

May 2020

REPTON GREEN FINGERS

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Link to salad bar video: <https://youtu.be/ol44qixZ8Go>

Link to garden veg 2 video: <https://youtu.be/Fnht5B1cWMo>

Link to setting up greenhouse: <https://youtu.be/vuZ1-hV3pbU>

GROWING VEGETABLES - TENDER PLANTS

QUICK REVIEW

First of all a quick look at what has happened to our vegetables we started off in April and I am pleased to say that most things are thriving. The wet winter and warm weather and extra attention means that everything is growing well. Our rocket has been a delicious addition to many meals - remember to cover it up to keep out the flea beetle that make little bullet holes in the leaves. Continual cropping also helps to stop it going to seed



SQUARE FOOT GARDEN

I think that square foot gardening may have originated across the pond but don't let that put you off. I have been delighted with the results this year and it is truly remarkable what you can grow in a square foot or thereabouts. We have used one of our compost heaps, covered in potting compost (our own, but you could use equal parts soil and commercial compost). It is about 3 foot square and divided it into 9 squares each sown or planted with a different vegetable. We then covered it with fleece draped over a frame made from flexible plastic pipes. All went well for a couple of days and then I noticed a few eaten cabbage shoots, perhaps slugs?, so a few organic slug pellets added, then another shoot gone this time radish perhaps a mouse? Nothing for it, mouse traps required. Success in less than an hour!! No return since.

Everything is growing well and the lettuce is exceptional, so clean and tasty but I do have a trick, when I crop the lettuce I pick the leaves from the outside and leave the middle to grow on for next time.

The cover was originally to create a warm moist atmosphere but now I am using it to keep the sun off in this mini heat-wave.

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SOWING MORE SEEDS

Some vegetables are better sown inside under cover, examples are sweetcorn which really needs a month of protection before finally going it alone. Courgettes are another crop that benefits from some cossetting. We usually hedge our bets and keep one courgette growing in the greenhouse until the outside ones are cropping well and then pull it up to give tomatoes etc more room. Start off courgettes by sowing seeds singly in individual pots of general purpose compost- there is still time. We find that they are generally trouble-free although they do get mildew. Beans are another crop that we hedge our bets with - some are sown outside and we have some back ups inside. Beans do not really like to be transplanted so there is a bit of a check. As the garden centres open there should be plenty of vegetable plants to buy.



SETTING UP THE GREENHOUSE

We have just set up the greenhouse for the summer. We grow directly in the border rather than using growbags or pots. Growbags are fine but you have to really keep on top of the watering. We always grow 2 grafted tomatoes as they crop really well and are free of the usual tomato problems.

This year the supply chain has been difficult - we are still waiting for the second tomato so we bought 2 sungold tomato plants from Swarkstone Nursery. I have also created some other plants by taking softwood cuttings from the sideshoots of the "sungolds". Tomatoes are so willing to grow roots from the stems. If they are at all leggy (and who hasn't grown leggy tomatoes at some point) just plant them really deeply burying the stem several inches deep is OK,

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TIME SAVING TIPS IN THE GREENHOUSE

We do three things that save a lot of time in the greenhouse. First of all we grow tomatoes and cucumbers up strings so as we plant we put one end of a rot proof string underneath and tie the other end up as high as we can, It is then simply a matter of winding the string around the plant as it grows.

Secondly we always install an automatic watering system, we run it off a waterbutt that collects water from the roof - very eco! We set it so that it is on the dry side and once a week we give everything a good dousing if it needs it.

Thirdly we have lots of windows, all with automatic windows

FUN IDEA TO DO WITH CHILDREN

welcome in the new season! This year, the spring equinox will take place at 3:48am on 20 March.

How to...

SOW SEEDS IN EGGSHELLS

You will need: egg shells (cut off at the top); cardboard egg box; drawing pin/thumbtack; potting soil; seeds






- 1** Wash the shells then prick a drainage hole in the bottom using a drawing pin or thumbtack. Place them in the cardboard egg box.
- 2** Half-fill the shells with soil, place a seed in each, then top up with more soil (follow the instructions on the seed packet for specific depths).
- 3** Label the shells with their plant names, then place indoors in a warm and sunny location, keeping the soil moist but not waterlogged.
- 4** Once the seedlings have sprouted, crush each egg gently in your hand, allowing the roots to spread, and plant in freshly tilled soil in your garden.

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If you want to keep a plant give some away