

# Kirklees Allotments

plant it  
grow it  
eat it

Your Guide to Making  
the Most of Your Allotment



**NHS**  
Kirklees

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COUNCIL



# Welcome...

to your guide to making the most of your allotment. We hope you will find this guide useful in getting started and in the future.

The benefits of having your own allotment are vast. Not only will you reap the health benefits of growing your own fresh fruit and vegetables, you will also get plenty of fresh air and exercise whilst working your plot. Allotments also provide the opportunity to make friends with your fellow allotment gardeners.

Allotment gardening is the ideal way to get away from it all or if you have children why not take the family along and get everyone involved. Growing your own produce can bring a great sense of satisfaction and the more you grow the more handy tips you'll pick up as you go along.

Happy Gardening!







**plant it**

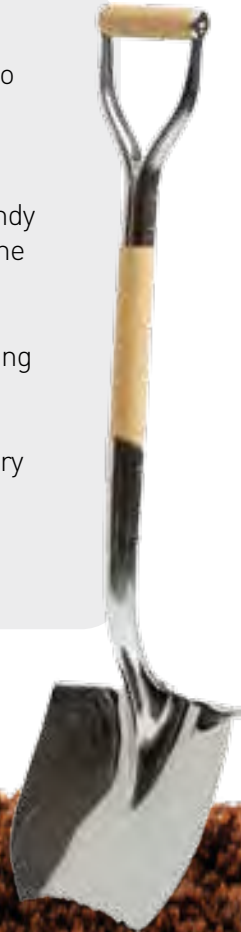




# Getting Started

Now you've got your own allotment you can start to enjoy the benefits of growing your own fruit and vegetables. We hope you enjoy getting out in the fresh air, taking some exercise and reaping the rewards of what you decide to grow. Here are a few tips to help you along the way:

- **Plan ahead** – draw a sketch plan of your plot and plan in advance what you are going to do each month. (Don't forget to use our handy gardening calendar on the next page).
- **Research** - borrow a gardening book from your local Library and Information Centre or mobile library to pick up some handy hints. Look up books referenced under 635 onwards or use the free internet access available in all Library and Information Centres. As well as picking up gardening tips, there is also a range of health books with lots of information on healthy eating and exercise.
- **Little and often is the key** – if you put in a couple of hours every week you will see real results, rather than trying to tackle everything in one day.







- **Associations** - being a member of an allotment association, such as Huddersfield Allotments and Gardens Federation or Dewsbury Allotments Association, may benefit you with talks, purchasing seeds and materials or hiring equipment. Contact 01484 234026/27 for more details.
- **Courses** - look out for allotment gardening courses and weekend workshops. Contact Kirklees Allotments for further details.
- **Talking** - why not pick up some helpful tips and advice from fellow allotment holders.
- **Assess the workload** - if you are finding it takes more time than you have, talk to Kirklees Allotments. They can offer advice or arrange for you to reduce to a smaller plot, so you have less gardening to do.



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# Your Gardening Calendar

The weather and climate is constantly changing which is a challenge to the allotment gardener, but below is a general guide to the gardening year.

## January

Plan what you will grow. Make bean trenches and sow sweet peas indoors. Seeds of main crop onions can be sown in the greenhouse. Broad beans can be sown in pots for planting out next month. Cover rhubarb to encourage an early crop of forced rhubarb.

## February

Sow broad beans at the end of the month, place seed potatoes in a container such as an egg box and wait for the shoots to appear, plant Jerusalem artichokes, onions and shallots.

## March

If the ground is warm enough sow parsnips, broad beans, carrots, spring onions and early peas. Plant early potatoes at the end of the month. Sow tomatoes for greenhouse cultivation.

## April

Sow broccoli, spinach, cabbage, beetroot, lettuce, radish, turnips, leeks and more peas outdoors. Sow courgettes, marrows, runner beans, pumpkins, cucumbers and sweetcorn indoors. Plant out main crop potatoes. For lettuce grow a few seeds every couple of weeks.

