

## **Gardening Journal Spring Term 2 2024**

**The weather is beginning to warm up this term, so we have been busy planting a variety of seeds with the classes:**

- Years 5 and 6 are growing Broad Beans and Mange Tout**
- Year 3 and 4 are growing Giant Radishes and Dwarf Peas**
- Years 1 and 2 are growing French and Climbing beans**
- EYFS are growing Mange Tout, Broad Beans, Dwarf Peas, Giant Radishes, Swiss Chard, strawberries and potatoes. They have also planted a wildflower area constructed from recycled wood rescued from the skip!**

All of the crops we are growing this year will mature before the summer holidays begin, allowing the children to harvest them before they move into a new year group.

Each class has been provided with a simple recipe idea that includes their vegetable. This can be used as a cooking activity within class time or taken home for the children to enjoy with their families.

**As well as planting seeds this term, we have been busy cutting back the seedheads of the perennial plants in the school grounds.**

**We have also enjoyed watching the growth of the bulbs that gardening club planted last year, as well as the bulb meadow that is emerging in the polytunnel garden.**

**More dead hedges have also been constructed in the after school club garden and the old chicken garden. This will help increase wildlife habitats in these gardens, as well as providing a place for composting dead material.**

## Year 6 Broad Beans



You can sow broad beans in pots under cover from February onwards, for planting out in spring. This is particularly recommended if your soil is damp (which can cause seeds to rot) or if there are mice in your garden (as they will eat the seeds in the ground).

Sow the large seeds individually into small pots or modular trays filled with multi-purpose compost, inserting them 5cm (2in) deep. Water well and keep in good light.

Plant them outside as soon as possible, in early to mid-spring. Take care to [harden off](#) your plants for a couple of weeks first, to acclimatise them to outdoor conditions, and prepare the ground as explained above. Space plants 15–23cm (6–9in) apart, either in single rows 45cm (18in) apart or in double rows 23cm (9in) apart. Water in well.

# REAL SEEDS

## Y6/S ORGANIC RATIO BROAD BEAN

*A fantastic new variety; short plants about 2ft tall, with finely cut quite pointy leaves. It makes huge pods, and the beans are excellent eating quality even raw straight from the plant.*

Sow early Spring (late Feb -mid April) for beans in Summer. Can also be sown in autumn (Sept/Oct) for an early crop next year. Sow direct or to avoid mice sow in modules and plant out at 6-12" spacing in double rows. Space these double rows 2 foot from the next double row. Need full sun and rich soil with plenty of muck. Plants will need support as they get larger or will blow over in windy weather. If the soil is short of potash, chocolate spot fungus is a common problem - comfrey as a mulch or a liquid feed is a good remedy and a good general feed in any event.

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## Planting the seeds

Seeds were planted in the polytunnel for protection from the cold weather. Some seeds were taken back to classes so that the children could observe their growth.





The seeds germinated quickly.



The children enjoyed planting them outside in their raised beds- they were amazed by the strong, healthy root systems that had grown!



They also planted Nasturtiums, which will provide bright orange edible flowers!



## **Feta & Broad Bean Dip**

An extremely useful recipe, nutritious and with many uses. Tuck feta and broad bean dip into sandwiches, pile it onto crackers as a snack, or even serve it warm as an easy side dish.

### **Ingredients**

- 500 g (2 cups) shelled broad beans fresh or frozen
- 1 clove garlic crushed
- 50 g (1/3 cup) feta crumbled
- 40 ml (2 Tablespoons) lemon juice
- 40 ML (2 Tablespoons) olive oil
- Salt & pepper
- A couple of chopped fresh mint leaves



## Instructions

- Bring a medium size pot of salted water to the boil.
- Add the broad beans. Allow the water to come back to the boil, then cook for 3 - 5 minutes depending on the size of the beans.
- Remove the pot from the heat and drain. Rinse the beans under cold water to stop the cooking process.
- Pinch the grey skin off the bean with your fingers. I do this by nicking the skin with my fingernail, then squeezing the green inner out of the pod \*
- Add the broad beans and the rest of the ingredients to a bowl and crush with a masher until the desired consistency is achieved.
- Add seasonings to taste and enjoy!

