

Date	Note
Jan-10	<p data-bbox="226 118 2068 427">You never stop learning. Just when you think you know all you need to about a subject you discover something else. Take pot cleaning. I was looking at the RHS Wisley web site and came across a 'Jobs for the winter' page. Check it out it's very interesting and I am sure will be useful throughout the year. One of the subjects is the cleaning of old pots and seed trays. A simple intuitive process you would think! As I am just about to do this in my own garden, as part of the annual cleaning and disinfecting my greenhouse ready for seed planting next month, I continued reading. The article talked about scrubbing with a brush to remove dirt then soaking in disinfectant. Pretty normal stuff to remove fungus spores. I was surprised when I read the following. "Once they are free of the worst dirt, soak in a garden disinfectant. Disinfectants work slowly in cold winter weather so try to leave them for several days to be sure all spores are killed. Unwashed pots might need to be soaked for several weeks to let disinfectant penetrate the grime. Rinse before use." I didn't know this. I've always washed in disinfectant then left them to drain. Fortunately I haven't suffered from a fungal attack - at least I don't think so! But this year I will be cleaning the Wisley way. Perhaps I will see a crop improvement. It's these little snippets of information that I find makes gardening so interesting.</p> <p data-bbox="226 467 2018 532">One year I did think that pots could be more easily cleaned in the dishwasher - short cool cycle obviously. However, as I got a smidge of opposition from my wife Jill I never proved if this was effective! Has anyone else tried it?</p> <p data-bbox="226 573 2074 670">When cleaning my greenhouse I first remove everything except the staging and sweep the rubbish out. I then scrub the internal surfaces with disinfectant using a soft broom. Everything that I use for seed propagation is cleaned with disinfectant and then put back. Final cleansing is by burning a sulphur candle which will fumigate and kill pests and fungal spores on exposed surfaces. By the time I have done all this I know what repairs are needed and carry those out.</p> <p data-bbox="226 711 2074 768">The cabbage and cauliflower seedlings, I planted last November and are currently in both mine and Bob's cold frames. They have been attacked continually by mice. Obviously my precautions and actions were not good enough. I will know better next time. Whether we will have enough to make it worthwhile to plant out in the garden</p>

Dec-09 The cabbage and cauliflower seedlings in my cold frame are progressing but unfortunately we have lost about 25% due to the activities of a mouse. I noticed that many of the pots only had a short stem (about a quarter of an inch high) sticking up, with no sign of any bitten-off vegetation or snail trails. Lifting up a tray I found a neat pile of the bitten off plants. The mouse had been storing food for the winter.

The herbs (Sage, Rosemary and Thyme) are all surviving but have, of course, stopped growing. I have found some fennel seedlings in my herb bed so have potted a few of these up for transfer to the Community Garden . They are slightly problematic having a long tap root that you need to dig down to get at and so need a fairly deep pot, but I think they will be OK.

I am gradually collecting some pots and trays, in anticipation of having the Polytunnel for propagation. We will need lots of 3 and 5 inch pots and some 12+ inch pots so if anyone has any spare don't throw them away I will call for them around February/March time. Squires have a bin of free second-hand pots and trays so next time you are there please liberate a few of the sizes we will need. The growing herbs from the supermarket come in good size pots.

We are still awaiting access to the garden but have basic plans in-place for clearing the remaining fly-tipping, transporting and spreading manure and pruning our neglected fruit trees. We will need members to help with all these activities.

Regarding the fruit tree pruning we have an expert who is prepared to show us how to prune them in return for allowing her to instruct her delegates at the same time. There are limited places so if you want to participate let us know. If we get too many volunteers it will be first come first served with only one person from a family.

As there is not much happening in the Community Garden to write about, I have decided let you know what the Steering Group are up to now in their vegetable gardens.

Lyn Payne, Carrots in a pot.

These will hopefully have avoided carrot root fly. Pete.

Richard Deighton

Leeks planted out in May and transplanted in September. They are eatable now but any left over till the spring will have a further growth spurt. However, they will go to seed at the first hint of dryness in the soil so I need to keep an eye on them and harvest them if they do start going to seed.

Nov-09

The bad news to date is that we haven't yet got access to the Community Garden so I don't think we will be planting this year. However, this doesn't have to be a serious problem as we can 'catch-up' early next year.

Weed killer has been applied and is working on everything that is growing. The problem we have is that brambles are not growing at the moment, we were a bit late getting access to the land. We will be pulling brambles from our crops next spring. Oh well, it will be more exercise that is good for us!

I have checked the soil at 6 points around the Community Garden. I went down about a spade and a half. It's good friable loam with excellent structure and smell everywhere I looked. Ph is 6.5 to 6.8 which is great for growing most veg and fruit. As the garden hasn't been touched for very many years it's reasonably safe to assume this is its natural Ph so we won't need to adjust it.

I'm convinced I have identified the sites of the old cross paths (East West paths). There are gaps in the kerbs in both of the North South paths that align with each other and which also align with occasional horizontal metal strips that join the tops of the apple tree support poles that border the central North South path. Clearly some sort of arch to allow passage and also transfer the force of the horizontal support wires that run from pole to pole. In one case I also have alignment with the doorway in the West wall. The good news is that digging did not reveal any path structure so I conclude that the cross paths were simply trodden earth. This would have allowed the original gardener to plough more easily.

As soon as we can get on the land, before ploughing we need teams to remove some scrub (along the West and North walls and the central path) and the remainder of fly tipping material. I have seen some buried concrete/paving slabs and old pipes. There are also a couple of trees that need to come down to make ploughing easier. We will be using trained people to take down the trees. There will be some stumps to dig out so start building-up those muscles. Don't go flabby over Christmas!

I found the possible site of the compost area, by the North wall. It's quite a mound. If it is compost it will certainly be 'well rotted' and the lower levels could be useful for potting compost.

We had a really good meeting in the Community Garden with Rebecca Dawson of Tozer Seeds. It was the first time she has been on the land. She is bubbling over with enthusiasm for the project and again offered help with seeds and advice. Tozer do supply organic seeds but not many varieties.

Oct-09 It's looking less likely that we will get on the land during November which is disappointing because, as I said at the open meeting, I was hoping to plant Broad Beans to reduce the black fly problem later on. However, there are ways of coping with black fly on later-planted broad beans with zero or extremely minimal use of insecticide. On the positive side we are still very hopeful of ploughing the community garden so it can be left for the weather to break down the clods to hopefully make it easier for us to reduce it to a fine tilth after Christmas. This will have the additional bonus of helping us all to reduce the effects of over indulgence during the Christmas holiday!

Some cultivation progress has been made. We have 250 cauliflower and 150 cabbage plants in individual pots quietly growing until we can plant them out. So there will be lots of work, probably after Christmas, for those of you who want to crawl about in the earth and plant them to say nothing about erecting scarecrows (no, pictures of our Chairman are not appropriate for this) and netting to keep the pigeons off. We also have some sage, thyme, rosemary and mint in pots waiting to be handed over to the tender mercy of Robin, our herb garden manager. If anyone has any herb plants to donate please let us know.