

Mid Ulster is Growing from Home
End of Summer Virtual Show
September 2020



130 entries received; Prizes awarded in 34 classes

Judging taken place on Monday, 12 October

Judges: Jenny McGetrick (TCV), Mark Edgar (MUDC), Yvonne Zellmann (MUDC)

Results – Part 1: General Garden Setting

Small food garden

1st - Jolanta Kulinska

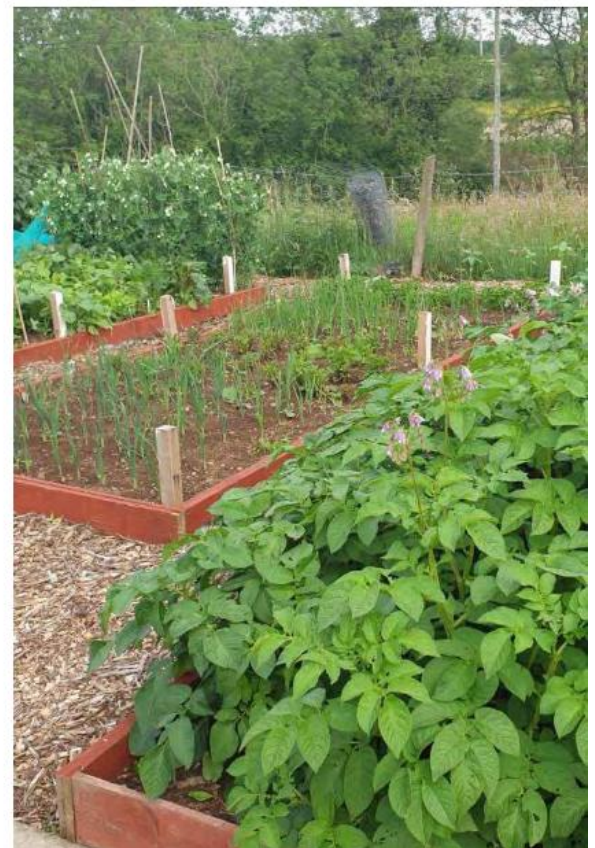


2nd – Sophie Atkinson



Large vegetable plot

1st – Frances Dobbin





2nd – Marie McKenna





Variety of produce in a raised bed

1st – Lorna Lammey



2nd – Katharine McGuckin



Backyard gardening

1st – Kate & Wendy Helliwell



2nd – Conan O'Doherty



Container growing

1st - Helen Andrews



2nd – Jean Reid



Salad/herb bar on the windowsill

1st – Christine McGowan



2nd – Jolanta Kulinska



Culinary herbs (in pots or bed)

1st – Sophie Atkinson



2nd – Marie McKenna



Productive greenhouse/polytunnel

1st – Community Garden at an Ráth Dubh, Moneyneena



2nd – Donna Anderson





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Results – Part 2 (a): Food produced

An impressive harvest (of any variety)

1st – Drumnaph Community Allotments (Grapes)

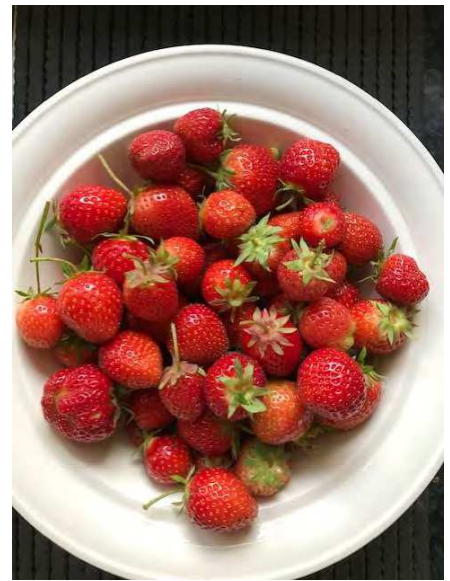


2nd – Maureen McKeever (Blackcurrants & Redcurrants)



Any homegrown fruits

1st – Nichola Salley (Strawberries)



2nd – Ian Weir (Apples)



The apples Ian harvested from the apple tree in his garden were used to prepare stewed apple and apple crumble, which he sent to families that were and are shielding.

