

Growing veggies is quite exciting

The garden is really coming alive now with both courgette plants flowering and what looks like courgettes on them and even the dwarf French beans I'd given up on seem to be starting to sprout.

The carrots now look like carrots, with their little feathery leaves and as Kate pointed out...

You can actually see the plants without standing over the raised beds now.



We also planted some radishes yesterday just for fun.

I'm worrying a little about the green house plants and the whole pollination thing. Obviously the bees and other insects don't get much chance to do their job in there and I don't seem to be very adapt with a cotton bud.

Fingers crossed.

Kate's hard work

Well this bank holiday weekend has seen some cracking weather so Kate got out and did some tweaking to the back garden.

The big deal was our new picnic bench which meant on Saturday, we had a barbeque and subjected the eleven year old next door to some of our music.

Oh the joys of being the grown up.



We also planted some new flowers during the week, you can see them in the background. The hope is that they will climb and spread along the back fence screen and give some colour.

I took it easy this weekend and just did some greenhouse tweaking yesterday.

The courgette plants had outgrown their pots so I replanted those and did the same with the pumpkin plants too.

Just have to cross our fingers that it wasn't too traumatic for them and they will still produce courgettes (and pumpkins).

Kate is working on her shed today, she'd replaced the frames on the windows as the wood was rotten, and she's added some new shelves to help store my endless supplies of plant pots.

She also built me a fab stand for hanging baskets in the greenhouse, cause I have a couple of trailing tomato plants.



The front garden looks amazing

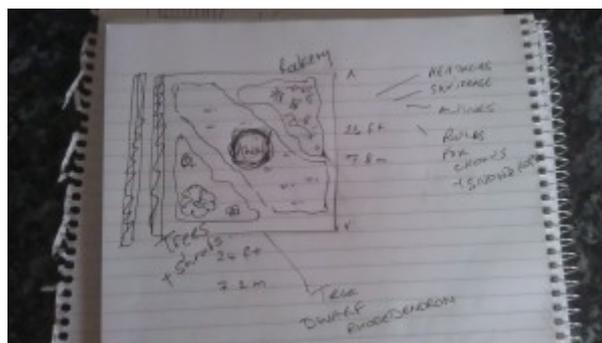
Well finally, after all that hard work. The front garden is done.

We started with a completely monoblocked front garden. Nothing pretty about it, but you could park four cars there. That's always a bonus but it wasn't what we wanted. We wanted a proper garden with flowers and grass and somewhere to enjoy life.



This was what the house looked like when we moved in

So that's where we began. Kate drew out some rough ideas to see what we could do.



After some mucking about, we decided that we would go for something a bit different, rather than the square lawns like everyone else in the street. (our street is full of square lawns with willows or cherry blossoms in the centre)

Task one

We spent a morning with some chalk drawing out our ideas on the actual monoblock so we could get a proper idea of size. This was a good plan as once we saw the actual dimensions, we decided on some small tweaks, as to be honest... the size scared us a little. Although we're thankful it didn't rain and wash our ideas away.

Task two

Once we knew what size and shape we were going for, we decided to start small, we lifted the monoblock to make space in the two corners so we could put some colour in to make a start on making it pretty.

Task three

This was the fun bit. We went and bought loads of plants that we liked in a mad afternoon in B&Q and then we came home and we built a rockery with loads of colours and different types of plants and then on the opposite side of the garden we built a shrubbery with a little tree.



Task four

This was probably our big mistake. We left lifting the section for the lawn till last and it was hard going. We lifted 1500 blocks just for the lawn.

Out of all the garden work we've done so far, I think this was

the hardest task, not because the blocks individually were heavy, but because there were so many and it wasn't just about lifting them, we had to carry them through the driveway to the back garden and then stack them there out of the way so that we could work.

This was a long job, but thankfully a neighbour saw us and came across to lend us his wheel barrow. The neighbours here really are lovely.

We got the blocks lifted ok... But it left a huge big empty space.

We had to dig over all the soil in the huge space where the lawn was to go. That was the hardest job ever and at one point I thought I was going to collapse.

Ok so I suppose this is the bit you are all waiting for,... You just want to see photos of the finished garden don't you?

So recap, just to make you wait.

We had a huge square blocked area. We created two flower gardens, one a rockery full of alpines and one a shrubbery with Kate's tree.

The we lifted the space where the lawn will go and dug it over.



Well ... Today... We finished it.



Easter weather wash out

Well we had big plans. Easter weekend was when we were to get our front lawn.

Exciting huh?

But it rained and rained and rained.

