

What a bonus for us gardeners, wall to wall sunshine for most of mainland Britain. On our allotment site this caused a rash of excitement, some people we had not seen since last October reappeared, all in a frenzy to get the plots ready for the summer.

Mind you there are a few of us who keep our plots ticking over during the winter months which means we reap the benefit of tasty brassicas and root crops. I harvested my first **Nessie** cauliflower from the polytunnel on 24th March. The one in the photograph I cut from the allotment greenhouse on the 21st April. Alongside me on Ann's plot we have another half a dozen **Nessie**. Grown outside with netting for protection those are just turning in. That is a pretty good spread of cropping from a cauli that is suitable for early or late sowing, all obtained by growing the crop in different situations and holding some plants back in there pots for another couple of weeks before planting out. At home more caulis are under way, amongst them are **Nessie**, **Graffiti**, and **Raleigh**. The later timed for the National at the New Forest Show. Those were sown 14 weeks and four days before the lifting day on 29th July, with another sowing a week later 13 weeks and 4 days to the show.



Celery planting Time

In mid April the **Morning Star** celery were potted on into 1 litre pots. The compost used was a mix of John Innes No 3 with a plenty of well rotted manure mixed in.



A week later and the roots were out of the pots. With the clement Easter weather it was time to plant them out.



I space them 18" apart. Don't skimp on the slug pellets as celery are a delicacy as far as molluscs are concerned. Also never let the bed dry out as celery are a marshland plant. I



water every day unless rain is forecast. In another week the first collars will be put on. For that I use the cardboard tubes that come from the inside of a carpet roll. They are cut to 8" in length.

Pot Leeks

It was time to get the pot leeks planted out as well.

This is perfect, the roots are holding the ball of compost together and at the same time they are not root bound. These will soon get away once planted in the trench.



and thrip. I will not attempt to blanch the leeks by drawing up the soil, until four weeks from the show.

The Exhibition Potatoes

All looking very good. I am pleased that this year I have once again been able to source new stock of Purple Eyed Seedling. In my opinion the best coloured potato never to have won at the NVS National Show. Though I believe one year it did place 2nd.



The top ten Sammy x Cambrians

I have given them 24" of space between each plant. Also the plants are staggered so that one leek is not directly opposite a leek in the other row. A few days after planting the leeks were sprayed against leek moth



Back in the Polytunnel

This is one of the leek moth traps. It has a capsule of a pheromone like substance that attracts the male moths onto a sticking insert. Which of course puts an end to them breeding.



As they grow the blanch leeks move through a succession of different length collars. The smallest is 8" tall which is applied when the leeks are first planted out. The black plastic one is 12" and in about a month the leeks will go into the 14" collar on the right of the photograph. After that I apply an 18" one which will see them through to show time. At the present time the leeks average 3" in circumference.

Up Coming Plant Sales

These are just a few of the plants I am bringing along for the sales.

Brassicas are always popular. Here I have a tray of **Montgomery sprouts** and **Graffiti Cauliflowers**. In other parts of the garden are loads of others, leeks and all types of bean in trays, plus courgettes and many more. I can't wait to get them sold. Because I am so inundated with plants I have brought forward our allotment sale to this weekend the 27th 28th April. I am hopeful that the weather will be kind.



To finish off here are my **Zenith** tomatoes. Hopefully these will be just right for the National in July. I have more plants on the other side of the greenhouse.



Back soon

John Trim