Colourful vegetables

1st – Delia McPeake



2nd – Christine McFlynn



Edible flowers

1st – Christine McGowan



Nasturtium flowers and seeds with Thyme flowers, chives and rosemary to add extra flavour displayed on a bed of home grown iceberg lettuce.

2nd – Drumnaph Community Allotments (Nasturtium Flowers)



Plants/produce grown from groceries

1st – Geraldine McElroy



Harvest of potatoes which Geraldine grew in a potato pot out of 3 shrivelled potatoes taken from her grocery basket



Plants/produce grown from saved seed

1st – Conan O'Doherty



Conan grew his mini white pumpkins from a white pumpkin he got the year before. He dried the seeds and sowed them around June this year.



2nd – Donna Anderson (Faye's Rose)



This was Donna's first attempt of growing a stunning rose, which she got from fellow Nunnery Hill allotment holder Faye, who had taken cuttings from plants and potted this up for her.



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Results – Part 2 (b): Food produced

Homegrown spuds

1st – Ian Weir



2nd – Helen Andrews (The Loup Women's Group)



Peas/beans/mangetout

1st – Tony McElroy



2nd – Frances Dobbin



Tomatoes/cucumbers/peppers/chillies

1st – Emma Hegarty

Chillies grown by Emma and her children over lockdown



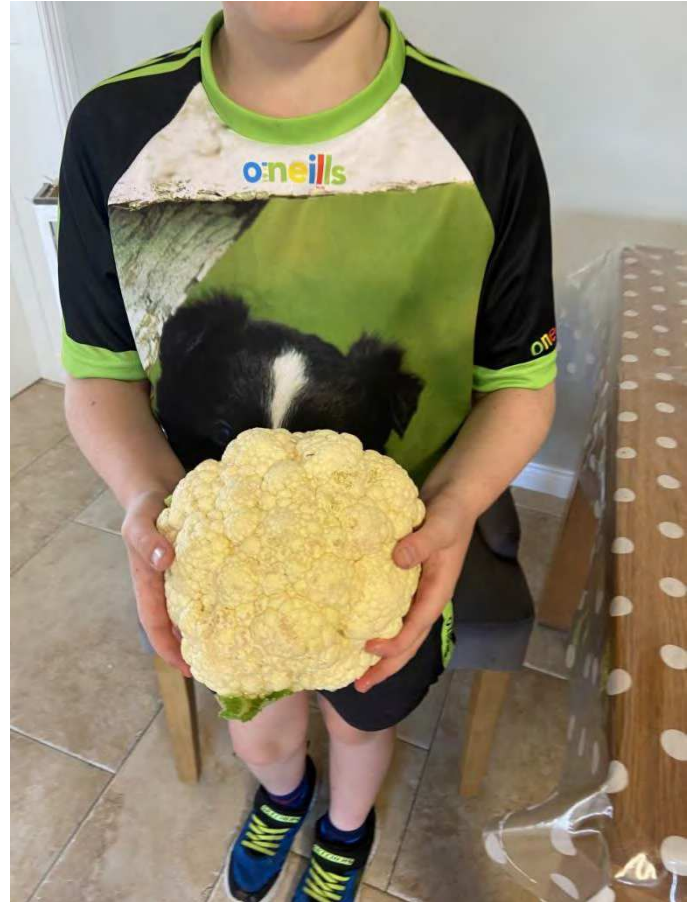
2nd – Anne Reid

Cucumbers & peppers grown by Anne and her family



Cabbages/broccoli/kale etc

1st – Conan O-Doherty (Broccoli & Cauliflower)



2nd – Marie McKenna (Cabbages & Kale)



Onions/garlic

1st – Deirdre Bradley





2nd – Drumnaph Community Allotments



Lettuce/salad crops

1st – Katharine McGuckin & Conall, Ruari and Finn



Root vegetables (carrots/parsnips etc)