**\* If the beans are picked when they are small and tender they won't need to be skinned**





## Year 5 Mange tout



### **Directly outdoors**

Alternatively, sow the seeds from March to June, directly to their permanent positions. The soil should have been well-prepared in advance by incorporating plenty of well-rotted organic matter. Sow the seeds 4cm deep at 5-7cm intervals along a flat bottom furrow. If growing in rows, allow 60cm between rows. After sowing, apply water and ensure there is suitable support for the plants.

You can make further sowings outdoors, every 2-3 weeks up until the end of June to ensure you have a succession of pea pods.

### **Sowing Seeds**

#### **Under cover**

Some growers prefer to sow mange tout seeds under cover in 7.5cm pots from March to April. This can help give you a head start and extend the growing season. Fill the pots with quality seed compost to within 2cm of the top, and then lightly firm down. Sow 2-3 seeds per pot at a depth of 3-4cm deep and lightly cover with seed compost. Cover the pots with polythene or glass to retain moisture and then leave them to germinate, which should take 7-14 days, providing a warm temperature has been maintained. Plant outside in May.

# REAL SEEDS

Y6/S

## GOLDEN SWEET YELLOW-PODDED MANGE-TOUT PEAS

*Incredibly rare. Beautiful tall plants,  
3" lemon-yellow edible pods in pairs.  
Pick when still flat and eat in salads,  
stir-fries, or just by the handful!  
Grows to 5 or 6 feet tall.*

Sow 2" apart in shallow drills 6" wide. Climbing varieties - put two drills either side of a piece of netting supported on canes, or use traditional peasticks. Never sow in cold wet conditions. Birds & mice like germinating seeds, so cover with netting, use mousetraps, or sow in trays and plant out when two inches tall. Sow from mid Feb to late May; round seeded peas can also be sown in autumn and overwintered in milder areas.

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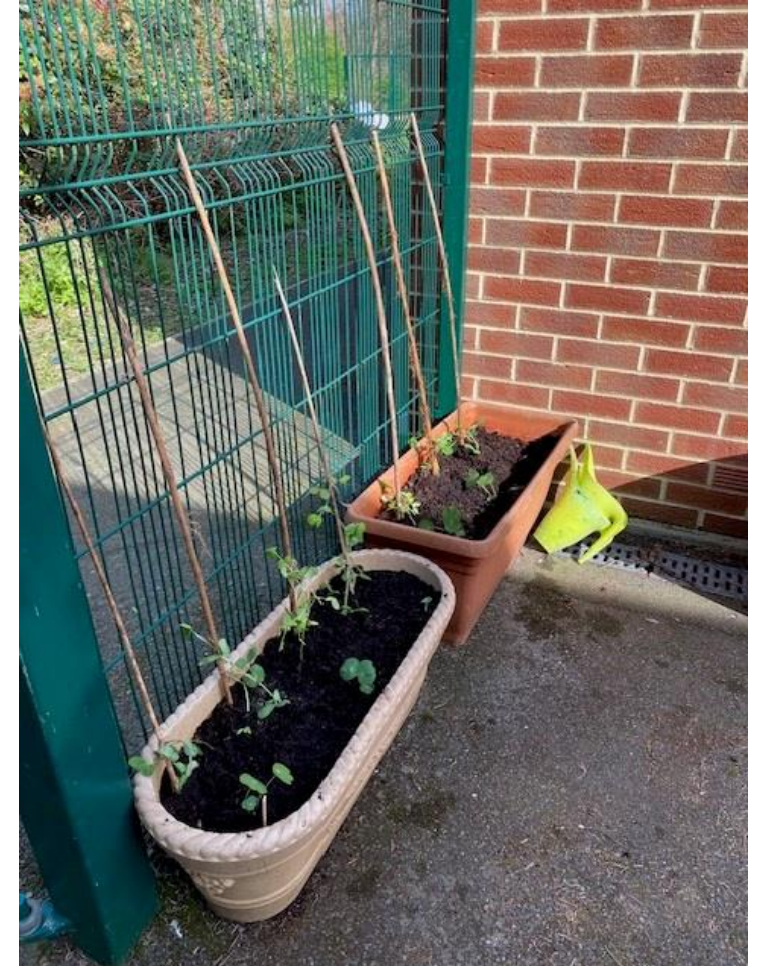




