



# Hertford Town Council

## Allotment Newsletter - Summer 2025



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

### WELCOME ...

to the Summer edition of Hertford Town Council's quarterly Allotment Newsletter. Also a warm welcome to our new tenants on the West Street and Norwood Close allotments.

Our aim is to keep you up to date with new developments and share tips on keeping your allotment healthy.

### Thefts from Plots

We have been made aware of items and produce being taken from plots.

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](http://www.hertford.gov.uk/services/allotments)

Hertford Town Council  
The Castle  
Hertford SG14 1HR  
Phone: 01992 552885  
Email: [allotments@hertford.gov.uk](mailto:allotments@hertford.gov.uk)

### Saving Water at Allotments

Between April 2024 and March 2025 an estimated 1.9 million litres of water were used at our allotments. Reducing unnecessary water usage saves both money and energy which is better for the environment. We've put together a list of ways you can reduce your water use, whilst still looking after your allotment.



#### When to Water

If you water in the middle of a sunny day, most of the water will evaporate before reaching your plants. If you can water early (before the ground gets hot) or late (after the sun has set) your plants' roots will have more chance to absorb the water.

You can also consider how often you water. Established plants need to be encouraged to search for water; frequent light watering encourages roots to stay near the surface but a good soaking once a week encourages them to grow down into the soil.

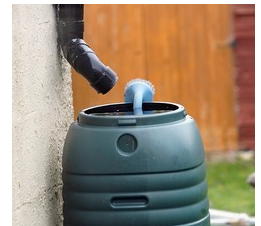
#### Watering Techniques

Make sure water gets to where it is needed by soaking around the roots. For thirsty plants such as tomatoes and courgettes, try placing plants in a saucer-shaped dip of soil so the water pools around them. Alternatively, you can bury a plastic bottle, cap removed and opening down, in the earth next to plants. Remove the bottom, fill with water and this will go straight to the roots.

You could also consider creating a swale (small trench), which will catch and hold water near your crop long enough for it to seep into the soil where it's needed most!

#### Mulch

Applying a thick layer of mulch will help to retain moisture by providing protection against sunshine and drying winds. Mulch can be made from natural materials such as chipped bark, cocoa shells, gravel, grass cuttings and straw. Generating enough mulch to cover a whole plot is difficult, so it may be easier to start with a few raised beds and extend over time.



#### Water butts

A water butt or two will help to harvest rainwater from the roof of your shed or greenhouse. Water collected in this way is a valuable resource and 100% better for your produce. Make sure all butts are sited in a safe place and are never left uncovered. Water butts cost around £40.00.

This article has been summarised and the full article can be found using the following link: <https://the-secret-garden.net/irrigating-your-plot-mastering-water-collection-and-storage-on-your-allotment.html>

### Reminder - use of Water Troughs at Allotments

Please do not use the water troughs for washing dirty hands or tools and hose pipes should not be used at the allotments.



# Hertford Town Council

## Allotment Newsletter—Summer 2025



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

### North Road Plot Holders Group

It seems that we gardeners are never happy with the weather. Last year, we reported the extensive flooding we had suffered due to one of the wettest winters on record, whereas this year we have experienced the sunniest, driest April since records began.



#### Recent Activities

Our regular work mornings continue to be well attended. As well as the routine mowing/strimming of communal areas, we have been carrying out other tasks such as repairs to fences and our compost bays. In addition to teas and coffees, one of our members is now preparing complementary breakfast items such as bacon rolls, so these mornings are becoming quite a social event for us. Our new main gate has now been installed and the digital lock makes it much easier to operate than the previous combination padlock.



Thanks to our former Chairman, Jim Waight, for building us a new replacement notice board. We have carried out our annual inspection of sheds and greenhouses and found no issues requiring attention. We also carried out a Health and Safety inspection with Stuart Baker from Hertford Town Council, and whilst no issues were raised, we had a useful discussion.

#### Plans for 2025

We are looking forward to our usual summer events, our AGM/ barbecue in June, our Autumn Show and our Apple Pressing day, both in September. In addition to our regular Scarecrow and Tallest Sunflower competitions, we are this year planning to give a prize for the most bee-friendly plot.

Our plotholders have been actively pursuing means to control pests now that we are no longer using pesticides. Slug traps, ponds to encourage predators and complementary planting, are amongst the measures being used.

### Lovely Grub Garden

Four members of the committee presented a stall at the Council's ECOFEST event on 11th May. It was a very busy day helped by the lovely weather. We also provided plants including currant and berry bushes organically propagated at the garden. We promoted the re-use ethos using plastic milk bottles planted with a variety of herbs and strawberries; and juice cartons planted with carrot seeds. Various saved seeds collected from previous seasons were also available in packets to try at home. Donations from the plants amounted to just under £60.00. Several members of the public seemed interested in joining as volunteers at the garden.



Since the last report, the weather has once again been unpredictable, and although there was a wet start to the year, up until 23rd May this area had not seen rain since mid-April. The garden relies solely on rainfall to top-up the water stores, it is not surprising therefore, that currently, only the large store has water, a situation which doesn't usually occur until mid summer. The LGG members are determined to make water collection/storage a priority, to remain off-grid, with the installation of more collection surfaces and butts.

To assist growing this season, members have been propagating seeds at home, only bringing them to the garden when they are a suitable size. The old polytunnel is still in situ so provides some protection for some young seedlings. Runner beans, tomatoes and French beans have been started in this way.



### Mudlarks Community Garden

Mudlarks hosted our first Saturday seed swap in March. There was a steady flow of people, some new and some familiar faces, who enjoyed a nice cuppa and home made cakes whilst swapping seeds. Our annual willow workshop was as popular as ever - the sun shone and all the willow obelisks that people created were amazing. We have helped a few allotment holders prepare their plots ready for planting. This is a great physical task for our gardeners which we love to do. As the weather has been so nice we have given our garden furniture some much needed TLC. Our gardeners have also made new signs for their vegetable plots.



Herts Regional College and Sele school have undertaken their work experience with us. Trainee OTs from Hertfordshire University also came and spent a morning with us and worked alongside our gardeners. Middleton school visited and enjoyed tasting our herbs and harvesting rhubarb. Mandy who is a professional photographer has been taking photographs at all our projects so we have some amazing photos for promoting Mudlarks.

Raytheon came for another much appreciated corporate volunteer day - they painted the outside of our shed and prepared the bank where we need to replace the flooring for our potting shed. We attended the Council's EcoFest at Hertford Castle and Nick gave a talk on composting. Dave and Craig have built us a wonderful barrow so we can put it out the front and put any excess vegetables we have over the summer months out for donations. The polytunnels are going really well and are supplying the cafe with early seasonal salad crops.

We said a fond fair well to Vic with an amazing party at Hertford rugby club. Nick has joined the Mudlarks staff team and is now running Special Branch. His diary is filling up quickly!

We look forward to welcoming Ricky our new CEO.