

GARDEN INFORMATION SHEET – THE ALLOTMENT GARDEN

Allotments are a great hobby. They're cheap, you get healthy exercise without having to pay for a gym or run around in circles and you get to eat healthy fruit and vegetables without all those (not so) yummy pesticides.

The allotment garden was extended in the winter of 2010 to its current size. Growing your own fruit and vegetables has always been a popular past time, but the upsurge in people wanting to grow their own has led to waiting listing on many allotments throughout the country.

Our Allotment Garden has been designed to show how to grow a large range of crops laid out to a clear four-course rotation plan.

Vegetables are grouped together into 4 sections, according to plant family and soil requirements. With this system it takes 4 years before each different group returns to the same piece of ground. In this case the sequence of growing used is

- Cabbage family - Brassicaceae
- Root crops - Apiaceae
- Potatoes - Solanaceae
- Peas, beans & members of the onion family – Fabaceae & Alliceae

The key to successful growing is to improve the soil fertility, so as well as making compost using the 3 bay New Zealand composter, leaves are collected for leaf mould and comfrey is grown to provide material for liquid feed

Flowers are included in the allotment garden for their decorative value, both fresh and dried. They are also attractive to beneficial insects, which help with pest control.

Month by Month Jobs

January

Start to chit potatoes

Winter prune established apple and pear trees

February

Sow seeds indoors to raise seedlings for planting out in the spring

Plant shallots and garlic

Dig over your plot and add well-rotted organic material – 2 barrows of compost per 5 sq m & 1 barrow of manure per 5 sqm

Cover seedbeds to warm up the soil

March

Sow a few seeds outdoors, if you've covered and warmed up the soil

Plant first early potatoes, shallots and garlic by the end of the month

Bare-root fruit trees and bushes should be planted by now

Finish winter pruning



April

Sow outside if the soil is warm enough

Plant second early and main crop potatoes and onion sets

Earth up first early potatoes

Prune cherries and plums now they are growing, once leaf buds have opened

May

Sow outdoors if the weather is mild and indoors or under cover if it's been a late spring

Harden off seedlings and start planting them out once the soil has become warm enough

Protect tender plants from sudden late frosts

Weed regularly and keep young plants well watered

June

Sow seeds for vegetables, salads and herbs that you'll pick later in the summer and autumn

Weed and water regularly to give young plants their best possible chance

Net peas, cabbages and fruit bushes

Keep a careful watch for slugs, snails, blackfly and other harmful insects

July

Pick cherries, strawberries, raspberries, currants, gooseberries and blueberries

Sow the last of your beetroot, French beans and peas for the year

Feed tomatoes regularly and pinch put side shoots

August

Check French beans, runner beans and courgettes every day and harvest them regularly

Pick plums, greengages and blackberries

Sow your last batch of carrots and turnips

Dry out garlic, onion and shallots so that they can be stored for winter

September

Pick late plums, mid season apples & pears and autumn fruiting raspberries

Plant spring cabbage and Japanese onion sets to over winter for next year

Add everything you can to your compost heap & sow green manures in empty beds

October

Cut pumpkins and winter squashes

Sow broad bean seeds for next year

Clear away dead plant material and compost it & sow green manures in empty beds

November

Pick autumn raspberries and cranberries

Plant new bare-root fruit trees, bushes & canes before the ground becomes too cold & wet

Sow green manures in empty beds

December

Plant garlic, rhubarb and new bare rooted trees and bushes

Prune apple and pear trees, soft fruit bushes and outdoor grapevines

Further Information

Garden Organic Fact Sheets

GS 1 – Growing from seed

GS 3 – Green Manures

GS5 – Organic pest and disease control

GG19 – Crop rotation

GS2 – Chemical free plot clearing

GS 4 – Managing your soil

GG9 – Growing potatoes

GG55 – Water in the organic garden

Garden Organic also runs a number of courses at Ryton Gardens including;

Managing your soil, Compost Magic and Planning your organic Vegetable garden

Please see our website www.rytongardens.co.uk for more details of courses and events on site

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FOR OTHERS TO USE – THANK YOU**