

Hope allotments blog – December 2020

November was wet and damp with a few nice days but turned cold towards the end and we have had some cold and icy days which is not unusual for December. Forecasters are predicting the coldest December on record. I seem to remember that they said the same thing last year too!

The broad beans – Aquadulce Claudia – which we planted at the end of October are coming up nicely, protected by a low fleece tunnel. They should provide us with some tender young beans in early June and will hopefully be well enough grown to survive any attack by blackfly. Young broad beans are a culinary delight and totally different from the large and often tasteless ones that you normally find in the supermarket. It is one of the joys of growing your own that you get the benefit of fruit and vegetables that would otherwise be uneconomical for a farmer to grow due to labour and production costs.

Elsewhere on the allotments we are using the glasshouses and poly tunnels to provide a bit of shelter for lettuces, spinach, coriander and rocket. We have also planted some spring cabbages and Khol Rabi seedlings that we didn't have time to plant outside. Hopefully they will benefit from the protection and grow to maturity providing some welcome fresh veg in the early spring to fill the 'hungry gap'.

Robin, our CEO, gave us a magnificent Dahlia tuber which we are keeping in a darkened and frost free shed for the winter. It will create a lovely centrepiece for one of the sensory gardens that we are building for Sonia and her clients and will provide a vibrant splash of colour in the plot when it flowers next July.

We have had a summerhouse delivered which will be the seating area for our woodland therapy area which we created from a piece of wasteland backing onto our neighbours allotments. The idea is to have spring bulbs and flowers creating a carpet of colour with English Bluebells being the centrepiece.



Looking forward to January. The days are starting to lengthen and although it is the depths of winter, and can be icy and cold, there can also be some fine sunny days when the air is crisp and it is a joy to be out in the fresh air. Nothing much is planted outside in January. It is a month for planning ahead and doing maintenance and building works ready for the coming season.

Finally, a festive picture from the allotments



Hoe, hoe, hoe

Have a happy Christmas and a good gardening month and see you in January.

Joe - the Hope gardener