

# Hope allotments blog – April 2021

March continued chilly and damp with the occasional nice day to make you think that spring had arrived early. This is not unusual although there were few days with frost in the mornings which is an indicator that winters are becoming milder.

April started off quite cold after the last few days of March reaching record temperatures. A couple of our tomato seedlings succumbed to the frost even though they were protected in the glasshouses. All the rest were OK which was a bit random as they were in almost the exact same spot but there you go.

We got our first early potatoes planted on a pleasant sunny day as you can see below.



We are trying an experiment with our turnips this year. Each area has different pests and diseases to cope with. On some sites you can't grow carrots because of carrot fly and on others you might be struggling to grow potatoes due to an infestation of potato eelworm. It just depends on your local conditions.

One of our problems is flea beetle. This is a tiny, shiny, black beetle which eats small holes in brassica leaves and jumps when the plant is disturbed hence the name. It is impossible to grow early turnips, Kohlrabi or rocket on our plots as the damage that the flea beetles do inhibits growth so badly.

So this year we are planting them in conjunction with our onion sets in the hope that the smell of the onions will deter the beetles.

We'll keep you posted and let you know if it works.



A huge thank you to Mat & Chris, from Glencar construction, who worked like Trojans to build our new shed/classroom. We now have somewhere to go when it's wet rather than cramming into my office/workshop along with all the other stuff like wellies and bits of wood. Thanks to National Gardens scheme for their funding!

### **Looking forward to May.**

April should see a frenzy of planting to ensure that there is a range of crops during the summer and with the arrival of warmer weather in May, grass will need cutting and weeds will start growing. It can still be quite cold at times with morning frosts fairly common so beware the temptation to plant out tender crops too early. It is far safer to wait until May to put tender seedlings like courgettes out as there is nothing worse than seeing your beloved plants shrivelled and brown after a particularly cold night.

We always welcome volunteers. Ring us on 01604214300

Finally,

Question: What happened to the vegetable Titanic?

Answer: It hit an Iceberg lettuce and sank.

Have a happy gardening month and see you in May.

Joe - the Hope gardener