

Kitchen Garden

Seasonal Update – July 2026

It's hot up at the kitchen garden now. Not as hot as last week though, where temperatures across the country and continent broke records yet again. Plants previously established are benefiting from the long light levels and moisture still held in the soil from previous rains. Newer plantings, such as the winter squash, have had some assistance with water from the mains until their roots have grown enough to reach the moisture still in the soil.

The early spring sowings are now at or near full maturity, and harvests are becoming abundant again. The resown spring onions and shallots are looking great, as is a new variety of striking 'peppermint' chard. The seed for this crop is being grown by farmers at Trill Market Garden over in east Devon, so as well as supporting small local businesses by buying this seed we are also hoping for it to be well adapted to our own climate and soil microbiology.



The peas and beans that overwintered in the tunnel have come and gone, making way for French climbing beans, basil, chillis and a few aubergines. All the other tunnel beds have also completed their transformation. One bed in particular has gone through many changes. An early crop of fennel, which was planted whilst salad was still being picked, has already been harvested, as has a central row of garlic from the same bed, making way for a few more tomatoes plants and borlotti beans that were planted before the fennel and garlic came out. Using these 'relay' techniques it's been possible to crop salads, garlic, fennel, and soon tomatoes and beans all from one bed within a season without having to do any cultivations.



Together with Exeter Seed Bank and with help from Food Studies MA student Kat White, we have been establishing a crowd breeding kale project here at the veg plot. With starter seed generously donated by the Gaia Foundation Seed Sovereignty Programme we are growing a diverse population of kale varieties that we will save seed from and sow again next year. The reason for this is to increase the genetic diversity of the crop with the hope that it will be more resilient to the rapid changes in the climate that we are now experiencing. We have also conducted a small informal trial using a seed bioinoculant on one bed of kale comparing this to a control bed. So far, after two harvests, the seed inoculated bed has produced around 6kg more.

