

Allotment Cultivation Advisory Note

1. Allotment Plot Inspections

- a. The council inspects all plots between the months of April through to October.
- b. What we look for when inspecting:
 - i. Number on peg closest to the main path.
 - ii. Plot being cultivated, with evidence of crops growing.
 - iii. Plot boundaries and paths maintained
 - iv. Grass to be cut on the paths between plots. Clippings to be removed for composting.
 - v. Rubbish and general tidiness.

2. Cultivation – When taking on a plot

- a. We will expect within
 - 3 Months – at least 25% to be cultivated with crops (First check)
 - 6 months – at least 50% to be cultivated with crops (Second check)
 - 9 months – at least 75% to be cultivated with crops (Third check)
- b. This starts from the date on your agreement.
- c. Checks are made throughout the year on an ad hoc basis.

3. Non-cultivation

- a. Plot holders who fail to maintain their plots will be contacted in the first instance.
- b. Plot holders who receive a letter for non-cultivation will be allowed one month to make significant improvements. Any other time scales must be agreed with the council. Failure to do so will require plot holders to give up their tenancy.
- c. You may use plastic sheeting only as a temporary measure to suppress weeds. The council encourages use of sustainable alternatives such as green manure cover crops or biodegradable cardboard over winter to prevent weed growth, improve fertility and reduce erosion.

4. Growing with nature

- a. Many of our native plants and trees provide important food and shelter for insects which are vital for pollinating our crops. However, some stronger plants (commonly known as 'weeds') can take over if they are not controlled.
- b. When taking on a new plot, be prepared to spend time to clear the plot properly.
- c. It is recommended to make frequent visits to your allotment, especially during the main growing season, and make weeding a regular task. Digging over the ground and removing roots is the most effective organic way but planting cover crops and other methods can help.

- d. Slugs and snails can be a challenge! Toads, hedgehogs and some bird species are nature's pest controllers, so creating habitat where they can thrive is a great way to help control slugs and snails naturally. See [Organic Slug Control – The National Allotment Society](#)
- e. Pest Control – this is controlled by the council's environmental officers. Any concerns should be raised with the Allotment Officer or your site representative.
- f. For tips and information to manage your plot and grow with nature please see:
 - [The National Allotment Society – National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd \(nsalg.org.uk\)](#)
 - [Getting started with vegetables - help and advice on growing veg / RHS Royal Horticultural Society Gardening](#)
 - [Gardening For Wildlife – The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds RSPB](#)
- g. Overall site management plans will identify areas unusable for allotment plots. These can be used for ponds and habitat for nature to deliver benefits for biodiversity rather than on individual tenanted plots. (South Gloucestershire Biodiversity team will co-ordinate with site reps, tenants, and Allotments Officer)

5. Pathways

- a. Sustainably sourced wood chippings/bark can make a good mulch for pathways. Wood chip from local tree surgeons can be a good source.
- b. Pathways between plots should be around 45 cm or 18" wide and kept clear of crops, weeds, tools, and rubbish.
- c. Leave a clear pathway between your plot and any boundary hedge for wheelbarrow/works access.
- d. Always place your shed, polycarbonate greenhouse or poly tunnel 30-45 cm away from the main pathway so that they won't get damaged when pathways are cut.

6. Chemicals and pesticides on site

- a. No chemicals and pesticides can be stored on allotment sites.
- b. As part of the council's work to respond to the Climate and Nature Emergency, use of pesticides on allotments is to be phased out by January 2023 as explained in our Pesticide Policy.
- c. To support this change in policy, the council will be running workshops for plot holders to find out more about pesticide free ways to control slugs, snails and 'weeds'.
- d. Until this date as current policy, weed killer (herbicide) and insecticide may only be used carefully on days with no wind, taking care it does not contaminate neighbouring plots.
- e. The council supports use of natural soil treatment including green manures, compost, seaweed, comfrey and manure in line with our Climate and Nature Emergency action.

7. Composting

- a. There are many benefits of composting on site and using compost on your plot as highlighted by [The National Allotment Society – National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd \(nsalg.org.uk\)](#) to save money, improve soil, save time and reduce plastic use from buying in compost.

- b. Only peat free compost to be used on allotment plots.
- c. As set out in the allotment terms and conditions; bonfires are not permitted on allotment sites. Composting of green waste is encouraged and any surplus green waste must be disposed of responsibly at one of the council recycling centres or in your home green waste bin.

8. Biosecurity

- a. Non native invasive plant species are not permitted on council allotments. They need to be removed/controlled appropriately and not composted or disposed of in green waste as explained in the council Plant Biosecurity Policy.
- b. How to identify non-native species and what you can do to help - [Non-Native Species Secretariat \(NNSS\) website](#)
- c. Plant purchasing is the most significant pathway for the introduction of non-native invasive plants, diseases and injurious plants. To reduce the risk of introducing non-native invasive plants and diseases, endeavour to purchase UK grown plants and use seed from the UK wherever possible
- d. The [Be Plant Wise](#) government campaign has information on stopping plants spreading and how to compost carefully.
- e. For advice or to report invasive plant species contact: nature@southglos.gov.uk

9. Find out more

South Gloucestershire council policies and information which may be helpful:

- Pesticide Policy (*in preparation link to be added*)
- Biosecurity Policy (*in preparation link to be added*)
- Pollinator Plan (*in preparation link to be added*)
- [Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Action Plan](#)

Other sources of information:

- [The National Allotment Society – National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd \(nsalg.org.uk\)](https://www.nsalg.org.uk/) <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/>
- [Getting started with vegetables - help and advice on growing veg / RHS Royal Horticultural Society Gardening](https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/beginners-guide/vegetable-basics?msclkid=5f657b1dab6511ecbd0e931537e51f87) <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/beginners-guide/vegetable-basics?msclkid=5f657b1dab6511ecbd0e931537e51f87>
- [Gardening For Wildlife – The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds RSPB](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/?msclkid=db171648ab6311ec894fedac85e6b0dc) <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/?msclkid=db171648ab6311ec894fedac85e6b0dc>
- [Organic Slug Control – The National Allotment Society](https://www.nsalg.org.uk/growing-advice/12625-2/) <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/growing-advice/12625-2/>
- [Non-Native Species Secretariat \(NNSS\) website](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm) <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm>
- [Be Plant Wise](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/what-can-i-do/be-plant-wise/) <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/what-can-i-do/be-plant-wise/>

Contact:

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For minicom and for this information in other languages and formats: Please contact us