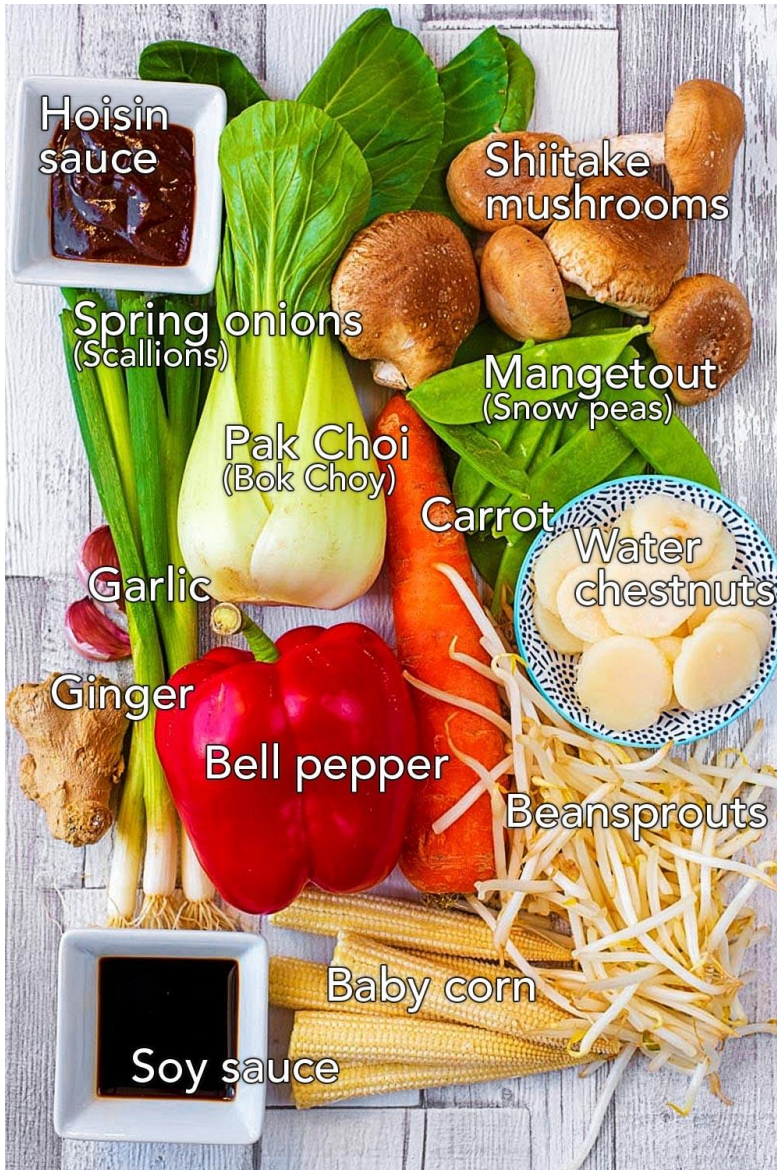
Some of the seedlings were attacked by mice! Luckily they left some healthy seedlings.



The children from year 5 have planted their young pea plants next to a fence so that they will have something to climb on. They added Nasturtiums to the front of the planters to give them a splash of colour, as well as edible flowers!



## Recipe for Mange Tout and Vegetable Stir Fry



- **Spray oil**
- **Mushrooms** - We used shiitake mushrooms as they have a nice firm texture, but any mushrooms can be used.
- **Vegetables** - We used spring onions (scallions), carrot, red bell pepper, baby corn, pak choi (bok choy) and mangetout (snowpeas).
- **Beansprouts and water chestnuts** - For a nice crunch.
- **Garlic and ginger** - Makes that lovely Asian flavour.
- **Soy sauce** - Adds an umami taste. If you can find gluten free soy sauce, this whole dish will be gluten free.
- **Hoisin sauce** - Adds a nice depth of flavour.

**One:** Slice all the vegetables thinly, crush the garlic and grate the ginger.



**Two:** Spray the oil in to a large pan and gently heat. Add in all the ingredients apart from the soy sauce and hoisin. Gently cook the vegetables for 5 minutes.



**Three:** Add the hoisin and soy, stir and cook for a further minute.



Enjoy your stir fry with plain boiled rice or noodles!

## Year 4 Giant Radish

Salad radishes are quick and easy to grow from seed, ready to eat in as little as four weeks. These compact plants can be grown in even the smallest of spaces and are great gap-fillers on the veg plot. Sow small batches every few weeks to add a crunchy kick to salads in late spring and summer.



