

# Garden Diary

## 21st June 2020

### Tasting Greens and cooking!

I had a very enjoyable time in the garden this week. The vegetable beds are all looking really good and healthy. Some of the fiddlier jobs got done - without any hiccups I might add! We got the netting over the fruit cage which sometimes can be a nightmare, gooseberry thorns and fine netting don't do well together when tangled! The real stand out of the week though was getting to cook again in the garden. I was asked to do a field to plate session online for a coffee morning.



A field to plate day is when you harvest the best produce on offer in the garden that day and cook up a meal on site. Cooking doesn't get fresher than that, it's also a great way to let the produce do the talking, instead of the recipe dictating what produce to use. Keeping it simple works best when cooking with groups in the garden, getting people involved harvesting, chopping and cooking great ingredients for everyone's lunch. Those who haven't done much cooking get such a kick from getting stuck in.

Doing a field to plate day to a camera for an online coffee morning was definitely different but I still got a sense of people getting excited about cooking with fresh vegetables and with so many more growing their own during lock down, I'm sure delicious things are being created in kitchens all around the country.



At this time of year fresh spring greens are the star of the show. In the basket for our field to plate day we harvested lettuce, mustard leaves, broad beans, a beautiful head of broccoli along with the first of the courgettes and some basil. I chargrilled the courgettes and broccoli, made a herb dressing using our own cider vinegar which we made in the garden last year, then mixed everything together, finally adding toasted pine nuts and crumbled over some blue cheese. Delicious! Will share the recipe on the blog, although this meal was all about using what you have growing, so you don't have to stick to the recipe and could switch around ingredients. If I had a cauliflower ready, I could replace that with the broccoli, or if coriander was at its best it could be switched with the basil. I never make anything too fancy when cooking in the garden and being adaptable is important. Sat in the garden, surrounded by fruit, vegetables and flowers, eating food that you just harvested is a great feeling that I definitely recommend!

*Regards, Dougal Dorman, Head Gardener,  
Colebrooke Walled Garden*

# HOMEMADE COMPOST

12TH JUNE 2020

Keeping our  
tomatoes happy with  
a homemade brew

Tomatoes are hungry plants and love a good feed every fortnight. Many people use tomato feed bought in garden centres but why not make your own! We use comfrey which we grow in the garden for just this purpose but you can use nettles instead if you haven't got around to plant comfrey yet.



Comfrey is a perennial that gardeners have grown for years for plant food and to add to compost. It can be grown from seed or can be divided from another plant, so if you know of anyone growing it get them to share the wealth!

Harvest the comfrey when it's about to go to flower. Each year you are likely to get 2/3 harvests.

Then loosely fill a bucket or a drum. We use this 10 gallon blue drum with a sealable lid. Fill the drum with water, then cover and leave for 4 weeks. After 4 weeks it will smell awful!! Which tends to be a good sign that your plants will love it. Dilute in a watering can 1 parts comfrey liquid 10 parts water and feed any fruiting vegetables, such as tomatoes, courgettes, peppers and cucumbers every second week. Make sure you feed all around the plant and not just around the collar. The roots will have spread far and wide though the soil. Our bed of around 25 tomato plants would receive around 3 watering can worth.



# FIELD TO PLATE SALAD

## INGREDIENTS

### Salad

- Bed of lettuce (Navara, Mizur, Mizuna and Mustard Leaves)
- Broad Beans, lightly boiled
- Broccoli, lightly fried
- Courgettes, chargrilled
- Toasted pine nuts
- Topped with Blue cheese and edible flowers

### Salad Dressing

- Coriander, finely chopped
- Basil, finely chopped
- Olive Oil
- Cidar Vinegar
- Crushed clove of garlic

This salad is very easy to put together, and uses the freshest vegetables! Lightly fry and chargrill the courgettes and broccoli using a little seasmie oil for added flavour. The toasted pine nuts add a little crunch and the blue cheese an indulgence! Build everything up on top of a bed of mixed lettuce leaves, before topping with your dressing.

