

With the advent of the flower and vegetable show season, most weekends will now see me busy with judging duties. Of course I still like to dabble myself, and this year I shall be targeting the Southern Branch Championships at the New Forest Showground at the end of July.

It is my intention to have a go at the large collection of vegetables. This really is the blue ribbon class of the show. I will let you know how I get on.



These are the first of my Kelsae onions to be lifted. With only 10 days to the show I

will need to get the others up if I am to get them ripened in time.

The onions in the deep beds are slowly putting on weight. Will they make it to the show, it is keep your fingers crossed time but they must be lifted soon.



The 'Barcelona' cauliflowers are another vegetable I need for the collection. The trouble is they are heading up a little too early and I am also having trouble with slugs and snails - it seems they also like caulies, 'just as much as we do.'

It is amazing the amount of growth caulies can put on in a relatively short space of time. A leaf is broken over the developing curd to protect it from the light.

A decent enough cauliflower but this one has had some slug damage. 'Another for the pot.'

There is still time to sow cauliflowers. If you want to spread the cropping period go for an open pollinated variety like 'All Year Round'. The F1 varieties are very good but



they will all form curds within a week or so of each other. Good for shows but not so good when it produces a glut in the kitchen.

'Raleigh F1' cauliflowers sown on 17th May ready for planting out. For kitchen use I only sow 6 at a time. A month later I will sow another 6 for continuity of supply.



Back in the vegetable garden. I have been very impressed with the tomato 'Feline'.

It is slightly ribbed with a thin glossy skin and a lovely flavour, the best I have tasted for many years.

Harvesting goes on apace. These 'Bell Boy' peppers came from seed obtained from one that I bought at Waitrose. No need to spend money unnecessarily. Just buy your pepper, remove and dry the seed on the window sill for a few hours. Then pop into a strong brown paper bag and store in the crisper section of the fridge until needed. Last job, 'eat the bought pepper'.



Our third sowing of broad beans, 'Meteor variety' have impressed me, tasty well filled pods of 4 to 5 beans, these are cropping well.



Vegetables to be sowing now

Time to get in another row of carrots. We still have a long way to go to beat the old favourite 'Autumn King'. As an open pollinated variety it is also cheap to buy. The bonus of sowing at this time of year is that we miss the dreaded carrot fly. Mind you I still grow ours under netting as the rabbits on the allotment site are very partial to the foliage.

I have also made my last sowing of beetroot 'Pablo variety'. These will be lifted in the Autumn and put into store. For this I use a plastic box. Put a layer of dry sand in the bottom followed by a layer of beetroot with the tops twisted off, then another layer of sand. Continue layering to fill the box.

I also use this system of storage earlier in the year when the beetroot is up to tennis ball size and I need to clear the bed for a subsequent crop. No one wants beetroot that are woody and the size of mini footballs. Better to lift and store.

I have planted out Dwarf French beans 'Prince' & 'Hawksbury Wonder' in the bed that grew some early potatoes. Here you can see the successional cropping. The



French Beans in the background are from an earlier sowing and are now producing plenty of beans. At the end of the month I shall make another sowing to grow on in the polytunnel.

July is the month to be thinking about sowing the winter brassicas. My dwarf kale is under way and now potted on in 3" pots, as are the 'Graffiti' cauliflowers and 'Tenderstem' broccoli.

To complement the perennial spinach that we grow for cooking, I like to sow a few of the true varieties. At the end of the month I shall be making an outdoor sowing of 'Bordeaux'. This is a favourite of mine. I also like to grow a few in pots in the greenhouse to have tender leaves in 3 weeks from sowing. Ideal for baby leaves in salads.



'Marathon' calabrese. The central growth has been cut; these are the florets that follow on to give a cropping period of 3 to 4 weeks.



'Snowball' onions grown from sets. These have been very successful. Not a single bolter amongst them. The necks have gone soft allowing me to bend down the foliage to assist ripening. Another couple of weeks and they will be lifted and will finish drying off in the greenhouse.



The 'Jermore' shallots have done well. This one is known as the chef's favourite. These were lifted at the end of June and are now well dried off, which has allowed me to tie them up into short ropes. More from me in August.



John Trim