

Kitchen Garden

Seasonal Update – February 2026

Although the spring term may be well under way for many, the kitchen garden is still in the slumber of winter. Though with the recent passing of Imbolc – the traditional Gaelic festival that marks the beginning of spring – we can start to see changes around us in the first awaking of dormant plants.

Winter has been a time to assess and plan, sowing schedules written and seed orders compiled. A long list of infrastructure repairs and improvements is slowly shortening, whilst tools are cleaned and sharpened and accounted for.

The first seeds of the season have begun to be sown; early tomatoes and chillis that will spend their lives in a heated greenhouse where there is no risk of frost to harm them. Onions are not far behind; they are slow growing so will benefit from a long time in the nursery before heading out to the garden.

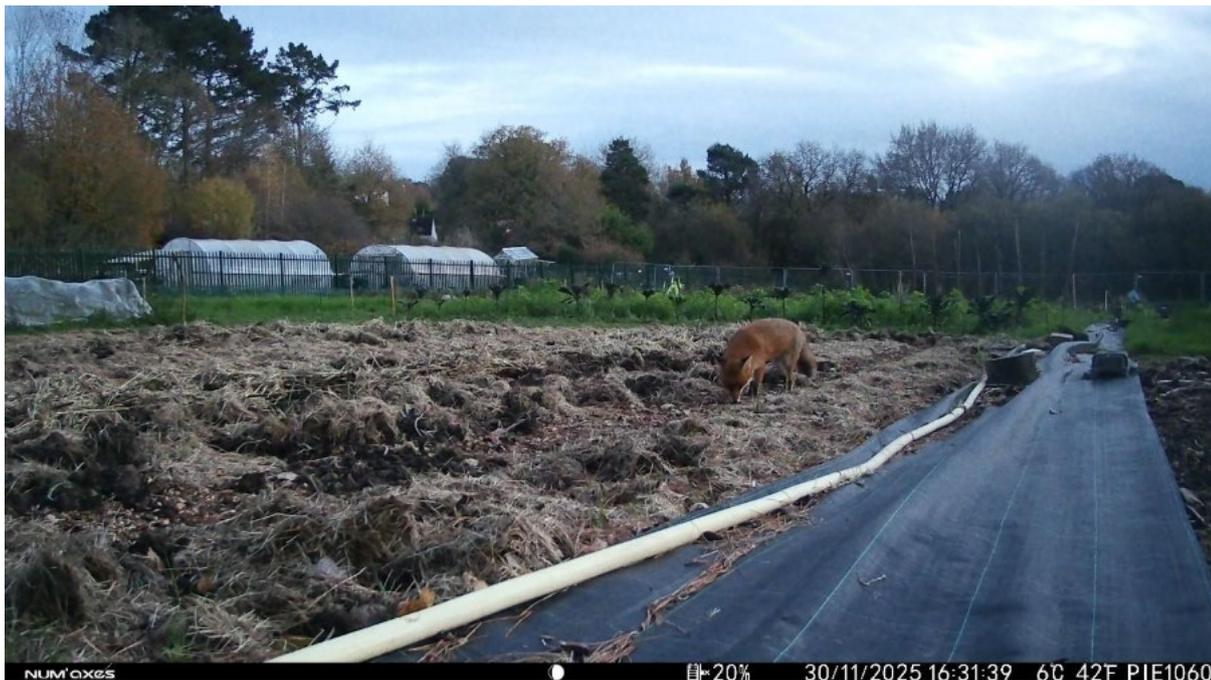
The Oca, sometimes known as a New Zealand yam, gave us around 35kg of tubers in December. Most of which went to the kitchen in January, but the remainder have been potted up as we continue to grow our population of this unusual South American crop. Look out for them at one of our future plant sales.



A more conventional tuber, potatoes, are being trialled this year. We are hoping for a couple of early crops in time for Graduation in July. Other crops we're excited about are the many different varieties of beans, and perhaps even some sweetcorn if we can protect it from our neighbouring badgers!

Harvests from the garden have slowed right down at this time of year, although the polytunnel has given us the chance to keep picking salad and brassica leaves. The few remaining beetroot will be making their way to the kitchen shortly, as well as the first picking of PSB (purple sprouting broccoli) and another helping of kale and turnips.

All the overwintering onions and spring onions were unceremoniously excavated from where they had been lovingly planted by our volunteers last autumn – there are two suspects and both were caught on camera! Luckily the twenty meters of garlic has so far been left alone...





The garden has coped well considering the amount of rain we've had over January. Thanks to the continuous cover of green manures and mulches the rain has been absorbed into the earth by the roots of the plants, where it will replenish the groundwater – much needed after the previous dry summer.

Staying with water, the hydroponics have had an overhaul and a couple of slight tweaks in their design, however, they are still just as leaky as ever unfortunately. A new microgreens propagation unit has also been constructed and we are experimenting with sowing densities and timings for these. Look out for freshly grown sprouts on your plate soon.