

News from the Farm

Last Updated Friday, 21 February 2014

- July 3rd 2006 - Demonstration Hydroponic Unit - First Open Day

The Anglesey project was funded through the European Leader programme with support from Anglesey Council and the Welsh Assembly Government. Many people came to our Open Day - and were pleasantly surprised by the variety of plants that can be grown without soil. It was a pleasantly warm day and we were fortunate in having a breeze to help keep the temperatures down.

An interesting article is to found at

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/north_west/5120946.stm

July 2006

In the demonstration unit we had growing:

Sweet Peas - Carnation - Calendula (marigold)-Nasturtium - Lavender - Helychrysum

French Marigold (tagetes) - Sweet William-Okra - Peppers - Pak Choi

Tomatoes - Runner Beans - Cucumber - Courgette

Many different varieties of Lettuce - Cabbage greyhound

Sage green - Sage tricolour - Sage golden - Sage purple

Rosemar - Thyme - French Tarragon

Mint - Chives - Stevia (sweet herb of Peru)Roquette - Basil - Coriander

Feverfew - April 15th 2007 Our new addition - settling in well Another Bouvier des Flandres called Chewbaka - a friend for Maisie and our Kerry Blue terrier - the infamous Nelson!
wooden frame Line with thick plastic watched by Nelson and Chewy Second water bed made of Polystyrene sheet measured up and holes cut for pots Close up and awaiting seedlings. Note Bubbler on top left to aerate the water!
Seedlings 120 plants growing well - June 10th 2007 and.... 12 days later - 22nd June-wow what a difference!
3rd Floating Bed! Takes 105 plants AUGUST 2007 Runner beans excelled themselves and did remarkably well in the hydroponic system without the stringyness experienced with earth grown beans. Purple beans and green peas Harvesting squashes (buttercup) Time to plant more seedlings!
September 2007 Busy putting up crop bars still growing 29.09.07 Plenty of tomatoes and still ripening! 10th October 2007 Crop bars in place - winter lettuce and oriental greens growing well on central table. Clearing out of old rockwool blocks and relining runs with thick black plastic to stop the leaking at joints of the runs. So far this has been successful. Note also the large roll of bubble plastic which we

will use to create a tent like structure over the winter plants. We have rigged up a lighting system using energy efficient bulbs which give us an extra 4 hours of light each day (on a timer). The rough cost of running these six bulbs works out at 7pence a day. The bubble plastic has been erected to help keep the warmth from the light bulbs from dissipating into the atmosphere! As winter approaches this will help protect the plants from frost.

Sunday March 30th 2008 - British Summertime begins ! Everything is starting to grow now - we just have to watch out for cold spells at night still. Mixed seeds in rockwool, fleximix and compost. Lavender, Rosemary, Sage cuttings with young tomato plants in aeroponic unit. Rosemary rooted. Long tomato roots

Experiment - growing Calabrese in crushed glass as the growing medium. Early potatoes growing in Perlite

Early toms in new system

Plants are placed in rockwool cubes resting on rockwool slabs and drip fed

Flat Leaf Parsley awaiting cutting.

Clay ball growbed with sprinkler bars.

same bed showing water draining back into tank-

in hot weather this runs continually. In winter this is on a timer.

Flat Leaf Parsley awaiting cutting. up! Herb Plants for sale in the Nursery

Just some of the plants! Saturday 7th June 2008 Broccoli grown in crushed glass ! A tasty meal. Potatoes grown in perlite. That's supper sorted! July 12th 2008 Pigs enjoying their new ark! Now what happened to my dwarf courgette? Three in a bed! Keeping out of the mud! The result and four weeks later!

June 2009 starts off pretty badly!

Father has an accident with a lawnmower and spends three nights in Ysbyty Gwynedd Bangor and Whiston Hospital Liverpool.

Here he is with daughter Amanda - who delivered him safely home.

Then some growbeds collapse in the aquadrome and we lose a tank full of rainbow trout as their water emptied out overnight - giving Rowena (who was holding the fort at home) quite a shock!

Some of the dead fish ready to be gutted and frozen!