**Sow salad radishes** in spring, early summer and late summer for best results. You can also sow in mid-summer in cooler locations or in light shade, out of midday sun.

It is generally best to avoid sowing in hot dry weather, as plants tend to bolt (start flowering).

For an early crop, sow in February in [pre-warmed soil](#) and protect with cloches. Sow seeds 1cm (½in) deep and 2.5–5cm (1–2in) apart, with 15cm (6in) between rows. Regular small sowings will provide continuous harvests.





# REAL SEEDS

Y4/3

## SICILY GIANT RADISH

*Another round radish, but deep red  
and not quite as hot. From Sicily - one  
for those who prefer a slightly milder,  
bigger radish.*

Sow radishes thinly in well prepared soil  
from late Feb to September (winter  
radishes from late June). Thin early to 1"  
(small vars) or 3" (large vars) apart. Water  
in dry weather. Make frequent small  
sowings to avoid getting too many at once.  
Ready 20 to 30 days from sowing.

This Variety: Heat does vary with soil type  
and growing conditions, we have found!  
Radishes are also very nice cooked in stews  
where they lose their heat and take on a  
different flavour.

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The children used rainwater from the water butts to give their seeds a good soak. Rainwater is preferable to tap water as it has not been chemically treated.



The healthy radish seedlings will be ready to plant outside after Easter.

## Pickled red onion & radish

These easy, crunchy pickles don't need marinating overnight and make a great garnish to any meal. They're vegan, low fat and take just 4 ingredients to make



## Ingredients

- 1 [large red onion](#)
- 12 [small radishes](#)
- 1 tbsp [golden caster sugar](#)
- 100ml cider vinegar

Slice 1 large red onion into thin rings and 12 small radishes into thin slices.

Stir in 1 tbsp salt and 1 tbsp golden caster sugar and leave for 20 mins.

Warm 100ml cider vinegar and 50ml water in a small saucepan, then pour over the vegetables. Stir to dissolve the sugar and salt, then leave to cool.

## Goes well with:

Falafel wraps  
Couscous salad  
Burgers

### Year 3 Dwarf Peas

Home-grown, freshly picked peas are sweet and delicious, better than any you can buy. Dwarf varieties take up relatively little ground space and don't need supports. If you sow several batches you can have harvests throughout the summer

Peas are easy to grow from seed sown in spring and into early summer, either outdoors where they are to grow, or indoors to get them off to an early, reliable start.

Sowing under cover in February or March allows you to get an early start, particularly if your soil is cold and wet, when seeds may fail to germinate or may rot outdoors. You can also sow in autumn and keep plants indoors over winter, for planting out in early spring. Indoor sowing can protect the seeds from being eaten by mice.

Fill deep modular trays, small pots or cardboard tubes with multi-purpose compost. Sow up to three seeds per pot, or one per narrow tube or module, inserting them about 5cm (2in) deep.

Peas like a sunny position, plenty of water and good drainage.



Indoor-sown peas can be planted out in March and April, once they're about 20cm (8in) tall



# REAL SEEDS

Y4/3

## AMERICAN WONDER DWARF PEA

*An unusually early and dwarf variety from the mid 1800's, growing 20" tall or less, requiring very little support. It makes really fat pods just stuffed with sweet peas.*

Dwarf peas are fairly self-supporting but most benefit from something to climb: sow in shallow drills 6" wide spacing 2" between peas, two drills either side of a bit of chicken wire on canes, or use traditional peasticks. (Very short varieties are ok without) Never sow in cold wet conditions. If you have trouble with birds or mice eating germinating seeds, cover with netting, use mousetraps, or sow in trays and plant out when 2 inches tall. Sow from mid Feb to late May; round seeded peas can also be sown in autumn and overwintered in milder areas.

