

Parkgate Primary School..... School – Allotment – Garden May 2020.....



Therapeutic Gardening.....

The current situation in the world has most definitely made lots of people aware that there are lots of positives that come from spending time outdoors – gardening is such a therapeutic experience, let alone being outdoors in the sunshine connecting with nature and getting your hands in the soil plus the joy of growing your own.....

School frontage undergoes a big tidy up.....

The school frontage has undergone a big tidy up with lots of weeding done which now leaves a space that creates more of a welcome plus it highlights some of the wonderful perennials including the grasses that are starting to flourish again.....



Wildflower area preparation.....

The area in front of the poly tunnel where there are lots of spring flowering bulbs planted also has some areas which are not planted, so, we have weeded these areas, prepared them and now we have sown a huge mix of wildflowers, annual flower seed and lots of perennial flower seeds, plus many of these seeds sown will self-seed so this area will hopefully produce a mass of colour for many years to come, plus this area will be a rich haven of food for the pollinators that we want to attract.....



Wildflower

Mix.....

Within this mix of seeds are calendula, poppies, blue, white and pink cornflowers, nasturtiums, borage, nepeta, lots of colourful annuals, a real mix of masses of colour which will create a stunning area.



Wildflower area.....

Stunning colours.....

Plants are able to make some stunning colours – a particular favourite especially for producing some amazing colours are Heucheras – with a bucket of Korean Mint in between which adds its own vibrancy with some super looking green leaves.....



Super colours

Calendula [Pot Marigolds] are thriving.....

All of these calendula plants were grown from seed by some of the children in their outdoor learning lessons – they are really making lots of strong growth which will hopefully continue and then the plants will produce some super colourful flowers.....



Lots of uses.....

This is another herb that is growing in our garden area.....

Calendula officinalis is known by many different names, indeed it is a flower that is found all over the world having both medicinal and culinary uses.

The flowers contain antiseptic, anti-fungal and anti-bacterial properties, also the sap from the stems can also be used.....

Also, many skin and cosmetic preparations contain marigold. The flower petals can be used as a dye plus they can be eaten.....

Bambino sunflowers are growing well.....

Sunflowers are a much desired plant for the summer – autumn period, indeed there are so many different varieties available to grow now including a variety that is called bambino – they are a dwarf variety that produces some stunning flower heads much earlier than the usual taller growing sunflowers.....
Below you can see the growth that our sunflower bambino plants are making.....



Subway Cambro's filled with herbs.....



Here you can see some of the Subway Cambro's that we have used to sow some herbs in along with some chives.....

Basil – Coriander - Thyme

Sweet peas have been planted out.....

We have now planted out the sweet peas that were sown by the children in their outdoor growing lessons – these plants were sown from seed so hopefully they will make some good progress now and will produce plenty of sweet - smelling flowers...



Shiraz peas are growing well too.....



Here you can see two different areas where we have our peas growing..... This variety is called Shiraz which produces not only leaves that have a purple tinge but the plants produce gorgeous pink flowers followed by purple podded peas.....

Poly tunnel seed germination is quick.....

Seed germination inside the poly tunnel is much quicker than outside in the ground as you can see from the speed that these salad leaves have germinated.....

With the protected environment which increases the temperature comes the need to make sure plenty of watering is done so that the leaves do not burn up.....

Below you can see the salad leaves and spicy leaves that have germinated quickly.....



Tomatoes planted out.....



Above you can see some of the tomato plants that have been planted in the poly tunnel – these plants were grown from seed under heat.....

Home grown salads.....

More poly tunnel seed sowing.....

We have lots of seeds growing in the poly tunnel which include radishes, mixed oriental salad leaves, coriander and Japanese greens – all of these seeds will grow quickly in the poly tunnel – given regular watering plus the heat and the protection that the poly tunnel provides, we will be harvesting some of these crops very quickly.....

VE Day Seed Sowing – May 8th 2020.....

To mark this very special day, we have sown lots of poppy seeds.....
Used to commemorate fallen military personnel – the traditional red corn poppy [Papaver rhoeas] has been sown in an area outside the school staffroom.....
Below you can see the tin with lots of poppy seed – amazing to think that seed that is almost like specks of dust can produce such a stunning flower that really has such a poignant message attached to it.....



Fyffes Growing Boxes.....



Here you can see one of our Fyffes Growing Boxes that we have planted up with potatoes – Charlotte is the variety here. As you can see the potato plants are making some strong growth, as soon as they reach the top of the box we will remove the fleece covering that has kept any wildlife out!!

Hestia Runner Beans are making lots of strong growth...

We have a big tub of runner beans that are making some really strong growth in our allotment area – this variety is called Hestia which is a dwarf variety that does not need any growing supports – this variety will hopefully provide a heavy crop of tasty beans in a few weeks - time – lots of water and sunshine will do the trick.....



Year 2 Seed Potatoes are growing well.....

The Rocket seed potatoes that the Year 2 children started off by chitting them in their classrooms have now been planted out and the potatoes have rooted quickly to produce lots of strong green growth. Below you can see some of this growth.....



Wildflower – Pollinator Area is growing.....

