

Soil test . My exhibition beds have a soil test (8 in total), first bed is on the plot in the tunnel (in here 8oz and large onions will be grown - it gets too hot for leeks!). Samples from 5 holes @ 6" deep - a tablespoon is ideal. Put samples into a plastic bag and shake well to mix! Do not touch the soil by hand. Mark bag with what you intend to grow, add your address and cheque for £8 (per sample) and post to Soil care centre (7 , Fern Avenue, Jesmond, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE2 2QT). I will put in the fertilisers what is recommended from the soil test, using organic feeds (so there is no build up of salts). My organic feeds are dried blood, bone meal and rock potash. The only other feeds once planted out are foliar feeds

Hole dug out with hand fork, and a piece of seaweed top left of hole!



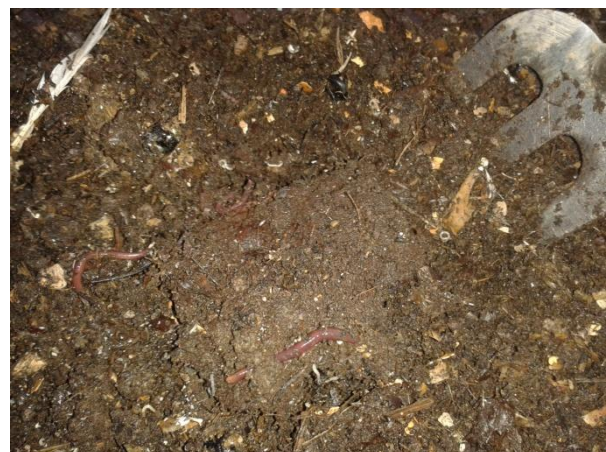
Close up of seaweed, bacteria and fungi already getting a grip - one reason to keep your beds moist!

Sample bagged up



Close up of the medium in my bed bostin!

Damson wine racked off - this will be bottled in 3 months, the taste now is superb - so should do well on our show bench



If you have the chance to collect seaweed, get it! First, upend and wash the salts off, then lay out to dry

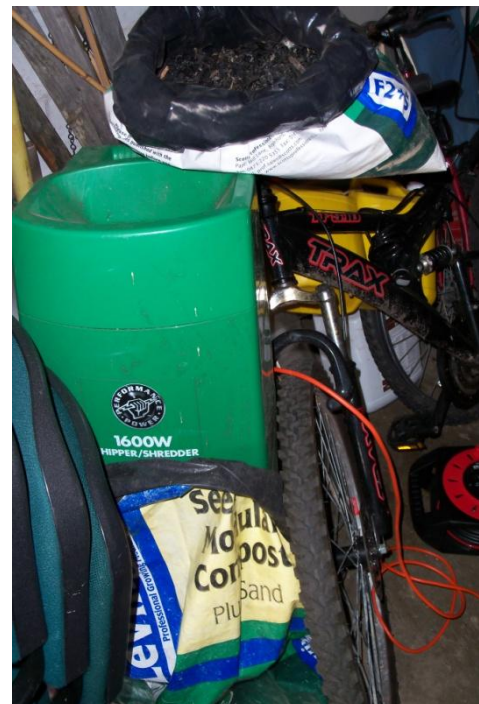


By dinner, the top will have gone crisp, so turn to dry off the other side.



Once crisp, I now chop it up with shears in a bucket, but it's still too big!

The seaweed can be used as a top dressing as it is, but I want it smaller as its one of my ingredients for when I'm making my garden compost, so this now gets put through the shredder twice to get even smaller particles



If all that is too much trouble, then cheat and go to Holland & Barrett, then crush a tablet instead!