## May

Sow more carrots, put up frames for climbing beans, sow french beans, swedes, radishes, marrows, kohlrabi and peas. Stake broad beans, plant out runner beans, tomatoes and leeks. Sow winter cauliflowers and cabbages at the end of the month.

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## June

Pull main rhubarb crop, sow more carrots, plant out cabbage, leeks, broccoli, kale, outdoor tomatoes, pumpkins, marrows, courgettes, lettuce and celery. Sow peas for a late crop. Protect and start picking soft fruit such as strawberries, raspberries and currants. Start pulling early crops of potatoes.

## July

Remove (pinch out) the top growth of broad bean foliage to help to stop black fly. Continue successional sowings of all crops of your choice. Keep crops moist, mulched if necessary. Start picking early crops of tomatoes.

## August

Harvest and dry onions and garlic, continue to pick soft fruit, cut canes on finished raspberries, plant new strawberries. Keep all crops watered if weather is dry.

## September

Harvest main crop potatoes, cut down Jerusalem artichoke tops, sow green manure crops and broad beans, plant out spring cabbages.

## October

Dig over and mulch/manure beds. Cut back hedges, tie in brambles, cut out old fruited wood on currants and raspberries, plant garlic. Clear and tidy greenhouse, as well as clean and sterilise against pests and diseases.

## November

Mend fences, gates, shed and give a coat of paint and make a leaf mulch bin. Look through seed catalogues for new ideas. Start planning your plots with regard to crop rotation and decide what you would like to grow and where.

## December

Make sure next year's seed list is sent off, finish digging over and tidying the garden.

# Gardening with Children

Working together as a family is a great way of getting everyone involved. From sowing those first seeds and enjoying all the tasty and healthy food you produce, to making gardening fun, here are a few things that children might enjoy:

- **An area that they can garden with child sized tools, or use border forks and spades, which are smaller and still robust.**
- **There are now gardening books for children, which will help to get them started on the path of healthy eating.**

To keep children safe on our allotments, please remember to:

- **Keep your children supervised at all times.**
- **Remind children to wash their hands after gardening.**
- **Don't let children go onto other allotment gardens; there may be hazards that you don't know about.**



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# Safety & Security

Allotment sites can never be kept fully secure, so are vulnerable to theft and vandalism. Keeping sites full, looking tidy and attractive is one of the best ways of deterring anti-social activity. There are other things that you can do:



Some people leave their sheds open because they feel this stops people breaking in. If you lock your shed use a strong padlock and keep your shed in good repair. You can grow thorny climbers over your shed.

If you do experience theft or vandalism ring the police on 0845 606 0606 and report the crime. This helps your site because the police become aware of any patterns of vandalism.

# Waste & Recycling

A well run allotment produces very little waste. Most weeds and crop residues can be composted. Prunings and hedge trimmings can be chipped for use as a mulch, or stacked in an out of the way corner as a habitat for beetles and millipedes.

On occasions a skip is provided on most sites for non-compostable waste.













# Preparing your plot

The best way to start is to clear your plot. This can sometimes be quite a big task, so little and often can be the best method of clearing rubbish and weeds.

Start by cutting back any grass, a strimmer might come in handy, then rake off and remove the debris, composting where possible.

To help keep weeds at bay spray the plot with glyphosate or cover with either geotextile or cardboard and manure. Carpet should not be used as it may contain chemicals, including moth repellent. Mulches can help to kill most weeds in the first year, but deep rooted weeds may need digging out.

## Going organic

Growing your fruit and vegetables without the use of chemicals enables you to go organic; by using only natural fertilisers such as manure and green manure.

No spraying of herbicides or pesticides which contain chemicals should be done. By manually weeding and controlling pests, this encourages predatory insects and animals such as frogs etc. Further information on organic growing is available at your local Library and Information Centre.

# Crop Rotation

The idea behind crop rotation is to grow different produce in the same soil each year. By doing this it reduces the risk of nutrient exhaustion and the build up of pests and diseases.

