

### INTRODUCTION

Henfaes horticulture demonstration plot was originally established with soft fruits. The area has since expanded to include lavender, asparagus and rhubarb. The most recent addition to the area is a 60m bed of perennial herbs and a 60m bed of annual herbs. On 18<sup>th</sup> August 2010 CALU held an open day looking at the field and pot production of herbs. This factsheet aims to give an overview of the establishment of the perennial herbs plot at Henfaes.

### VARIETIES

Micro-module plants of the varieties shown in Table 1 were ordered from Kernock Plants, Cornwall, in November 2009.

**Table 1: Perennial herb varieties for Henfaes herb plots**

Herb common name	Latin name	Description
Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Upright deep green foliage and blue flowers.
Purple sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i> 'Purpurascens'	A purple form of the well known broad-leaved Sage.
Common sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Broad, green upright foliage
Thyme	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Dark green upright, bushy foliage with pink flowers.
Chocolate Mint	<i>Mentha x piperita</i> 'Chocolate'	A cultivar of originating from a water mint x spearmint cross. Slight chocolate mint taste to the leaves.
Apple Mint	<i>Mentha suaveolens</i> 'Apple'	One of the most popular culinary mints with large round hairy leaves, apple scent and attractive flowers.

The micro plugs arrived on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009. Only one plant was lost during delivery: a rosemary plug.

### POTTING ON

Immediately following delivery, the micro plugs were potted into 9cm pots filled with Humax multi-purpose compost. The compost was very wet, having been stored out of doors. The plants were left to establish in an unheated glasshouse over winter.

### GROWING ON

As the compost was very wet, the plants were not watered after potting on. They were visually checked on an ad-hoc basis (at least once a week) when staff were working in the area. The plants were grown on in the unheated glasshouse until the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010 when they were moved onto outside benches to harden off.

### PREPARATION OF THE FIELD SITE

The site was previously grazing for sheep. The first step of preparation was to securely fence the plot to ensure rabbits and sheep were excluded. The grass was sprayed off with

Glyphosate in mid-February. It was ploughed on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and treated with Pirisect (active ingredient: chlorpyrifos) on 18<sup>th</sup> March to, hopefully, minimise leatherjackets. On 21<sup>st</sup> April the bed area was covered with Mypex type fabric. The herbs were planted into the field in batches during the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010. They were watered in after planting as there had been no rain during the previous weeks.

### SPACINGS

Incisions were made into the Mypex and thyme plants were planted at 0.3m within the row by 0.5m between rows. The rest of the herbs were planted at 0.5m by 0.5m spacings.

### ON-GOING MANAGEMENT

The plot will be hand weeded as required throughout the growing season. The herbs will be trimmed as required.

### COSTS OF PRODUCTION

Throughout the process we have monitored the inputs (labour and materials) involved in establishing the demonstration plot. The table below summarises this information

**Table 2:** production costs for 3 x 60m rows of herbs at CALU Henfaes, 2010

Item	Unit	Unit cost (£)	Quantity	Cost (£)
Micro module plants				
Mint (apple)	ea	0.24	57	13.68
Mint (Chocolate)	ea	0.25	57	14.25
Sage (Green)	ea	0.25	57	14.25
Sage (purple)	ea	0.25	57	14.25
Rosemary	ea	0.26	57	14.82
Thyme	ea	0.25	75	18.75
9cm pots	ea	0.01	360	3.60
Pot trays	ea	0.72	18	12.96
Humax multipurpose compost	litre	0.05	120	6.00
Labour	hr	7.20	4	28.80
On going watering, monitoring & maintenance = 1hr / week	hr	7.20	20	144.00
Insecticide	litre	10.75	0.05	0.54
Insecticide application	hr	7.20	0.30	3.60
Cultivating	hr	22.00	1	22.00
Planting out	hr	6.50	8	52.00
Laying geo-textile	hr	7.20	5	36.00
Geo-textile	meter	1.00	60	60.00
<b>Total cost</b>				<b>£459.50</b>
<b>Cost per plant</b>				<b>£1.28</b>