1st – Nichola Salley



2nd – Tullymeadow Community Garden



My most unusual vegetable grown

1st – Elizabeth Scott (Red Chard & Purple Peas)



2nd - Rose Mary Johnston (Kohlrabi)



Biggest plant or vegetable

1st – Lorna Lammey (Sunflower)



2nd – Damien & Fionn McElroy (Courgettes)

Our family favourite veg

1st – Conan O'Doherty (corn on the cob)





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Results – Part 3: Food made from homegrown produce

Variety of homegrown soup/stew vegetables (at least 3 different ones)

1st – Anne Reid & Family (Veggie Soup)



2nd – Frances Dobbin (Potato and Leek Soup)

Ingredients

Serves: 4

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 large leeks, chopped
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 5 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 900ml boiling water
- 2 vegetable stock cubes
- salt and black pepper, to taste



Heat oil gently, add leeks and onion, then cook for 7 to 10 minutes until soft.

Add potatoes, cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Add water and stock cubes, and season well.

Bring to boil, lower heat, simmer for 20 to 30 minutes.

Cool slightly, puree, reheat gently. Serve in warm bowls.



Cake/dessert made with homegrown fruit

1st – Jolanta Kulinska (Apple Crumble)



Recipe:

- apples (enough to cover baking tin about halfway up) - peeled, cored, and sliced
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup brown sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup old-fashioned oats
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold butter

Toss apples with white sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon in a medium bowl to coat; pour into a baking tin

Mix brown sugar, oats, flour, and 1 teaspoon cinnamon in a separate bowl. Mash cold butter into the oats mixture until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs; spread over the apples to the edges of the baking dish. Pat the topping gently until even.

Bake in preheated oven until golden brown and sides are bubbling, about 40 minutes



2nd – Maureen McKeever (variety of dishes using raspberries & currants)



sourdough banana loaf with fresh raspberries



Freshly prepared healthy lunch/snack with produce from your garden

1st – Marie McKenna



2nd – Frances Dobbin – Red Pepper & Tomato Soup and Veggie boxes



Roasted Red Pepper and Tomato Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 2 red bell peppers, seeded and halved
- 15 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 medium onion, quartered
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and halved
- 1/3 cup of Red lentils
- 1-2 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste



- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon ground paprika
- Cayenne pepper
- Salt
- Crème fraiche



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 200oc. Place red pepper, tomatoes, onion and garlic on a baking tray. Toss with olive oil, salt and pepper. Arrange the tomatoes and bell peppers with the cut-side up. Bake for 45 minutes, until vegetables are tender.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat the vegetable broth on medium heat, add lentils and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the roasted vegetables (remove skin from peppers) tomato paste, parsley, paprika and cayenne pepper. Stir to combine. Simmer for 15 minutes.
3. In a food processor or blender, purée the soup and transfer back into the pot. Cook on low heat for another 5 minutes. If you desire a thicker consistency, cook a few minutes longer. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Stir in some crème fraiche before serving.



Two lovely examples of the many home-produced veggie hampers, which Frances gave away to friends this year

Any cooked meal (with some homegrown produce)

1st – Emma Hegarty & children



Chilli con carne with home-grown chillies



2nd – Lorna Lammey



Tasty cooked dinner of homegrown potatoes, swedes, beetroot from Lorna's raised bed in her garden and red onions on fish

Home made preserves (jams/jellies/cordials ...)

1st – Rose Mary Johnston (great variety of chutneys, pickles, etc)

Rhubarb and Apple Chutney



Recipe

- 1.5kg Rhubarb
- 500g apples
- 500g onions
- 1 cup sultanas
- ½ cup prunes
- 1kg soft brown sugar
- 1.25l cider vinegar
- 4tsp salt
- 1 tsp cayenne
- 1tsp ground cloves
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp ground ginger



Thinly slice the onion. Core the apples – don't peel. Slice them thinly. Cut the rhubarb into chunks. Simmer all the ingredients for 2 hours, stirring every 15 minutes or so. Bottle in sterilised jars.

