

Tombreck Market Garden

Newsletter #19 September 2024

In a repeat of last year we had a rather lovely September, with warm daytime temperatures and long spells without rain (eleven whole days near the end of the month, some kind of record, surely!) Things finally got busy on the sales side, with big orders going out to Errichel and Ballintaggart which required some creative arrangement of boxes to fit into the car. The 'market day' at MacGregor's seems to be quite popular too - Killin can't get enough of our carrots apparently. Boxes are still quiet, not sure why, maybe not being able to choose scares people off? It's better for us if we're able to plan and manage what goes out week on week, and direct sales mean we make more money and less veg gets wasted. However, I appreciate it can be a bit of a stretch for people used to buying what they want when they want it and not necessarily wanting the choice of what they receive to be made by somebody else, even if this means they get to (or are forced to!) try new things. A question of balance, I suppose...



Most of the summer crops are now coming to a close. Disappointing yields from tomatoes and courgettes due to not receiving enough warmth and sunlight during the 'summer'. Possibly the worst ever squash harvest, with only eight of the small Japanese varieties mature enough to be worth harvesting from 47 plants originally sown. On the other hand cucumbers did well again in the polytunnel, and onions and shallots got to a good size, albeit taking a long time to get there. So far we've got away with only a few very light frosts, so fleecing the outdoor lettuces has extended the time we're able to continue harvesting from them. Fennels and celery have held on with no obvious damage, so should hopefully carry on for a while as well.



A group of around 10 arrived about mid-way through the month to harvest the flax. As part of the Innovative Farmers trial, heights were measured (average maybe 1.1m) and weights of the bundles taken (around 20kg per 10m row). We were given a demonstration of the further steps needed to process the fibres into yarn, and some of the bundles are now 'retting' (decomposing so the hard central core can be separated out) in the field. It will be interesting to hear back the results of the trial, and perhaps set aside some more beds to have another go next year.

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