So what did we get done? Well there were quite a few jobs to do to get things ready for laying a lawn.

Lift 1500 paving blocks

Lift sand

That would let us lay the lawn.

Then...

We planned to create a new monoblock area in the back garden to create a sundeck area.

We managed to lift the monoblock.



So now there is a space for the lawn to go...



Remember Colin?

Well he's taking over



and...

He has flower buds.
I'm quite excited.

Day two of the big chill out weekend.

Oh what a glorious day, the sun is shining, I'm sitting in a sunbeam waiting for Kate to return with beer and burgers for the BBQ.

But wait... Before anyone gets the wrong idea, we've just finished the shrubbery.

That's right we've done some more work out front and now we are having our well deserved sunshine.

Yesterday we built the rockery and today followed suit. We lifted the monoblock on the opposite corner into the same

shape, dug and forked all the earth and dug in some fertiliser.



Then we planted an array of colour and texture.

Kate finally got to plant that Japanese maple she's always wanted.



So... Finished shrubbery...



And almost finished front garden (still got the lawn to create).



I feel I should apologise for any spelling mistakes, I'm blogging from my phone in the sunshine :0)

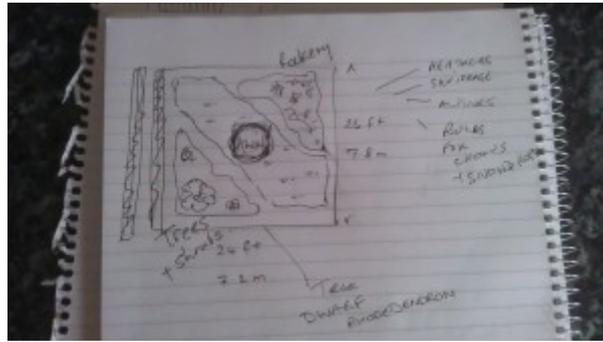
Today we are going to chill out and not do anything...

Yeah that plan didn't work.

Today was going to be a day of relaxation, maybe do some shopping but nothing major. That lasted about an hour and we were back at it.

I guess we just aren't good at sitting around doing nothing. We managed breakfast and some TV but then we were getting twitchy and before we knew it...

Eli was planting beetroot and Kate was drawing sketches of how the front garden was going to be and writing lists of what we needed. Then, the chalk came out and we were drawing our plans onto the monoblock.



First thing to check out was how difficult it was going to be to lift the monoblock. If that was going to be a nightmare job, then plans were going to have to be scaled down somewhat. Luckily though, it came up really easily.

We know cause once we had a list, things progressed to ... "let's just see..."

So we find ourselves standing in the front garden, with muddy hands and a big hole in the ground. OOPS!

Off to B&Q AGAIN!

So home from B&Q with soil and plants and the end result..



Greenhouse update

I thought I'd give you a wee update on how things are going with our brilliant greenhouse, only this time... I'm doing it with video :0)

Click on the link below to see the video...

<http://www.elidonald.co.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/First-year-in-the-greenhouse.mp4>

Epic weekend!

Have we been busy this week?

– have we ever! Even more so than normal and boy do we hurt. Kate is currently hugging a glass of wine cause it's too heavy to lift. Eli is looking smug cause she has a non alcoholic beer which is only 55 calories but tastes like beer.

First job of the week was cleaning the patio – thank goodness for the pressure washer – turns out the slabs are grey not black! We originally tried some proper patio cleaning stuff from the builders yard at B&Q... did it clean it up? Did it heck!!!!!!

So out came the pressure washer and Kate was off. ☐ It looks so much better and it's not slippy when it's been raining.

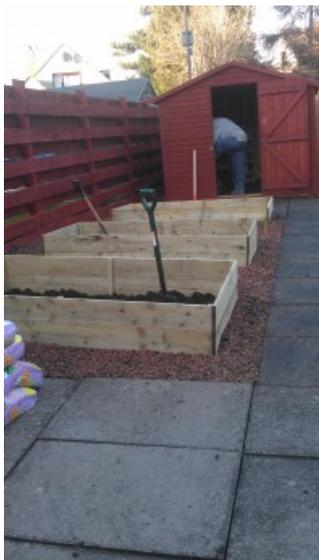


Next up was painting the shed – Eli did a fantastic job (assisted for a time by Lou) particularly impressive given that she really had to stretch to reach the high bits. Of course, letting Eli loose to paint the shed meant she painted it – of course – orange! But amazing what a difference a coat of paint has made – the shed looks great – and so do the fences which also got a freshen up.