Green Tomato Chutney



Recipe

- 910g green tomatoes
- 225g onions
- 225g apples, peeled and cored
- 225g sugar
- 285ml vinegar
- ½tsp salt
- 1tsp pickling spice



Chop the tomatoes, onions and apples. Simmer all ingredients gently until the ingredients are soft and the mixture thickens.

Sauerkraut



Diana Henry's Pickled Onions



Recipe

- 1kg onions
- 1.2l distilled white vinegar
- 750g granulated sugar
- 2 cinnamon sticks, halved
- 6 cloves
- 8 allspice berries
- 2 small dried chillies
- 2 star anise



- 4 bay leaves
- 8 black peppercorns

- Cut the onions into 1cm slices and separate the slices into rings
- Put the other ingredients in a saucepan and bring to the boil, dissolving the sugar. Once boiling, add the onion rings in batches – as soon as the liquid begins to simmer again stir the batch of onions, take the pan off the heat, and remove the onions with a slotted spoon. Repeat for each batch.
- Repeat for all the onions twice more.
- Once the onions have been done the 3rd time boil the liquid until it has reduced by half, then cool completely.
- Put the onions in sterilised jars and cover with the vinegar solution.

2nd – Anne Reid & Family (cordials & Rhubarb & Ginger Syrup)





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Results – Part 4: Environmentally friendly gardening

Attracting pollinators/wildlife

1st – Christelle Rankin



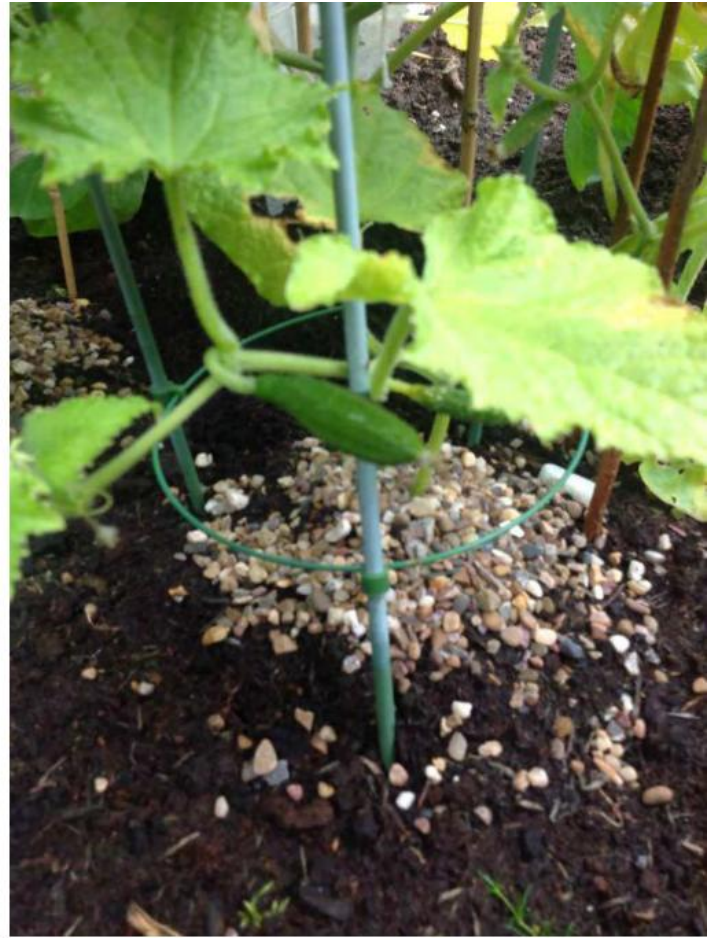
A beautiful butterfly enjoying the flowers on Christelle's cosmos plants growing in two large pots on the patio and have been a haven for bees, butterflies etc this summer

2nd – Marie McKenna



Ideas for chemical free pest control

1st – Una Hughes



Wildflowers in the garden

1st – Eilish Hackett (Tullymeadow Gardening Group)



2nd – Mary McConnell & Children



Wildflower Meadow grown with wildflower seeds distributed by Tullymeadow Gardening Group

Use of recycled/reused materials in the garden

1st – Christine McGowan



Christine has been recycling milk containers, as well as reusing salad containers from a local restaurant to re pot and grow her iceberg lettuce. It is important to insert holes for drainage in both types of container.

