

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



Plenty of signs of growth.....

As spring edges ever closer, there are plenty of signs of new growth in lots of different areas of the school allotment garden. Our newly planted blackcurrant bushes are producing lots of healthy - looking green shoots, our rhubarb plants are producing their first leaves plus there are masses of spring flowering bulbs all giving us a burst of vibrant colour in lots of different areas of the school grounds.....

Blackcurrant bushes are making lots of growth.....

Below you can see plenty of healthy - looking green shoots on our new blackcurrant bushes which will hopefully give us a tasty crop of blackcurrants in the summer.....



Rhubarb.....

Below you can see that one of our rhubarb plants is making some strong growth.....



More fruit to be added.....

We now have strawberry plants all planted up both outside in the allotment area plus we have some strawberry plants planted inside the poly tunnel.....

Lavender all planted up.....

A long line of lavender plants have all been planted up which once they establish themselves they will provide a delightful aroma plus when they flower in the summer they will provide plenty of food for the pollinators plus once the flowers have finished flowering we can dry the flowers to make some lavender bags.....



Thyme planted up.....

Below you can see one of our Fyffes Growing Boxes that has been planted up with thyme – yet another aromatic herb that will flower in the summer to both attract the pollinators and feed them too, pollinators which we will need to work for us.....



Stunning Crocuses and Daffodils..



Early Potatoes are looking good!.....

The early potatoes that we have planted in the poly tunnel are really starting to make some strong growth – now that the potato plants are producing strong green leaves we need to make sure that these plants get plenty of water plus we will need to earth up the soil around the sides of the plants because if the potatoes that start to form get exposed to the light they will turn green making them inedible..... Below you can see the Charlotte potato plants growing in the poly tunnel.....



Wild strawberries in flower.....

Below you can see the wild strawberry plants that are just starting to produce some flowers which will be hopefully followed by some strawberries.....



Poly tunnel strawberries.....



Seed sowing is well underway now.....

Although the outdoor weather temperatures are constantly fluctuating, this is getting close to the best time to start seed sowing – the added bonus of having the school poly tunnel really makes seed sowing much easier. With this in mind we are starting to sow lots of seeds – making paper pots also saves on planting materials particularly plastic pots. Paper pots are much stronger than you think plus you can either pot the seedlings on or plant them straight out into the ground..... Plant roots will grow through the moist newspaper..... Below you can see a tray of sunflower seeds that have all produced plenty of strong green growth.....



Broad beans are really advanced.....

With the relatively mild winter period we have experienced this year with only isolated cold spells of weather, this has allowed our broad beans that were sown in the autumn to grow relatively quickly so much so that the plants have produced flowers very early indeed – this should mean that we will have a crop of broad beans to enjoy very soon. Below you can see the plants with their flowers.....



Poly tunnel growing bed preparation continuing.....

To maximise the space that we have within the poly tunnel, we are preparing more of the growing beds so that we can continue to sow and plant more crops so that we can maximise the growing potential of the school poly tunnel.....

Below you can see the preparation work being done.....



Propagators set up within the poly tunnel.....

Added to the protective environment of the poly tunnel we have also got some propagators that we have set up – these will add to the protection that we can give seeds and these seeds once they have germinated and grow into plants.....



Stunning tulips.....

These stunning red tulips are gracing the school playground – spring is such a powerful time in the year as lots of flowers bloom giving lots of bright vibrant colours plus the trees start to bud up after their dormancy through the winter..... It is like a bright new beginning for the garden.....



Stunning bulbs.....

More outstanding spring colour.....

There really are some outstanding spring flowering bulbs in full flower in different areas of the school grounds – they really brighten up the day particularly during these extremely troubling times.....

Below you can see some of these flowering bulbs.....



Amazing
Flower Detail..

More spring colour.....



Lots of fruit is growing now.....

We have blackcurrants, blueberries, strawberries, rhubarb and now we have three new apple trees all planted. Fresh fruit – you cannot beat it!

Bramley Cooking Apple



Topaz - dessert apple.....



Rajka – eating apple.....



Rhubarb looking good.....



Fresh fruit.....

More garden set up carried out.....

The area behind the poly tunnel where the water butts are housed is the latest area where we have carried out some more set up work – basically this area was left with the grass uncovered which made the access to this area very muddy.....
Now we have put a weed suppressant membrane down which we will eventually cover over with wood chip but for now this area is much more accessible.....



Water butt set – up.....

Bug Hotel set – up.....



We have built another bug hotel in the garden space to hopefully encourage and provide a home for lots of the “good” bugs that we will need in our garden area – bugs that will work for us.....

Pea sticks set – up.....



Growing bed preparation continuing.....

As much as possible we are trying to set up our school allotment growing beds using the no - dig gardening method. Effectively what this means is that the soil structure is not disturbed by heavy digging which not only disturbs the soil but also disturbs the worms and all of the millions of microbes that are so important to the quality of the soil. So, what we have been doing is to cover our growing beds over with un waxed cardboard which not only suppresses the weeds and the grass but also at the same time retains the moisture in the soil which also is evident by the numbers of worms that are living underneath the wet cardboard..... Below you can see one of our growing beds that has been covered over.....

Here you can see one of our growing beds that has been covered over with cardboard to leave a growing bed with no weeds or grass growing, so basically this bed just needs a layer of compost added to the top surface and then we are ready to plant and sow seeds straight into this growing bed.....



Here you can see the piles of growing compost that has been added to the layer of cardboard – this compost will then be spread all over the bed to give us a top layer of compost so that we plant and sow seeds.....

Growing bed set – up work.....

Growing bed planted up.....

In this growing bed we have planted shallots, turbo onions, red onions and we have also sown meteor peas all around the twig pea support frame, plus we have also sown two full rows of carrots.....



Paper pots work a treat.....

In this world where we are trying to reduce the use of plastic, there is one way that we can do this in the garden which really works a treat and that is to make paper pots which are ideal for starting off seeds and getting onion sets started off.....

Below you can see a perfect example of how well these paper pots work.....

These are onion sets which you can see they have got a start plus their root system has grown through the base of the paper pot and they have been watered too.....



Paper pots.....

Onion sets.....

Poly tunnel bench loaded with seeds.....

This time of the year is close to the peak seed sowing time of the year, just take a look at one of our benches in the poly tunnel – it is loaded with lots of different seeds including sweet peas, calendula, cauliflower and sunflowers.....



Wallflowers just starting to flower...

Wallflowers are a particular favourite of the bees particularly at this time of the year as the bees are looking for food – wallflowers are perfect for this.....

