

Hope allotments blog – November 2021



Late October was pretty wet although it continued to be very mild for the time of year. We finally got our first frost on the 2nd of November after a weekend of torrential showers and winds which brought down a tree on the allotments. We were lucky and had no damage apart from a couple of water butts being blown around.

The same can't be said of our neighbour Igor who lost a couple of panes of glass from his glasshouse. Unfortunately the panes blew onto our allotments and landed on the slabbed path and shattered into thousands of small fragments. This is the problem with toughened glass. It sounds like a great idea but the reality, as we have found, is that although it can survive being dropped onto grass when it does break it is almost impossible to clear up. We are still finding tiny pieces over a year and a half after losing glass from our own glasshouses in the storms of February 2020.

We managed to get one of our plots rotavated ready for planting broad beans. We are planting Aqua Dulce 'Claudia' again this winter after the huge success of this year's crop. It may have been coincidence that we didn't have any trouble with blackfly this year but we aren't going to risk a repeat of 2019 when we didn't get a single broad bean despite having a full 5 pole plot (125m²) sown with a number of different varieties like Bunyards exhibition, Robin Hood and the Sutton.

We are going to try out a few different and interesting vegetables this year. We have just received delivery of Skirret and Good King Henry seeds from Incredible vegetables of Devon.

They are both plants that were grown extensively in the UK in the past, Skirret for its roots and Good King Henry for its leaves which can be eaten like spinach.

We will let you know how we get on.



We are extremely pleased to have been awarded Level 5 – Outstanding in the Britain in Bloom competition. This is a testament to the hard work and teamwork of all those who regularly come to the allotments and put their time in. Thank you everyone!

Looking forward to December.

December is the month when most people are thinking of Christmas rather than gardening but there is still plenty to do down on the allotments. Most of the planting has been done but the glasshouses and poly tunnels still need to be watered if the weather stays mild.

Crops like Kale, Jerusalem artichokes and Chard can still be harvested and we are working towards all year round production to keep continuity of supply for our clients and customers. Ironically enough the winter isn't necessarily a time of shortage for vegetables it is in early spring in April and May that the 'Hungry gap' appears so December is a time for planning to try to prevent this.

Finally,

Have you ever wondered why plants are named as they are? Yes. Good! Then each month we will explain some of the names of plants starting with Verbena 'bonariensis'.

The name Verbena is said to be derived from 'herb bona' meaning 'good plant' and the Latin species name 'bonariensis' means 'from Buenos Aires' (which is where the seeds came from)

Have a happy gardening month and see you in December.

Joe - the Hope gardener