

Hertford Town Council

Allotment Newsletter - Spring 2025



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

WELCOME ...

to the Spring edition of Hertford Town Council's quarterly Allotment Newsletter.

Our aim is to keep you up to date with new developments and share tips on keeping your allotment in tip-top condition.

Thefts from Plots

We have been made aware of items and produce being taken from plots on Cromwell Road allotments.

Any theft from plots should be reported to the police. Items, plants or produce should not be removed from any plot, other than your own, without the current owner's consent.

Please don't leave any valuables in the allotments and ensure crops are protected with nets to deter pests, both animal and human!

Reminders

- Dogs must be kept on a lead at all times. Dog waste should be picked up and disposed of correctly.
- Please respect your neighbours both on the allotments and in neighbouring houses. Keep noise to a minimum and mechanical tools must only be used between 9.00am and 8.00pm Monday to Saturday, and 9.00am to 4.00pm on Sundays.
- Non-organic herbicides or pesticides must NOT be brought onto, stored or used on the allotments.
- No bonfires between 1st May and 1st September.
- Full rules and regulations can be found on our website www.hertford.gov.uk/services/allotments

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No-Dig Gardening—BBC Gardeners World Article (Summarised)

By Charles Dowding (February 2020)

The no-dig gardening method is one employed largely by growers of organic vegetables, though it applies to ornamental plants, too.

Rather than digging the soil to remove weeds, this process involves applying organic matter, such as garden compost or well-rotted manure, to the soil surface, emulating the natural processes of decomposition, as plants die back and leaves fall. Instead of being dug in, the no-dig gardener allows plants, fungi and soil organisms to break down and incorporate the organic matter into the soil.

In doing so, the soil structure is not disrupted by being dug over. Likewise worms and other organisms are not disturbed, therefore the soil's ecosystem remains intact. Yields of vegetables tend to be bigger when grown in no-dig soils. What's more, it's a great option for time-short gardeners who don't have the hours to spend digging over beds and borders.

The benefits

- Bigger harvests
- Saving time - less time digging, weeding and watering
- Less weeding - due to use of mulch
- Good for your body—less strenuous
- Better drainage and less watering
- Conserving soil carbon
- Less mud and easier access
- Earlier harvests
- Stronger plants
- Better flowers

How to get started

- Clear weeds
- Mulch with composted garden waste, wood chips, leaves or well-rotted manure
- Divide it up or create raised beds
- Sowing and planting
- Keep paths weed-free
- Frequent mulching



Please see:

www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/grow-plants/no-dig-gardening-guide/ for the full article.

The water supply to the water troughs is turned off over winter, from the end of October to the end of March, to protect the pipes. We request that Tenants do not turn the water back on themselves, please email or telephone us using the details to the left to request this.



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Lovely Grub Garden

In addition to making the new raised bed for Terri's group it was agreed that Bed E, a small raised bed, should be the first to be redesigned/ located as the sides have collapsed almost completely, the bolts broken and it poses an obstacle to people passing that side. A reassessment/measuring up of the Polytunnel is to be carried out and costings calculated for urgent purchase. Also order contractors to come to dig out/ level off ground to take renewed frame and cover.

A brief discussion was held as to what veg the group would like to grow this year; options included brussel sprouts, jerusalem artichokes, bush aubergine, hanging basket tomatoes 'tumbling tom', plus the usual favourites and a wider range of flowers for pollinators.

We updated our information leaflet last year for the All Saints Hope Day/Eco Fest but had not circulated it to local surgeries re 'social prescribing'. Committee agreed to discuss our scheme with surgery managers to make sure the practices were clear about what we could offer, namely social support and gardening opportunity but not anything formally 'therapeutic' as we are not trained/ qualified.

We will continue to try to find sources of grants for materials to go towards the repairs & replacements for the raised beds. Possible sources include B&Q and Asda Outdoor Community Spaces Fund.

We have agreed to take a stall for the Ecofest to be held at the Castle grounds on 11th May. We also anticipate holding an open day at the Garden in early September (7th).

Thanks was given to Ann D for her work with us over a number of years as she is moving away from Hertford in the near future. She will be missed very much.

North Road Plot Holders Group

Recent Activities

The cold wet winter has deterred all but our most hardened members from coming to site very much in the last few months, and in any event there is little that can be done. The strong winds have certainly shown that our new wind turbine works! Coupled with our solar panels, we should be able to charge all of our electrical mowers and strimmers on site from now on. Hopefully the cold weather will have reduced the number of pests we see later in the year .



Plans for 2025

Our regular work mornings were restarted in February, when our members got together to keep the site looking tidy.

Our committee has decided to change the timing of our AGM from this year. The AGM, Annual Show and Apple Pressing Day had all been held in September. So to spread the events around more, we will be holding our AGM in June.

We appreciate the Council's decision to fund the replacement of the main gate with one which should make access much easier and improve security. We look forward to seeing this installed in the coming weeks. We also welcome the decision to remove two oversize trees which were becoming an unwelcome presence to our members and neighbours.

Lettings

A small number of members have decided not to renew in January, so we are now in the unusual position of having one vacant plot (and one trug) and no-one on our waiting list.



Mudlarks Community Garden

The last few months have been quite challenging with the weather either too cold or too wet!

We welcomed three new gardeners and said good bye to one who has moved. This means we have now have 101 gardener places at the allotments every week, which is a tremendous number of people that are being given really meaningful and rewarding day opportunities in Hertford. We have more people referred to us these days who have high support needs, and for whom there is no other day activity available. The work we do is therefore vital for individuals' wellbeing, and also for their families who get much needed respite while their young adults are at Mudlarks.

We moved our Christmas wreath workshops to the Cafe as it was on the weekend of the heavy rains and wind. Some amazing wreaths were made using our home grown willow and adornments.

Our Christmas tree deliveries exceeded previous years, and with the gardening work slowing down, the gardeners had great fun delivering trees across East Herts. We also recycle the trees after the season finished, taking them up to Cumberlows to be mulched, and helping to reduce their carbon foot print.

Mudlarks were chosen as the recipient charity for the Christmas concert at Christ Church in Ware, "Carol singing from around the world". Gabby, the organiser, visited us few times in the week running up to the concert, with her violin and various musical instruments for the gardeners to play and have a good sing along.

This time of year gives us the opportunity to help other allotment holders clear their plots, and every week teams have been out weeding, clearing and laying wood chip for our neighbouring allotment holders.

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