

Food for Thought Newsletter

April

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Due to Easter there's only around two weeks to be on the school garden so there's not a lot of new things to do this month. Hopefully the weather has warmed up and a balance of rain and sunshine will save you time on the plot. Hopefully you planted daffodils from the ideas in last September's newsletter to give away beautiful flowering daffodils for Mother's Day.

Jobs for outside

Plants indoors

What you can grow

Potatoes in bags



Well done Broadhempston School who have completed all their spring planting!

Jobs for outside

Keep weeding: little and often when you check if the seedlings need water. When there are rain showers, very little sinks into the ground so if it hasn't rained for a couple of days gently water your seeds so as not to flood them out of the lines you planted them in. Use your string lines when planting seeds.

Plants indoors

If you have planted seeds on windowsills, keep them watered and when they are about 4cm high, pot them on into individual pots to grow bigger. Gradually move them away from heat sources to bright windowsills, so they don't get too dependent on the heat but can easily access the light.

This is a perfect time to plant pots of herbs from seeds and then give them to the school kitchen to put in school dinners. Why not think of a herb garden outside the kitchen area of your school?

What you can grow

Here are some ideas for you if you want to keep your growing going.

By this time of year it's full speed ahead in the garden. Almost anything you put in will grow really quickly. Bean seeds are a firm favourite as they grow extremely rapidly in pots ready to plant out. My beans grew to 8 cm in one week in a warm damp pot so get growing on a sunny afternoon.

Keep checking your plant wish list and seed packets to see when you can put seeds in outdoors. Use a string line and careful labelling to remind you what you put in and where and keep watering as you go. Lots of seeds can be planted this month. Be careful to space them according to the instructions as overcrowding will not be successful.

It's not too late to plant donated perennial fruit like autumn raspberries, rhubarb or currant bushes. Water well.

Potatoes in bags

See my guidance video on the DDE Food For Thought website, for planting potatoes in an old compost bag. You can use about three seed potatoes per compost bag, and you will need compost to start them off, about 10cm under the potatoes and 10cm on top. The benefit is you can put this bag of potatoes anywhere it's useful, rather than having to leave it on the veg plot. It makes my day when I visit a school and the adults tell me they're growing their potatoes like this at home.

Plants in pots

You can use a large pot full of compost to grow veggie seedlings too. Why not use a very large pot full of compost and some bamboo canes tied at the top with string to grow some runner beans or climbing French beans? These will need a lot of water where growing but a pot is ideal for putting outside a classroom door outside where it will get lots of attention and look beautiful.



Ikula Primary School with tree seedlings.

This is Ikula primary school, partnered with Northlew and Ashbury Primary school in Devon.

DDE has funded a tree nursery project as trees planted in schools provide excellent shade .

Keep feeding your compost heap

As the weather has warmed up, the beneficial bacteria in the heap will start to multiply and break down the organic waste into lovely compost; feed them with fresh weeds, water if it's too dry, and fruit and veg peelings from the school kitchen or playground. Add ripped up cardboard . Don't be put off by small flies, this is part of the success story and proof your compost heap is heating up nicely.