Plan to rotate your crops by dividing the plot into 3 or 4 beds, where each bed has a family of crops in each. For example:

**Bed 1** should be treated with lime and used to grow brassicas (cabbage, sprouts, cauliflowers and broccoli).

**Bed 2** should be treated with a general fertiliser only and used for root crops (potatoes, carrots, turnips, beetroot and swede).

**Bed 3** should be treated with manure or compost and this section should be used to grow peas, beans, onions, leeks, tomatoes, celery and courgettes as these crops require the richest ground to do well.

Each year the crops are moved on to the next bed and in this way no crop will return to the same piece of ground for three years and the whole plot will be manured every three years.



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# Choosing what to grow



There is a wide variety of fruit and vegetables to choose from. The best advice is to grow what you will actually eat. If you grow in successions of crops you will avoid growing excess quantities of the same type of vegetable/fruit. Sowing small amounts in regular succession will avoid waste.

Why not try swapping excess crops with your neighbours? In order to grow more use a greenhouse or polytunnel.

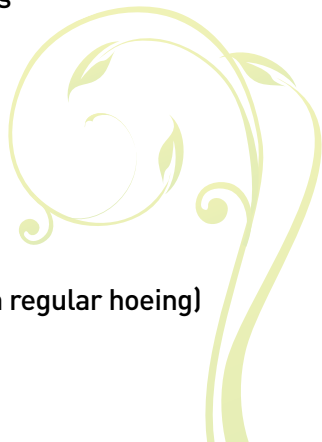


## Mulches

Mulches can be used to suppress weeds, to retain moisture and to keep soil warm, all of which makes for good growing conditions. Mulches can be made up of:



- Grass clippings
- Old wood chip
- Membrane
- Compost
- Manure
- Leaf mould
- Soil dust (from regular hoeing)



Grow it

# Tackling Weeds

Weeds are best kept down by regular hoeing, which is best carried out in hot dry weather. Also using mulches will help. Planting your crops close together will help to reduce weeds by blocking out light reaching the ground. Some deep rooted weeds such as dandelions and docks will need digging out.



# Composting

Compost provides a natural source of rich nutrients for your allotment. It naturally improves the quality of your soil, as well as reducing waste.

You can either make your own compost bin or purchase one from Kirklees Council by contacting **0845 076 0223** or you can visit the **Kirklees website [www.kirklees.gov.uk](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk)** and go to the A to Z where you will find a Composting section.

All suitable allotment green waste should be composted, including grass clippings, leaves and vegetable green waste.

# Why make compost?

- Improves soil texture
- Improves aeration of the soil
- Increases water-holding capacity of soil
- Improves soil fertility
- Feeds micro organisms that keep soil healthy
- Reduces landfill pressure (45% of all waste could be composted)
- **BEST OF ALL COMPOST IS CHEAP TO PRODUCE**



## Good decomposition requires:

<b>Material:</b>	50:50 by weight of browns and greens. Manage contents of pile using list opposite.
<b>Water:</b>	50% moisture content, damp to touch. Below 40% the bacteria will slow down, above 60% they may drown. Cover pile to protect from rain, water as required.
<b>Oxygen:</b>	Oxygen to all areas in the pile to keep bacteria healthy. Turn the compost, use an air stack, stir the pile.
<b>Surface Area:</b>	Larger surface area allows more bacteria to digest and multiply faster creating more heat. Cut up or shred material before adding to the pile.
<b>Volume:</b>	The pile should be large enough to keep heat in, but small enough for air to get to the centre. A minimum of 3 feet cubed and no larger than 5 feet cubed.