She was disappointed when she realised that the wood paint didn't stay orange, but turned a dark reddy – brown.

Friday was the start of the big gardening adventure – we hired a van to make sure that we could get everything home in one trip – I love my car but she's not really able to transport 1000 litres plus of compost, 5 raised beds, 4 hanging baskets, a mattock, shelving for the greenhouse, plant fleeces (IN CASE THEY GET COLD), pots for the chilli plants etc etc etc. Eli even managed to convince a nice boy in B&Q to do the heavy lifting for us although the shine wore off when the cashier

looked at our trolley and asked who we were burying!



Building the beds turned out

to be a little trickier than expected as it turned out that the soil under the chuckies was less than a spade depth – so we did some lateral thinking and doubled up the height of the beds to make sure there will be enough space for all the stuff to root. The ground isn't all together level so the layout of the beds is a little “organic”, but hey that's how you can tell they were handmade!



Saturday was demolition day – which basically meant that Kate got to go wild with a crowbar and a sledge hammer tearing down the old shed – a huge amount of fun – highly recommend it as stress busting exercise. Didn't take too long to get the shed in pieces and the skip was soon full of broken pieces and unwanted random stuff left behind by the previous owners. Eli was a big squeally girl as she had to carry loads of wood with spiders and other beasties on it, but she tried to be brave so she could get her greenhouse in the end.

We have to say thanks to our neighbour Sandra who leant us a sledge hammer and gave us a box of maltesers “to keep our strength up”. It sounds like the whole neighbourhood are enjoying the saga of what we're doing to the house and garden. We're expecting a visit from the East Lothian Courier any day now.

Other big excitement of the day was the arrival of the fire pit – which will make a great addition to the patio for evenings of bbq, toasted marshmallows and some jamming on the guitars (provided I keep up my lessons and do the practice exercises that Eli has set). The garden is really starting to take shape and looks so much tidier.



Eli has been very patient waiting for the day to put up the greenhouse (she bought it the night we moved in), and Sunday finally saw the wait come to an end.

The concrete base needed a little work to level out – plus the eviction of many spiders, slaters and centipedes and then it was time to open those green boxes that have been lurking in

the shed for weeks! Cue assembly of the world's biggest mechano/jigsaw! At this point even Eli had second thoughts.



We started putting the greenhouse together about 9 o'clock. We sat down at 5:30 pm.



Have to say a huge thank you to Eli's sister Leigh who painted the last fence on Sunday.



Plan to take it easy on Monday and do a little potting – and maybe even go do something other than gardening!

Shed clear out Saturday (and no that's nothing to do with playing the old firm at Tannadice)

Well this weekend's list of chores are;

- Clear out the big shed – check
- Replace the rotten wood in the shed – check
- De-rust and paint the clothes poles – check
- Put up screening on the back fence to increase privacy –

check

- Fix outdoor tap so it doesn't leak – check
- Paint fence and shed
- Sort herbs in new herb planter – check
- Plant new herbs in propagation tray – check

Today has been another productive day of making things pretty around the house and garden. It started with a wee trip to b and q and a shopping list of garden supplies.

I suspect it's going to end in stiff joints, ice packs, beer and Chinese.

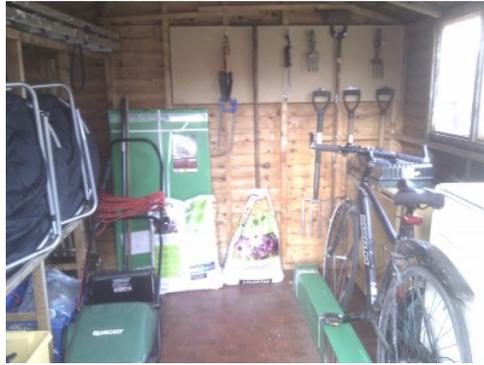


Kate did a grand job of ripping out all the rotten wood from the shed and giving it a really good clean before re-organising it to make loads more space. And I must say, she makes a very attractive dust mask model.

While Kate was sorting the shed, Eli got on with de-rusting and then painting the clothes poles. And in true Eli style, by the end of it there was more paint on her than on the poles. How she got the paint on her back side when she was facing the poles is one of the great mysteries of life along with... where does the other sock go when you do the laundry? Why are you always left with one screw and a dowel when you put flat pack furniture together?

The poles do look better though.

And the shed.... positively palatial Kate says...



Sunday's tasks will be to paint the fences and shed and to clean the patio.....and maybe even wash the car (before the neighbours start talking about us!)