2nd – Katharine McGuckin





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Results – Part 5: Keeping up the community spirit

1st - Tullymeadow Community Allotments in Augher

Even though group activities had to stop at the community garden, the group was able to keep a variety of crops growing this summer, thanks to attention by individual members. Furthermore, to keep spirit up and brighten the community Tullymeadow distributed lockdown gardening packs and free sunflower seeds for group members to sow in their gardens and spread a little sunshine during these difficult times. Below are some of the photos received:







2nd - Community Garden at an Ráth Dubh in Moneyneena

The Community Garden at an Ráth Dubh, Moneyneena supported by the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (administered by Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership) and Mid Ulster District Council has provided a lifeline for up to 15 local gardeners during the Covid-19 lockdown. Gardeners of various ages and backgrounds have sought refuge and availed of physical exercise, tending to their allotments and raised beds, whilst at the same time experiencing the benefits of the great outdoors, aiding their mental health and wellbeing.

Socially distanced with appropriate measures in place, the gardeners through an agreed rota from 6.30am in the morning until 10.30pm at night were able to maintain the garden, happily planting, cultivating and harvesting their produce from May – September 2020.



The gardeners were ably assisted by the local Gardening group 'Greenfingers @an Rath Dubh' who have gone beyond the call of duty over the last 6 months, opening & closing Polytunnel doors, watering the plants, weeding and helping look after the community garden, ensuring that it is always left neat and tidy and well-presented.



Highly commended were also the entries submitted by

- **Drumnaph Community Allotments**
- **The Loup Women's Group**
- **Ballygawley Community Garden**

who despite the enormous difficulties faced by all groups this year successfully managed to keep fruit and vegetables, herbs and wildflowers growing in their community allotments and gardens.

Well done everyone!

Mid Ulster is Growing from Home

2020 Growing Season



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Wrapping up the gardening season

End of October, we are well into autumn – temperatures are down and days are getting short – and as we are finding it much less pleasant to venture out into our gardens, it might be time to wrap up this growing season. There are still a few gardening tasks to complete, but don't worry if you don't feel like it or can't find the time during the shorter daylight hours. Most things in our gardens can now wait until next year, when you hopefully feel refreshed and energised to start the cycle of vegetable seed sowing and planting again ...

However, if you want to get out into the fresh air and clear your head from time to time, you might enjoy a few late autumn (or winter) activities in your garden:

Keep Harvesting



While tender plants such as courgettes, pumpkins and runner beans will have died with the first proper frost there are a lot of frost-hardy vegetable plants, which can withstand even snow and ice. So, **don't** cut off your well-established Brassica plants (e.g. cabbages, kale, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, broccoli) or feel pressurised to harvest them all in one go. They should hopefully continue to crop well into the winter months, the same is valid for leeks, chard and hardy salad crops, such as Lamb's Lettuce.



Carrots and parsnips can theoretically also be left growing in the ground, but often slugs and other pests start to eat into them at this time of the year, so it might be better to harvest them all now and store in a cold, dark place.

Don't forget about your herbs and fresh greens, such as rocket, mizuna and winter lettuces – if you find the daily trip to your vegetable patch too unpleasant in this weather, it might be a good idea to move some pots with herbs and late salad sowings close to the house, so you actually get the benefit of eating them!



Last sowings



You can just about still sow most of the seed from your late summer sowing packs e.g. oriental vegetables, hardy salad types or scallions to prolong your growing season, especially if you have a polytunnel, greenhouse or cold frame. Otherwise you might want to provide some form of fleece protection against very cold temperatures and severe stormy weather. If you are keen you can even already start some of next year's crops by sowing broad beans or planting garlic – I usually wait with these until spring as the success rate can be a bit sketchy.



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As before you can sow directly in rows into the ground or start off seedlings in plug trays – make sure to keep these in a sheltered, bright place **outdoors** (or in the polytunnel if that's where you intend to grow them on) and plant out on a reasonably nice day as soon as possible.