# What can I put in my Compost?

**YES** ✓

## **BROWNS (carbon)**

- dead leaves
- cardboard (torn)
- old straw/hay
- dry plant stems
- sawdust in small amounts
- paper (scrunched up)
- wood ash

## **GREENS (nitrogen)**

- grass
- fruit
- vegetables (raw)
- pea and beantops
- manure
- bedding plants
- urine
- young weeds
- flowers
- comfrey / nettles

**NO** ✗

## **NOT TO BE INCLUDED**

- coal and coke ash
- cat litter
- dog faeces
- glossy magazines



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# Leafmould

The main benefits of leafmould are that it contains twice as many minerals as manure and retains 3-5 times its weight in water, making it an excellent choice for improving your soil structure. Another key benefit is that it is free to collect leaves. If collecting leaves off the street ensure that you do so before the gritter has been around as salt contaminates the leaves.

## The Low-down on Leafmould:

- collect leaves with a mower on a high cut to shred them and add some grass clippings for nitrogen.
- store leaves in wire containers or sealed black plastic bags.
- ensure leaves are kept damp at all times.
- tread down to compact leaves in storage.
- store leaves for at least twelve months to allow them to break down sufficiently.





# Wildlife

Encouraging wildlife to your plot will increase biodiversity across Kirklees. Wildlife can also play an important part in helping control pests on your allotments, for instance:

- **Birds eat slugs, snails, aphids and caterpillars.**
- **Hedgehogs eat slugs.**
- **Frogs and toads eat slugs.**
- **Predatory insects such as ladybirds and beetles eat aphids, slugs and other pests.**

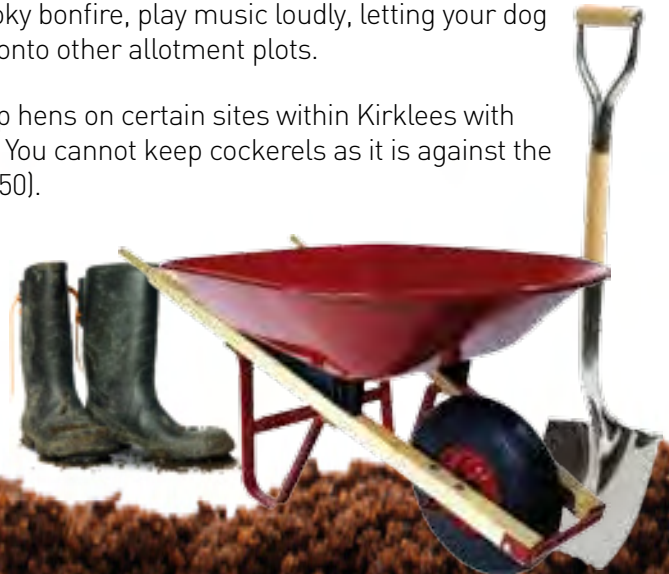
However you will need to protect your crops from birds. You can do this by putting a protective net over your crops or using bird scarers such as old CDs on bits of string which help to reflect the light and scare the birds away. Netting may also be required to protect your soft fruit.



# Do's and Don'ts

## Conditions for Having Your Allotment Garden

1. You may grow soft fruit, vegetables and flowers on your allotment garden. You are expected to care for all of your allotment garden, not just part of it whilst letting the remainder grow weedy.
2. You are responsible for the health and safety for yourself and other users of your plot.
3. You must not bring onto your allotment garden any harmful things such as banned chemicals, asbestos, builders' rubble or synthetic carpets that do not rot away etc.
4. You should keep the soil free from harmful things such as glass, plastic waste, builders' rubble etc.
5. You should show care and consideration to other allotment users and the residents around the allotment site. This means that you should not behave in a way that may cause concern eg: have a smouldering smoky bonfire, play music loudly, letting your dog bark or trespass onto other allotment plots.
6. You may only keep hens on certain sites within Kirklees with prior permission. You cannot keep cockerels as it is against the Allotment Act (1950).



