



## Sustainability in Colwich & the Haywoods (SinCH)

[info@sinch.earth](mailto:info@sinch.earth)

### Green Fingers Newsletter 5 – March 2022

## Welcome to the 2022 season!

Now that the soil is beginning to warm up it's time to take stock of what you did last year and what might be done this year.

No matter what size garden you have there's always something you can grow.

It's time to get sowing over the next few weeks.

Some things can be started indoors so they are ready in April.



Ideas include:

- Lettuce
- Tomatoes
- Cucumber
- Beetroot
- Peppers
- Broad Beans

Some seeds like carrots and peas are best sown direct, as they don't like transplanting, so it's best to wait for the soil to warm up a bit more.

Early potatoes can go in the ground in late March but you'll need to keep the shoots covered with soil until the last frosts in May.

Swift and Charlotte are early potatoes which do well in containers so even if you don't have much space it can be done! See some advice [here](#).

## Growing Your Own

The price of food, energy and other bills will be a massive challenge for the foreseeable.

Global food chains, which haven't settled down after Covid, are now set to be further disrupted due to energy shortages and the war in Ukraine.

Due to ecological and carbon-footprint concerns SinCH has been encouraging people to reduce their dependency on global food sources through UK suppliers and also to eat food in season. So there's never been a better time to grow your own. Hopefully you'll find some useful insights in this newsletter.

In our newsletters we'll be following Lucy's veg plot again and we'll also be following Sarah who is planning to bring some old raised beds back into production. Rob will also be adding fruit and veg into what he hopes will become a forest garden – inspired by permaculture. We'll keep you up to date on all these.

## Do you need a raised bed?

Hilary has donated SinCH a large amount of compost and we also have some reclaimed wood. For a donation to SinCH funds we are offering to build and fill you a bed if you have space. If you have an urgent need for compost for the new season this is also possible. All enquiries to [info@sinch.earth](mailto:info@sinch.earth).

## Eating in season

We are approaching the time of year when there is little in season. But by planning ahead last year it is possible to have plenty of green vegetables and salads available.

Simon has still got one pumpkin left from last autumn and is looking forward to that final soup and roasting some mixed veg. Lettuces and spinach sown undercover in the autumn are doing really well now and the last of the sprouts, winter cabbage and purple sprouting are all ready for the picking.

Another way to extend the season is to freeze the gluts and to make preserves. Liz will be giving us some tips on this throughout 2022.

To see what's in season when click [here](#) and [here](#).

## Community Gardening Club starts on Sat 12 March, 2-4pm

Angela from Colwich and the Haywoods Bloomers is setting up a gardening club for families with young children aged 7+ years.

The club will meet monthly at the Colwich and Little Haywood Village Hall, please come with your 7+('s) and **gloves, trowel, fork and lots of enthusiasm.**

Angela writes, 'We would love to get children growing vegetables from seeds through to harvest, whilst educating them on the processes of looking after plant-life. We believe it is our responsibility to inform the younger generations on how to grow and maintain plant-life.'

SinCH supporters have been pleased to help Angela by giving advice on a successional sowing plan. We have also been able to help fill the raised bed by sourcing free soil (via the Parish Council) with compost and manure being donated by SinCH supporters.

For more information on the club please contact Angela at [angelahardwickpink@gmail.com](mailto:angelahardwickpink@gmail.com)

## An Appreciation of Gordon Hawley

We are very sad to say that in January we unexpectedly lost Gordon.

Gordon was part of our *Green Fingers* steering group and was a source of inspiration and advice. He was a regular attender at the Lamb & Flag coffee mornings and Green Drinks evenings with Val and he very much enjoyed the socialising.

He was always keen to chat and give advice on anything relating to growing and he was always contributing plants to help SinCH build up its funds.

Fuchsias were a particular passion but he was always happy to turn his hand to anything and

propagation was also an interest - he seemed to carry a pair of snips and a plastic bag wherever he went!

Gordon's interest in growing things started at a young age, prompted by his father and when looking



towards a career he attended the Pershore Horticultural College. He and Val ran their own horticultural business for many years.

His Tomato Masterclass article for the summer 2021 newsletter nicely illustrated his depth of knowledge and his wry sense of humour:

*"Some seventy two years ago my father challenged me to grow a tomato which I did. I have now been growing them for all that time and have had successes and failures. I was not very happy when things went wrong so I decided to go to (college) where I learnt what to do and not to do... (many tips followed)*

*You now come to picking your crop, they will gradually begin to change colour and get ripe, you can pick them at anytime to suit yourselves. I do not know which is best as I do not eat Tomatoes!"*

Our thoughts are with Val, Sal and the family at this difficult time. Gordon will be sadly missed by us all.

Simon and Lucy on behalf of Green Fingers & SinCH

## SinCH's Website

In April the long awaited SinCH website will be up and running at [www.sinch.earth](http://www.sinch.earth). It will have a whole section on Green Fingers for you to dip into. This will include previous editions of this newsletter so don't forget to check these out for more ideas.

## Lucy's update

Well SinCHers, I have tried over the chilly winter months to reflect on what I have learnt from last year's growing season [my first using my raised bed, as you know] and have made changes to reflect this in my plans for my latest green gardening adventures!

Firstly – tomatoes! Whilst last years crop was a great first attempt, the plants were affected by blight. So I have decided to grow smaller bush variety called Microcherry, with the intention of growing them undercover and hopefully both protect the plants from disease, and also encourage earlier ripening. Always worth a try...

Next – pumpkins in pots are not going to be repeated! With only one raised bed, I don't have enough space at the moment to grow pumpkins directly in the ground which I suspect would improve the size and quality of fruit the plant produces. Instead, I'm going to use the pots to grow runner beans in, using seeds kindly shared by a fellow SinCHer from last year's crop. The pumpkin I grew in my compost bins was much more successful.

So this year, I'm going to use the compost bin again, but this time for courgettes. As an amateur vegetable grower, and with plenty of plants that didn't do as well as I'd hoped, it was great to have a bit of success with the courgette plant, and I'm going to choose to ignore the occasional family groan of "oh no... not another courgette!". I have chosen a variety known as Romanesco as these claim not to become too big or watery, and continue to look for interesting recipes to tackle any future glut [as well as bringing them along to the coffee mornings of course!].

In our attempts to make our garden [and particularly our lawn] more wildlife friendly, when we cut back the long grasses last autumn we also sowed more wildflower seeds including spring favourites Cowslip, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Lady's Bedstraw, Rough Hawksbit, Red Clover and Yellow Rattle.

We also added some summer/autumn classics such as Selfheal, Tufted Vetch, Knapweed, Toadflax, Musk Mallow and Ragged Robin.

Plants such as the [Yellow Rattle](#) will hopefully keep some of the grasses at bay and allow other plants to flourish, providing food and nectar for any birds or insects that visit our garden. I will keep you posted on the results!

Happy gardening

Lucy x



## Lamb & Flag Coffee Mornings

If you have spare seeds, and would like to participate in seed/plant swaps, why not bring them along to our monthly coffee mornings [at the Lamb & Flag pub, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 10.30-12md] and see what other treasures you can pick up for a small donation.

## Your input please

We'd like to know what's been useful and what else you'd like to see featured.

Please share your thoughts, experiences and photos. If you have got a question about how to do things, or need some advice and support please get in touch.

Fancy getting more involved? We have a Green Fingers steering group to generate ideas and to help organise activities so please contact us if you are interested. Contact [info@sinch.earth](mailto:info@sinch.earth)