
May 29th 2008

Contributed by Jonnyboy

Well, spring has most definitely arrived, and for a while was threatening to jump straight into summer. Overnight everything in the garden seems to have sprouted by a foot, the grass, leaves and weeds. If only I could see the seedlings...I'll go out on a limb here, and say that everyone hates weeding but it's one of those necessary things we all have to do if we want our tiny seeds to turn into tasty success stories.

You'd be forgiven by some of the posts in 'grow your own' for thinking that the garden is a war zone, with desperate calls for reinforcements and an escalation in the WMD's used to keep the axis of evil at bay (that's blight, aphids and those bloody weeds again). But the good news is that our more southerly members are even starting to harvest and plenty of us seem to be trying new varieties to boot. Even better news is there's still time to get planting and have a successful growing season.

The increasingly late evenings and dry weekends have sparked a flurry of activity in the livestock department. Bees, pigs, chickens, lambs and even snails are all on the go, or the subject of much dreaming, and even when people are experiencing a few livestock problems, it's always great to realise how people persevere and overcome the challenges that we all face when rearing livestock.

One interesting piece of news is that ex battery hens are in increasing demand and harder to come by, good news for the hens and good news for another of our new traders, who is offering lovely Barnvelder eggs for home incubation as a great alternative. Of course, you could completely cut out the process and go straight for oven readybirds from another of our members. So whatever your poultry perversion, er persuasion, there's someone here who can sort you out.

Of course, as May comes to a close, one event stands out. The inaugural Skill Swap weekend which will see the biggest gathering of Downsizers yet. All coming together to meet, greet, sell, barter and share their knowledge and experience. Expect friendships to be forged, renewed, and much homebrew consumed. Let's all cross our fingers for sunshine and laughter.

This editorial is sponsored by radox, and roundup.

EDIT The skillshare weekend was a huge success for all who attended, and great credit must go to Sally and her partner Gareth for all their hard work, also to Penny the landowner, who so generously agreed to host the event. You can read comments and see pictures on the forum. Talk has already turned to next years event!