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7. You are responsible for the boundaries of your allotment gardens. You are responsible for cutting and keeping tidy the grass path running beside your allotment garden. Boundary hedges and fences must be maintained where applicable.
  8. You are responsible for any structure on your allotment garden. You can remove it when you leave your allotment garden, or pass it on to the next tenant. You are responsible for keeping any structures safe and well maintained.
  9. Applications for all new structures should be agreed and approved with the Allotments Section in accordance with Planning Regulations.
  10. We ask you to use water wisely by collecting rainwater in a water barrel to protect our environment. We also ask you to consider your neighbours, who will be sharing taps with you. Hose pipes and sprinklers should not be used.
  11. As a matter of health and safety all water tubs, baths and containers should be covered and kept secure. Any ponds on sites should be secure to prevent children falling in.
  12. When you decide to give up your allotment garden you are expected to write to the Allotments Section and give 4 weeks notice before you want your Tenancy Agreement to end.

Happy Gardening!









# The benefits

## Why eat plenty of fruit and vegetables?

We know that we should be eating more fruit and veg, but most of us still aren't eating enough. Fruits and vegetables should make up about a third of your food intake each day.

Five-a-day is a healthy, achievable target. If you count your portions each day it might help you to increase the amount you eat. You can choose from:

- fresh,
- frozen,
- tinned,
- dried,
- or juiced

Remember that juice will only count as one portion a day regardless of how much you drink and potatoes don't count at all because they're a starchy food.



Eat it





Five great reasons to eat 5 a day:

- **They're packed with vitamins and minerals**
- **They can help you to maintain a healthy weight**
- **They're an excellent source of fibre and antioxidants**
- **They can help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers**
- **They taste delicious and there's so much variety to choose from.**

Different types of fruit and vegetables will provide different nutrients. Try to eat a variety of colours and textures. Growing a variety on your allotment will enable you to get lots of fresh low-cost fruit and veg.

## **It's all in the preparation!**

Fruits and vegetables can be eaten, prepared and cooked in a variety of different ways, such as roasted, grilled, steamed, boiled, stir fried or cooked in a microwave. Below are some tips for the preparation of fruits and veg.

- **Eat fresh fruit and veg as soon as possible rather than storing for a long time - or use frozen instead.**
- **Don't overcook - start with boiling water and cover tightly to keep in the steam, because this speeds up the cooking or use a steamer or microwave.**
- **Fruit and vegetables don't have to be eaten on their own to count. You can also include any vegetables found in soups, stews, sandwiches and other dishes**
- **Avoid leaving any vegetables open to the air, light or heat if they have been cut. Always cover and chill them.**

# Get Physical!

Exercise is a vital component for keeping fit and healthy. There are many forms of exercise and working on your allotment is an excellent way to being more active.

## Benefits include:

- Improved cardiovascular function
- Lowered blood pressure
- Reduced body fat and improved weight control
- Improved glucose tolerance and reduced insulin resistance

## How should I feel whilst I'm being more active?

- Warmer
- Breathing faster
- Feel muscles working
- Sweating
- Develop a healthy glow

## After exercise you may feel:

- Less stressed
- More relaxed
- Confident
- Less likely to suffer from joint problems



# For more information:

Call: 01484 234026 / 27

Visit: [www.kirklees.gov.uk/allotments](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/allotments)

Email: [culture.leisure@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:culture.leisure@kirklees.gov.uk)

Or write to:

**Parks and Open Spaces (Allotments)**

Culture & Leisure Services

The Stadium Business & Leisure Complex

Stadium Way

Huddersfield

HD1 6PG

## Other useful websites:

Allotments Regeneration Initiative

[www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari)

National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG)

[www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk)

Healthy Weight for Kirklees

[www.healthyweight4kirklees.nhs.uk](http://www.healthyweight4kirklees.nhs.uk)

Time to be Active

[www.time2beactive.co.uk](http://www.time2beactive.co.uk)

Allotment Growing

[www.allotment.org.uk](http://www.allotment.org.uk)



Eat it



# Kirklees Allotments











# Contact details

Call: **01484 234026/27**

Visit: **[www.kirklees.gov.uk/allotments](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/allotments)**

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