

The first UK allotment trial of **E**ffective **M**icro-organisms

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Making light work



Andrew Seall is giving the sun a helping hand on the EM trials plot

We are told that the best average growing light conditions for fruit and vegetables is six-plus hours per day, and the more 'rounded', less-intense, that light is the better. I don't think we get enough sunlight most years – in fact, weather statistics for my area show that for the first part of this year, sunlight levels were down twenty minutes per day on an average year. I reckon that any extra reflective rays we can aim at our crops can only mean a better harvest. So, as well as my EM trial, I am experimenting with light-reflective ground cover and sunlight-reflective wall coverings. The reflective ground cover works fantastically well for fruit farmers, so I am going to use it under 12 strawberry plants to see if we'll get a better-than-usual crop. I am using the reflective wall covering on some soft fruit bushes and my container-grown lemon tree.

Another reason I'm using the ground cover is that it will suppress weed growth. The EM micro-organisms we have

poured into the ground can't distinguish between weeds and our plants – so to reap the maximum benefits of EM we don't want competition from weeds.

This white reflective ground cover isn't yet available to gardeners, but when it is it will be offered to *KG* readers first. I know some of you are saying all this is costing more money, but when applied against favourite vegetables and high-value fruits, it is worth the investment. Maximise your cropping potential and minimise unnecessary work, my wife Carol tells me all the time, and I think the EM with white ground cover will achieve just that on our soft fruit beds.

The EM trial on the vegetables, both with and without EM, is so far not showing anything conclusive. That is not to say that things are not going as one might hope, just that the results are a little way off yet. What we can say, though, is that we seem to have more worms, some so big as to frighten off the blackbirds!



ANDREW SEALL

We pulled up the remaining rocket and looked at the roots, the picture tells the story. However, we decided not to pull all the parsley but just keep cutting for the pot because it is so good so early.

The last experiment is my carrot cloche, made from timber and covered with 1.5m (5ft) wide fleece – all designed to keep the carrot fly away. I have treated the soil with EM, diluted 1:10, and mixed in sharp sand to open up the soil. I've also sown tagetes all around the outside.

Bye for now, Andrew

My allotment neighbour Ron on his 22-year-old Ford 1200 tractor, turning the ground ready for planting brassicas.



CAROL SEALL

My carrot cloche should keep the carrot fly away

Rocket roots tell their own story: the top plants were grown in soil treated with EM, the lower ones in untreated soil



CAROL SEALL

What is EM....

- EM stands for 'effective micro-organisms' and is a totally natural organic liquid feed, adding beneficial organisms to the soil.
- EM increases the micro-flora and fauna in the soil, which then makes more nutrient available to be taken up, which in turn makes the plants stronger and encourages better root development.
- You can make your own EM. A starter kit (fermenter and ingredients) are available to *KG* readers at the special price of **£29.99** inc p&p to anywhere on the UK mainland, saving £4.95 (regular price with p&p £34.94). Send a cheque, payable to Pillerton Designs, to: Pillerton Designs Ltd, PO BOX 6959, Wellingborough, NN29 7WY. Or visit www.gardenyogurt.co.uk