And if you really can't be bothered to face the elements, there is always the option of sowing some pea shoots indoors in a tray on a sunny window sill, for some fresh sandwich toppings or side salads, quickly grown in a week or so!



Protect young seedlings



When transplanting your seedlings started-off in seed trays from late summer sowings make sure to also protect the young plants from slugs, especially if you had a slug problem during the summer! This might even be a problem in greenhouses or tunnels! Used (cut-off) 2l plastic bottles work very well for individual young brassica seedlings, which otherwise might disappear quicker than you can plant them out!



Clearing your plot

Now is also the time to tidy up and clear some areas in your garden by removing withered, diseased or rotten plants, unused crops and of course weeds! But don't go overboard and don't just throw everything away – **think of your garden as a resource** – your own food growing resource for next year and an important food resource for our wildlife to make it through the winter!

So here are a few Do's and Don'ts:

Peas/Beans

- **Don't pull out spent pea/bean plants** – just cut the plants at ground level and dig in the roots, which contain valuable nitrogen for your soil.

- **Save some seed for next year**

It's easy to **save some seeds from your pea plants** for next year's sowings: Leave a few plants that still have some pea pods on them until completely withered and brown/black – you want to hear the peas rattling in the pods – and harvest the peas for seed on a dry day. You can also take whole plants and dry them upside down in a shed. Fully dry the pea seeds for a week or two on a plate in a dark cupboard before storing them in paper bags/envelopes in a cool, dry place.



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- **Strawberries**

Take some strawberry runners to increase your number of next year's plants before cutting back your strawberry plants. Simply choose a few strong runners and peg them down into the soil with a piece of wire bent into a u-shape (old wire coat hangers work well). For container grown strawberries use little pots filled with compost for your runners. Leave the strawberry plants and runners outside and just keep watering them if necessary – you can cut off the runners from their mother plants once they have rooted.



- **Never leave your soil bare** if you want to avoid nutrients being washed out by rain! If you don't intend to sow a green manure cover over winter, thickly cover any bare patches with organic matter. This process is called mulching and you can use old straw, grass clippings, sheep wool, even thick layers of cardboard/old paper weighed down with grass clippings or old twigs etc. I wouldn't use wood bark chip to mulch your veggie plot though, as it decomposes very slowly and might make the soil too acid.
- **Compost** any old plants/stems/vegetable matter from your garden – unless they are diseased. You can also collect leaves from your garden trees and store them in a wire mesh bin to start making leaf mould as a valuable addition to next years potting compost.
- **Re-use the spent compost from your pots, seed trays and container plantings** - either now as additional mulch around overwintering plants or store the full pots somewhere dry to be used next spring, when you can mix the contents with mature compost or leaf-mould to fill the bottom of large containers or window boxes. This will save on the cost for buying in multi-purpose compost!

Wild Foods

- Right now many of our native shrubs and trees found in hedges, such as ilex, dogwood, hawthorn and blackthorn are still full of berries! If possible **wait with the cutting of your garden hedges and shrubs** until later into winter to allow the birds in your garden to make full use of this vital food resource.



- Similarly when cutting back herbs and flowers remember that sunflowers and other plants with seed heads (e.g. teasel, echinacea, rudbeckia) are an important food resource and also provide shelter for wildlife, so don't waste them just to have a tidy

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looking garden. Leaving some of these plants uncut until late December or so might also come in handy if you are into crafts as many of them are useful materials for winter wreaths or seasonal crafts.

- Also remember to leave some untidy areas in your garden – some old wood piles, areas of nettles, high grass etc to provide overwintering areas for insects and other wildlife.
- And if you like to go foraging along the hedgerows for some wild foods to add to your own cooking you should still be able to find some rosehips for making syrup or sloe berries for sloe berry gin ...

Hope you have enjoyed the project and will keep enjoying your gardens 😊

And don't forget for next year: KEEEEP GROWING!!!!

This 'food growing info' concludes the Mid Ulster is Growing from Home project.

For queries and feedback please email yvonne.zellmann@midulstercouncil.org