

Virtual Organic Garden

Week 12 June 27th

We're back at Ynys Las following our visit to Ryton Organic Gardens. We enjoyed the gardens and parts of the journey! Thanks to Virtual Gardeners, Sian and Fiona, for sharing the visit with us.

This week we're continuing harvesting and maintaining crops. Mange tout, radish and salad leaves have all cropped well. We'll probably dig up one root of early potatoes and see how the crop is progressing. We'll feed brassicas, onions, leeks sweetcorn and tomato with nettle tea and make sure the broad beans, carrots and other crops are well watered.

The task at the end of course!

Here's a task, hopefully worth doing, to help you consolidate your learning.

The task should take no more than a couple of hours in total.

If you send your completed version to us we'll look at it, make positive noises and suggestions. We'll also put together a personal certificate of the competences you've demonstrated.

A. Planning your growing area for next year's crops.

- 1. Draw a sketch plan of the vegetable growing area you maintain or would like to maintain. Mark on any semi permanent features such as compost heaps, hedges, greenhouse or cold frame, paths etc.**
- 2. Show any features that are designed to encourage beneficial wildlife into the growing area.**
- 3. Mark on the plan any crops you plan to grow in the same place for several seasons. E.g. Rhubarb, strawberries, asparagus, comfrey, raspberries etc.**
- 4. Divide the remaining growing area into smaller spaces. List the crops you would like to grow in each of the spaces next year.**
- 5. Either on your plan or in separate notes explain the reasons why you've put crops and features in particular locations.**

B. Now explain in notes, pictures, lists, etc. how you are going to grow good organic crops and

- 1. Get plants growing in the healthiest way,**
- 2. Maintain and improve soil fertility,**
- 3. Keep weeding to the minimum,**
- 4. Avoid or control pests and diseases,**
- 5. Keep plants well supplied with moisture.**

C. Now select four crops that for you are worth growing.

Follow each crop from seed catalogue to eating.

Explain the decisions and actions you will take to try and make sure you achieve an acceptable return for the time and effort you've put into the activity.

If you send your contributions to us will you let us know if you are happy for us to use some of your ideas, anonymously of course, as discussion points for other students?

At Ynys Las we'll meet again on 11th July to continue harvesting and to replant and maintain areas of our plots. We'll have a coffee, gossip and tidy session at 11 am on each Monday through the rest of July and August.

In September we'll meet on Monday 5th to review people's contribution to the above task.

Finally at a date to be decided we'll "put the plots to bed for the winter" so they can be used next year. We'll also have some sort of celebration of achievement.

We'll display pictures with short captions to explain what's going on.

Thanks for following the course and good luck!

Ian Mitchell
June 2005