

Setting up at the Southern Branch Championships

Sunday before the show. This is how it starts with a few willing volunteers. Gerald Vale and Mike Lowman prepare for work.



Once the tables are up it is down to the detail to make sure everything is perfect for the exhibitors.

This photo was taken on the third day of the show. The exhibits in the potato championship still look in pretty good fettle.

Our marquee draws in plenty of visitors who marvel at the standard of vegetables on show.



Mark Read came up from Weymouth with a lovely dish of peas.



From even further afield Clarence Thomas made the trip from Truro in Cornwall.



John Branham came down to us from Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire with this superb dish of 'Apero' cherry or as we say these days, small fruited tomatoes.

I am afraid that due to a family bereavement my support for the event was largely limited to the build up and break down of the show.

My thanks must go to the show secretary Ian Clemens for a job really well done. The build up team consisting of Ian, myself Gerald Vale and Mike Lowman. The judges, who did a superb job, 'they must have because there were no complaints'.



Plus all the stewards largely drawn from members of Hants D.A who manned the information stand for the three days of the show.

Our branch secretary Peter Cranfield for making sure that the money was allocated correctly.

And of course all the exhibitors who came from all counties in the South and several more who made long journeys from the Midlands. Thank you for making our show the success it is.

Although just lately I have had other things on my mind, I can now look forward to visiting the NVS National Championships at Malvern in late September.

I won't have a great many exhibits to put in but I am hoping to have a crack at the additional class featuring Kohl Rabi.



'Kolibri' is a reliable variety that I have grown before. 'Modrava' is one that is new to me.



The seed was sown at the end of July. Kohl Rabi is a fast grower taking about 8 weeks to maturity. We don't want them too large. About the size of a cricket ball is perfect. These will be planted out 12" apart in my polytunnel. Beware, Kohl Rabi is a member of the brassica family, so don't grow them in soil contaminated with club root.

The ever reliable 'Marathon' calabrese is heading up nicely in the polytunnel. I already have young plants that will follow these and in a day or so I shall sow again for an early winter crop.



The last of the 'Sakura' cherry toms have been harvested from the allotment greenhouse. These have been very productive.



At home the first lot of 'Ferline' tomatoes have finished. On the opposite side of the greenhouse the next lot are producing.

These are 'Zenith' which have been cultivated from cuttings. They will give us a crop starting around late September and on into November.

I am reusing the grow bags but the compost in the bottomless pots is fresh. Everything was sterilised with Jet 5 but any good disinfectant will do.



'Tydemans Early'

I don't recall ever having apples ready to eat this early in the year. These are off my allotment family tree. The squirrels love them so I have to be quick to beat them to it.

I shall now give a last spray of calcium nitrate to all my apple varieties to prevent bitter pit.

On the allotment my exhibition onions were making a good size. This one measured 17.5" in circumference. I was hoping to harvest them

around the 4lb mark. Then Downy Mildew swept through our site and overnight that finished off the foliage. All one can do is harvest the bulbs as quickly as possible and ditch all the infected leaves.

Jobs coming up for the rest of August. Planting out the perpetual spinach.

Sowing a few more lettuce seed. Do as I do and pot on a few seedlings into 3" pots and plant out the rest. The lettuce in the open soil will gallop away but those in the pots will be held back. After two or three weeks plant out those in the pots. That way you will extend your cropping period without having to sow seed every couple of weeks or so.

French beans can still be sown. I have three different varieties under way. On the allotment is a wig wam of 'Cobra'. Under environmesh is a row of 'Aquila'. And at home in the small greenhouse I have a row of 'Hawkesbury Wonder'. These may well make it to the Malvern show.



Later in the month we shall be having a look at some dodgy leeks. And there will be a round up of which varieties have performed best so far in the courgette trial.

Until then I shall be kept busy judging various shows.

John Trim