The wildflower – pollinator area that we have sown with a real mix of seeds has quickly started to germinate – this area when it flowers will create a haven for the pollinating insects that we will want to attract into our allotment – garden area.....



Summer flowering bulbs area..



Summer flowering bulbs planted.....

We have planted over 400 summer flowering bulbs in two different areas of the school grounds which include Gladioli, Crocosmia, Iris, Freesias and Tritelia which will hopefully flower through the summer and into the early autumn.....

Poly tunnel strawberries look good!!.....



The first - year strawberry plants that we have growing inside the poly tunnel are starting to produce some juicy red strawberries.....

Once these plants have finished fruiting, they will put out runners which we will be able to peg and then pot the runners up to produce new plants.....

Butter beans are germinating.....

The butter beans that were sown a couple of weeks ago have now started to germinate so we will look to plant them up very soon – we are going to grow these plants inside the poly tunnel because they do not tolerate cold weather..... Below you can see the plants emerging.....



Frost damage!!



Hestia Dwarf Runner Beans.....

On the left you can see a big bucket full of some “sad” looking plants that have unfortunately been hit by the cold frosty nights that we have been experiencing this week – it is unlikely they will recover so we may need to re-sow some more seeds.....

One of the unfortunate and frustrating sides of growing.....

Always err on the side of caution.....

Crop harvest has begun.....

There are plenty of crops growing in the school allotment – garden area, now some of these crops are ready to be harvested – these are crops that are generally frost hardy or quick growing crops.....

Below you can see some of the Broad Bean that we have harvested.....



Radishes – love them or loathe them.....

Probably one of the quickest and easiest salad crops to grow aside from cress are radishes – now radishes are the type of crop that some people love whereas some people absolutely loathe them. There are lots of different varieties that you can grow now, indeed some of these varieties taste a little bit “sweeter”
Below you can see a few radishes that we have pulled out of the ground.....



Fresh produce.....

Fyffes Growing Box Potatoes.....

We have one of our Fyffes growing boxes planted up with potatoes – the amount of growth these potatoes have made has been very quick – indeed you can see from the photograph that the potato plants have pushed up the fleece covering that we put over the box to both protect from frost and to deter any wildlife getting inside the box and digging up the plants.....



Subway continue to support our schools growing work



Schools growing work

More herbs are growing.....

Within our herb garden areas, we have lots of different herbs growing which all have their own distinctive aromas and various different uses. Ultimately, most herbs have flowers that are really beneficial to the pollinators that we want to attract to our garden space to assist in pollination especially as very soon we will be planting out our cucurbit family of plants namely squash, pumpkins and courgettes which will all need pollinating so the more pollinators that we can attract then so much the better. Below you can see some borage plants that we have grown from seed – now, borage is a real favourite of the bees but it also has many culinary uses too. The leaves although have a furry underside actually taste of cucumber plus the flowers can be used in cake decorating. Once these plants actually flower then you will see that the bees are really attracted to them.....



Pot marigolds.....



Here you can see our borage plants on the left and our pot marigold – calendula plants above which have all been grown from seed.....

Borage - Calendula

Wildlife area being created.....

The secret to any successful growing space whether it be a farm, an allotment or just a regular back garden is to create a balance that encourages bio- diversity within your space – essentially you want a balance in your space by creating areas where wildlife can reside and thrive, a manicured space with nothing out of place, everything trimmed back is not the ideal space simply because there are no places where animals and insects can shelter or call home, so we are in the process of building another bug hotel and also creating a wildlife friendly space with some grass left long plus we are going to sow some more wildlife friendly seeds.....
Below you can see the start of this space.....



The creation of this wildlife space does not look much at the moment, but very soon you will see that there will be two distinct levels of grass plus the bug hotel will be built which will also provide a haven for insects. Also, adjacent to this area is a wildflower and perennial flower area that has been seeded and is growing fast so this area will really start to come alive in the coming weeks.....

Wildlife area development...

More seed germination.....

It is not only fascinating but also very satisfying when the seeds that you have sown germinate and produce a strong healthy plant that you can then plant out and then hopefully it will produce either a fruit, a vegetable or a flower.....

Here you can see some examples of plants that we have sown from seed that are now ready to plant out which will hopefully produce us some tasty crops that we can harvest over the next few months.....

Sweetcorn..... Cucumbers.....



Lettuce and Mixed Greens

Calendula.....



Lots of greens making super growth.....

Here you can see lots of lush healthy green leaves that are nearly ready to harvest. There is mixed oriental leaves that have a spicy taste, there is spinach and wild rocket that will make up some really healthy green leaves.....



Alliums are stunning.....

Below you can see that we have some really stunning alliums that are in flower, planted late spring as bulbs, they have established themselves very quickly and are already producing some stunning flowers – alliums are part of the onion family and once they are established, they will flower for years with little or no care.....



Grape vines being planted in the poly tunnel.....

We have two new grape vines that have been planted in the poly tunnel, the grapes are a variety called black hamburg which are dessert grapes..... It is unlikely that the vines will produce much fruit this year but certainly next year, hopefully we can expect to be able to pick some bunches of grapes.....

