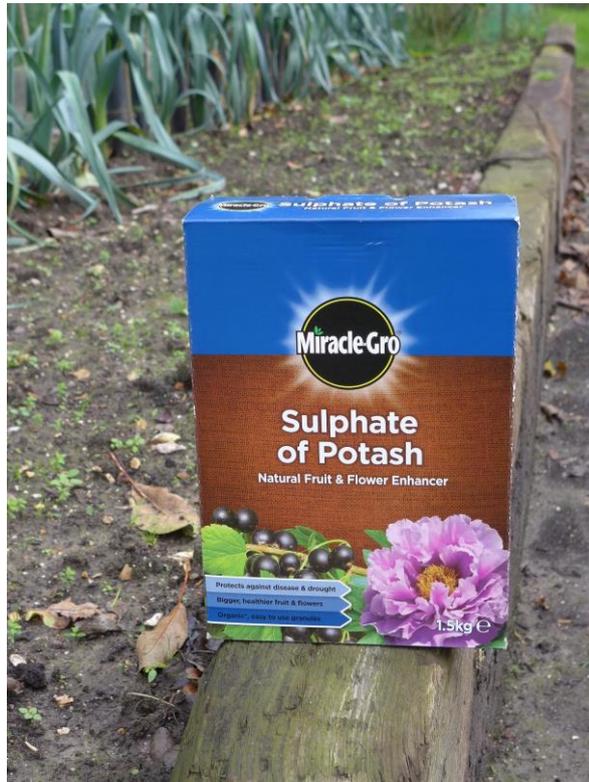
Another vegetable that will be planted out this month is the 'Provence Wight garlic'. This is well advanced and ready to go out.



On the other hand the 'Elephant Garlic' is slow to throw shoots, have a look at the bottom of the pots and you will see that something is happening.



The most important fertiliser to add to the soil when growing garlic is potash. 4oz to the square meter will do it. Do remember that garlic need to be irrigated but they won't tolerate a waterlogged soil. Choose a free draining site for best results.



Another job I need to attend to this month is the leeks that are propagated vegetatively. This is a good head of what we exhibitors call grass. Each grass is a tiny leek.

Growing leeks this way is rather like taking a cutting from the parent plant. Each one will be a

near replica of its parent. This ensures greater uniformity. If we grew from seed we would end up with a right old mish mash as many of the seeds would turn up characteristics of former parents that had crossed with each other.

To propagate the grass, first of all cut the head off the stalk.



Not the best specimen head of grass, but it illustrates the method.

The head of grass is then stood in a dish of water. In three days the young leeks will be sending out tiny roots. At that stage they can be pulled away gently from the head and potted up in plugs. Use a good seed compost.

In the polytunnel the carrots that were dibbled into a deep bed have grown a new head of foliage. These will see us through the winter months as they will not run to seed until April or May next year.

The 'Pablo' beetroot from a sowing made 12 weeks ago is now at a useable size.



With the onset of the cooler weather these will not put on a lot more weight. As they are growing in the polytunnel at home we shall leave them where they are and harvest as required. On the allotment they would be at risk from the attention of the rabbits and deer. In that instance I would lift and store them in a box between layers of dry sand.

Jobs to tackle this month. Check over stored potatoes. I have just taken all my spare exhibition ones out of the peat and popped them into paper sacks.

Unfortunately I missed two late shows as my duty was required elsewhere. This means we have plenty of top quality potatoes to use up in the coming months.

I always try and get the heavy digging finished before the heavy rains set in. I almost made it this year. I have about a third of a plot to finish. The soil is turned over rough and left in clods for the frosts to break down and the birds to remove as many of the pests that they can find. Of course the rain also serves a purpose as it washes excess mineral salts out of the soil, the residue of the fertilisers I used during the year.

Back again later this month.

John Trim

