

Hope allotments blog – February 2022



The weather in January was fairly standard with some pretty cold, icy mornings and a number of lovely sunny days to make up for it. We are using these days to tidy up the allotments and put lighting and heating into the classroom as we were given a grant from the David Cock Foundation to buy a generator which we have finally got working after having found out that the Automatic Voltage Regulator (AVR) was faulty.



That is a piece of dried Teasel that was collected for flower arranging and not part of the generator by the way.

We were also awarded the contract to re-design and build a healing garden at the Catholic Cathedral in Northampton and the dry days allowed us to make a start on that.

We are working toward an opening date of Sunday 15 May so keep that in your diary.





We have received our order of potatoes from JBA seed potatoes of Annan, Dumfriesshire.

This year we are growing 'Charlotte', a second early, as our new potatoes and going for 'Picasso' again for our maincrop as it is drought resistant and has given us good results over the last two years.

We will be planting the second earlies in early to mid April and our maincrop in mid to late April

Looking forward to March.

March is when we start the main planting period. Last year it was very dry which is not what you want when you are bringing on young seedlings or trying to germinate seeds. What you want are warm and wet conditions which are more akin to a normal September. This is where a glasshouse/poytunnel or cloches come into their own. The protection they give the young plants can make the difference between success and failure although their use is more labour intensive but you can't have everything! Even if everything goes wrong and all your seeds fail to germinate or get eaten by slugs you can still rescue the season by buying plants to replace them from your local garden centre or the Hope allotments.

Finally,

Continuing with our explanations of plant names.



The name barbata as in *Stipa barbata* (or bearded feather grass) means bearded or hairy and relates to the fact that from early summer the plant produces small clusters of flowers that become fluffy and curled like an ostrich feather or a fine beard.

Picture courtesy of Beth Chatto's plants & gardens

Have a happy gardening month and see you in March.

Joe - the Hope gardener