

There is nothing I like better than comparing vegetables in a trial situation. This year it is going to be courgettes as I was sent a few extra packets by friends of mine.

All In all I shall be growing seven different varieties. These will be compared with my own favourite, **Black Forest**.

If you are looking for a courgette suitable to grow in a container situation, then go for **Patio Star** or **Midnight**. Patio Star is very dark green and a prolific cropper. Midnight is glossy green and has very few spines. If growing courgettes in large pots they must be regularly fed and watered. Not the best way to grow them if you intend taking a holiday in mid summer. Unless you have an accommodating neighbour.



British Summertime is one of the earliest croppers, bred in Britain to cope with our unpredictable climate. This tasty courgette is another prolific producer and as a bonus the fruits are spineless.

Green Bush Heavy yielding this one will crop all summer if picked regularly. Harvest the fruits at 4" long for the best flavour. It has dark green tender skins and can be cooked whole.



Defender This is reputedly the heaviest cropper of all courgettes. 'We shall see'. It is certainly one of the most popular varieties with gardeners. It has also been awarded an RHS AGM 'award of garden merit' so it's a pretty good courgette.

Tuscany This one is well suited to the British climate. It has excellent flavour and few spines. It is also resistant to powdery mildew.

First of all to test germination all seven varieties were grown in 4"

pots, the seed was sown half an inch deep on edge using a good seed compost, then placed on a heated bench. There were six of each variety.

Sown on the 6th April the first courgette **British Summertime** was poking through by the 10th after just 4 days.

For successful germination I find that you must get the balance of watering just right. Too much and the seed will rot off in the pot before it gets going.

So take a little care and if in doubt water every second day. They won't come to any harm if they dry out a little but be careful you don't let the pots dry out completely.

British Summertime first one up.

10 days on and germination was almost complete. Time to record



which varieties had done best in the germination department.

Those with 100% germination were, **Midnight, Black Forest, Green Bush and British Summertime.** **Tuscany** achieved 5 out of 6. **Patio Star and Defender** achieved 4 out of 6.



The best looking courgette plants all of equal size were **Midnight.**

We shall catch up with the courgette trial in May.

At home the polytunnel is filling up. The potatoes on the left **Purple Eyed Seedling** were planted out in February. In another couple of weeks we shall begin harvesting.

Ridge cucumbers destined for the NVS Hants D.A plant sale.

At West Wellow village hall, Button Lane. On Saturday 6th May 10.00am -1.00pm. [‘See you there’.](#)



On the Allotment



We have some new arrivals. This is a Hampshire breed of pig, very like an Essex. We also have two large whites.

A very tidy row of peas on Ann and Bobs plot.



I have got my pea sticks up but the peas are being raised in pots at home. I am taking no chances with mice or a frost.



I had a tour around the plots to see how the others were getting on. Another of our lady gardeners, Stefanie, is very keen on broad beans. These are **Witkiem Manita**. Although her favourite broad bean is **Masterpiece Green**.

Ann gives her **Ferline F1** tomatoes a high nitrogen feed. Probably the last one before she switches to high potash. There are flower trusses on the plants and in a few days these will form into tomatoes.



The exhibition potatoes are all poking through. In the foreground is one of the trial bags of **Kestrel**. All looking good so far.

To the left is a very healthy looking row of **Elephant garlic**. The bulbs should be starting to swell up. If we don't get any substantial rain soon, I shall have to start watering. You can't let garlic go without at this stage of their development.



This is towards the top end of our allotment site. Dee and Paul Beverly Smith admire the blossom on their trees.

Being right on Southampton Water many of our allotmenters are also sailors 'like myself'. Dee and Paul are two of the leading lights in our local Hythe Sailing Club.



That's it for this week. I shall be back in May.

Watch out for those frosts.

John Trim