November 2009 And the rains came down! The aquadrome was flooded - which washed the floor clean- excess water

then flooded outside and into the greenhouses!The dogs Nelson and Chewy were hoping to find some fish - but with no luck!!This should have been called *Water Way* !December 2009 A BBC filmcrew came to do some filming for a Cookery programme.And mother and daughter very cosy in the barn - they were brought in from the field which was waterlogged. and the Boss havng a stroke from Princess !January 2010And the snow and ice arrived ! plants suffered - but the fish appeared to not mind the cool cool temperatures!Salad and herbs frozen solid! Water Cress all iced up.But - the dogs enjoyed the snow- and were kept busy trying to eat it!

New arrivals- February 2010"Princess" and her offspring
wet weather still persistsmud,mud,glorious mud!April 2010piglets sunbathing !and now-for some of our visitors in 2010 ...Anglesey Growers learn about "Barrelponics"Bodedern(Anglesey) Young Farmers find out about Aquaponics..Two young entrepreneurs about to open a Hyroponic shop in South Wales.. Open Afternoon - Saturday 28th AugustThere is nothing like a cup of tea after a tour of the facilities!Tryng the peppery taste of the nsturtiums!Colour co-ordinated visitorsand- Father's new helping hand! A new polytunnel enlarged and recovered in herb field.Filling in the soil..and making tidyWinter 2010 and the snow arrived ! November thick snow - Duchess (a teenager) was no too keen on the whte stuff! and our sow A Prncess farrowed on the coldest night of the year Of 14 born - 6 survived - here they are on Mum under theheat lamp. More snow in December .. Christmas Day 2010 Enjoying the sun! January 2011

Pigs outing- mum and youngTwo months on and what a difference! Mud,mud,glorious mud!

July 2011Our second two day course of the year.The weather was kind to us and here we are planning the weekend. students put together a simple flood and drain system and had a discussion about it! Discussion on carp tanks and the benefit of duck weed-students took many pictures! Grub time enjoyed in the sun!

and more pigs wer
ones: really cheeky!

gate.....2012Everything very slow growing due to the long winter followed by a wetperiod.

At long last (June) things are starting to grow !

What a wonderful aroma!

Parsley especially has surpassed itself!And along come all the nasty insects - so we use other NICE insects to eat the bad ones

June 2012Anglesey Walkersvisiting Food Producers of the islandLearning about hydroponic growing
Duchess a week before farrowing- cooling herself in the mud !and then - bang on time - 3 months-3 weeks and 3 days after AI Ten little pickles!!!and eight weeks later....in the orchard with mother!
then we had a visit from some Young Farmers - Llangefni Branchand they were shown around the hydroponic and aquaponic unitsIt was a horrendous dark wet evening but we believe that they enjoyed themselves!

November 2012And more and more rain felloops - water in the aquadrome - and because the greenhouses were also under water -there was nowhere for this water to flow to !!

2013A long wet cold winter brought with it a few problems to say the least.First of all the polytunnel by the road tore and had to be covered with a tarpaulin, but this did not last very long and when the next big blow came the remaining plastic had to be cut offand it could have caused problems to the passing traffic..secondly our large hydrodome split after another storm and this again was covered by an emergency tarpaulin - butthis unfortunately did not last very long as the wind just wrecked this also- causing no end of damage.You can imagine that we were not very happy !.Where does one to start?So much work now to do - to clean and tidy up and then to start all over again!They say that patience is a virtue! But we persevered and managed to get the roadside poly cover back on and slowly working againbut not up to our usual salad rotation - we lost a few months growth and salesAugust - now fully back in action.Then we hired a JCB to come and redig the trench around the hydrodomein order that the plastic cover could be buried safelyNext our friends and neighbours very kindly came and gave us a handto recover the large hydrodome We were fortunate that we managed to choose one rare day with sun and without a breeze!But it was hot work never the less !Not long after we managed to set up and refill the hydrodome as we had plants desperate to be grown on !But again - we lost a lot of valuable growing and selling time. In July our sow Duchess gave birth to ten healthy piglets, and we have had a lot of enjoyment watching the antics of her and her *naughty* children ! and we had some visitors from South Wales and some swallows ! Growth in aquadrome kept apace and we were busy growing and selling broccolli, cauliflower, rocket and nasturtiums Looking

good in July 2013

2014 This year started wet, wet and more wet ! February we had a visit from final year students attending Â Ysgol David Hughes, Menai Bridge. They were looking into issues of Food Security and interested in both Hydroponics and Aquaponics. Discussion about Hydroponics..
And inspecting Rainbow Trout in an Aquaponic system..