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## Pea pesto

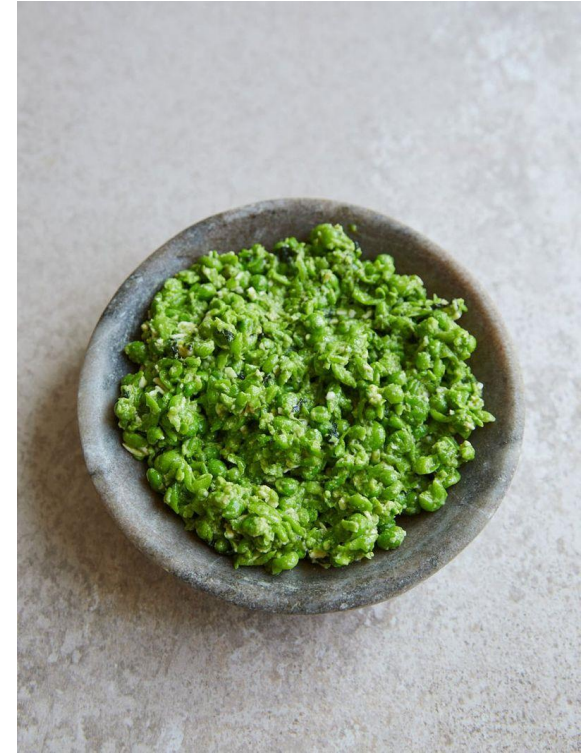
“This easy pasta sauce will cook in about the same time it takes to cook some dried pasta in boiling salted water – we’re talking about quick and easy options here. These amounts serve 2 but are easy to scale up or down. You need about 75g of dried pasta per person – use whatever shape you’ve got.

### Ingredients

- 100 g fresh peas
- ¼ of a clove of garlic
- 2 sprigs of fresh basil or mint
- 30 g Parmesan cheese , plus extra for grating
- extra virgin olive oil

### Method

- 1.Sit a sieve in the pan of pasta as it cooks, add the peas and blanch for 2 minutes.
- 2.Peel the garlic and place in a pestle and mortar with a pinch of sea salt. Tear in the herb leaves and add the pine nuts.
- 3.Drain the peas and add them to the mix, then roughly bash it all up to whatever texture you like – I like to keep it chunky.
- 4.Finely grate in the Parmesan, and add about 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil – enough to give you a spoonable consistency – then mix and season to perfection with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Drain the pasta, reserving a mugful of starchy cooking water. Toss with the pesto, loosening with some splashes of cooking water.
- 5.Transfer to plates, and finish with a little drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and an extra grating of Parmesan, if you like.



## Year 2 Dwarf French Beans



French beans like warmth, sun and rich, moisture-retentive soil, with protection from frost and slugs and snails in the early stages.

**Dwarf varieties** should be fine without supports.

Keep plants well watered, especially once they start flowering, and they should give a generous crop with little fuss. Just remember to pick regularly to encourage more pods to form.

### **To sow**

Sow beans 5cm deep in pots of warm, damp soil.

Place on a warm sunny windowsill or in a propagator with bright light.

Keep the soil damp. Once the seedlings have grown to 8cm tall, they can be planted outside providing there is no risk of frost and they have been hardened off (acclimatised) during the daytime over a few days.



## Green beans with tomato & feta



### Ingredients

- 300g green beans, trimmed
- 6 [large tomatoes](#), roughly chopped
- 100g [feta](#), cubed
- 1 tbsp [olive oil](#)

### Method

- Boil a pan of water
- Add the beans and cook for 4 mins until tender.
- Drain the beans, then mix with the tomato and feta.
- Drizzle over the olive oil and season generously with black pepper.

## Year 1 Climbing Beans



French beans like warmth, sun and rich, moisture-retentive soil, with protection from frost and slugs and snails in the early stages.

**Climbing varieties** need tall supports, such as bamboo canes or wigwams.

Keep plants well watered, especially once they start flowering, and they should give a generous crop with little fuss. Just remember to pick regularly to encourage more pods to form.

### **To sow**

Sow beans 5cm deep in pots of warm, damp soil. Place on a warm sunny windowsill or in a propagator with bright light.

Keep the soil damp. Once the seedlings have grown to 8cm tall, they can be planted outside providing there is no risk of frost and they have been hardened off (acclimatised) during the daytime over a few days.

# REAL SEEDS

Y2/1

## COSSE VIOLETTE PURPLE CLIMBING BEAN

*A tall climbing bean with purple flowers and long dark purple pods. It is productive and early, and is very decorative too!*

Do not soak before sowing. Plant seeds direct in the growing site from May - June (earlier under cloches) in well manured soil, or start off under cover in small pots, planting out after the last frost. Climbing varieties need 6-8' canes, plant 2 seeds to each cane approx. 8-12" apart. Space bush (=dwarf) varieties 4-6" apart. **COOKING:** Beans can be eaten young as snap beans (if stringless), as shelled green beans (flageolets) as the pods mature, or left to ripen on the plant for dried beans. To cook from dried, soak overnight, then boil in fresh water.

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**Reception and Nursery children have been busy planting a wide variety of crops for their new growing space!**



### Swiss Rainbow Chard Bright Lights

Swiss chard is exceptionally easy to grow, making it a great choice for beginner gardeners looking for a no-fuss crop to get them started.

Chard has broad, thick stems available in a range of colours: brilliant white, zingy yellow, and even lipstick pink!

Delicious and nutritious it is lovely added to soups or stir fried in olive oil or butter- shred the leaves and chop up the stems into small pieces.



### Beauregarde Purple Mangetout

This mangetout is a beautiful shiny purple colour, but it will turn green as it is cooked!



### Bean, Dwarf French, 'Merveille de Piemonte'

Such a charming variety is this with beans a pale creamy yellow, mottled with dark purple speckles that follow the pink flowers. They are so pretty, it would seem a shame to cook them, but cook them you will. Don't be too disappointed though – they change to an attractive buttery yellow colour with a sweet and nutty flavour. When fully mature the markings on the beans will turn a deeper red colour and the seeds inside can be shelled and used fresh or left in their pods to use dry.



Salad radishes are quick and easy to grow from seed, ready to eat in as little as four weeks. These compact plants can be grown in even the smallest of spaces and are great gap-fillers on the veg plot. Sow small batches every few weeks to add a crunchy kick to salads in late spring and summer. Water well or they will bolt (try to flower).





## Broad Beans

Sow the large seeds individually into small pots or modular trays filled with multi-purpose compost, inserting them 5cm (2in) deep. Water well and keep in good light.

Broad beans can be eaten raw when young and tender, or cooked as bigger beans. They only need a couple of minutes in boiling water if freshly picked!



## Maxidor Dwarf Yellow French Beans

French beans like warmth, sun and rich, moisture-retentive soil, with protection from frost and slugs and snails in the early stages.

**Dwarf varieties** should be fine without supports.

Keep plants well watered, especially once they start flowering, and they should give a generous crop with little fuss. Just remember to pick regularly to encourage more pods to form.



American Wonder Dwarf Peas are a lovely sweet tasting pea. They only grow 50cm high so they won't need supports. Keep them well watered and pick when the pods grow fat and juicy. They are a tasty nutritious snack and delicious eaten raw.



We have included a new wildflower meadow areas in the new Woodlands garden. The children enjoyed scattering the seeds! The meadow will increase the biodiversity in this area and encourage pollinators to visit the crops and help them fruit by spreading the pollen!



## Strawberries

We are hoping that the new strawberry plants in Woodlands and in the allotment garden will produce fruits from June-July.

Yvette had lots of baby strawberry plants in her garden which she kindly brought into school to share.

Sometimes mice like to help themselves to the fruit, so they will need to be netted to protect them. We are recycling old broken hula-hoops from school to use as colourful supports for the nets!



## Chitting early potatoes

**Reception and nursery prepared their potatoes for planting by 'chitting' them first.**

Home-grown potatoes taste heaps better than the ones you buy in the shops. Early and maincrop potatoes can be sprouted inside before planting in the garden, this is known as '**chitting**'.

Seed potatoes of early varieties should be started into growth indoors in February, planted out into the soil just before Easter, and lifted for eating in late June or early July. Maincrop varieties should be planted in early April again after sprouting indoors.

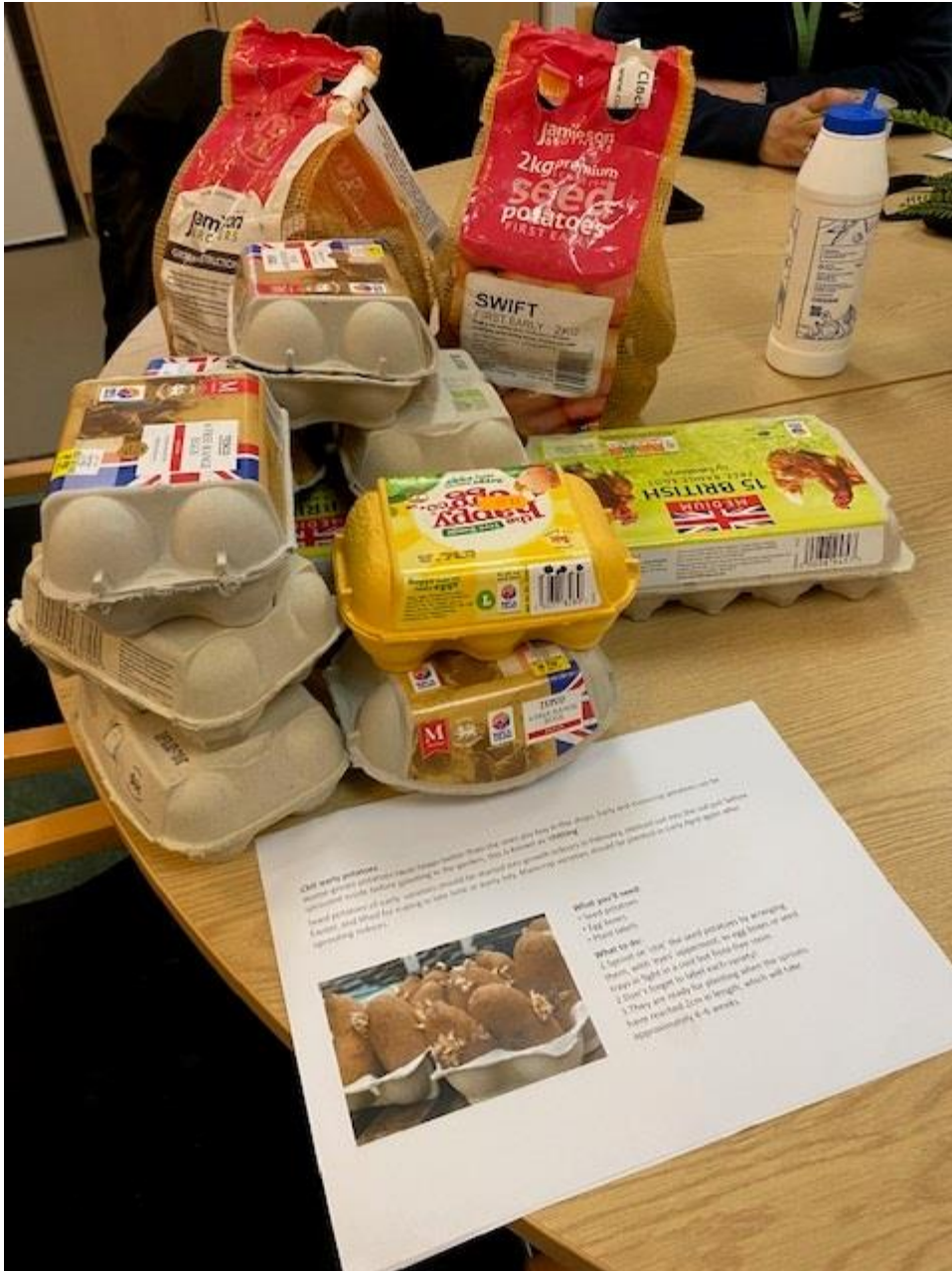


### **What you'll need:**

- Seed potatoes
- Egg boxes
- Plant labels

### **What to do:**

1. Sprout or 'chit' the seed potatoes by arranging them, with 'eyes' uppermost, in egg boxes or seed trays in light in a cool but frost-free room.
2. Don't forget to label each variety!
3. They are ready for planting when the sprouts have reached 2cm in length, which will take approximately 4–6 weeks.



EYFS have an early variety of potato called 'Swift'. After the children have chitted the potatoes, they will be shared by the classes and planted in the outdoor area.

The children are looking forward to making a delicious potato salad as part of their growing topic!



The children carefully planted their chitted potatoes in sacks outside. As they grow leaves, the soil will be topped up to keep the developing baby potatoes in darkness. If they get exposed to light they will turn green and become inedible.

The Crocus bulbs and onions that gardening club planted in the autumn are doing well!





The cherry tree and narcissi bloomed at the same time in the allotment garden. The beautiful tulip bulbs followed on with their brightly coloured flowers.







We left the perennial plants and seedheads standing over the winter. The seedheads make attractive spaces where insects can hibernate or shelter from the winter weather.

They have now been cut back and carefully arranged as a dead hedge, so that any remaining insects can continue to rest. There were plenty of ladybirds hiding!



A new dead hedge in the after school club garden will provide shelter to insects and hopefully attract more wildlife to the area.