



Hertford Town Council

Allotment Newsletter - Winter 2024



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

WELCOME ...

to the Winter 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 good condition.



Invoices 2025

The invoices for 2025 were sent out on 26th November via email. If you haven't received your invoice, please contact Jo Paxton on 01992 552885 or by email: allotments@hertford.gov.uk. Payments are due by 31st December 2024 and can be paid by BACS, credit/debit card or cheque.

Please note that the rent will be increasing to £7.50 per pole per annum from 1st January 2026.



Hertford 2030—Have your say...

We welcome your views on what is important to you to help Hertford Town Council reach our environmental goals by 2030. Please click on the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N3HSTML>

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Hertford Town Council actively encourages the use of organic methods of gardening. By eliminating chemicals, ploholders can help to support wildlife and ensure a balanced eco-system to reduce pests and diseases and increase productivity. Going forward only Organic sprays will be permitted.

From April 2025, tenants will not be able to bring on site or use any non-organic chemical pesticides or herbicides. Old chemicals and their containers must be disposed of off-site at a local household waste site. All chemical pesticides and herbicides must be removed from the allotments by April 2025.

Organic Gardening

Organic gardening not only promotes healthier produce, but also fosters biodiversity and soil health. Inspired by the principles of The Soil Association - the National Allotment Society have written an article with hints and tips on how to manage your allotment without the need for chemical pesticides and herbicides. This is summarised below, and a link to the full article can be found at the bottom of this page.

Why Go Organic?

Organic gardening focuses on working with nature, not against it. By avoiding synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, you're supporting the natural ecosystem, encouraging pollinators, enriching the soil and reducing pollution. Not only will your produce be healthier, but your allotment will also thrive as a haven for biodiversity, promoting natural resilience against pests and diseases.

1. Get to Know Your Soil

Healthy soil is the foundation of any organic garden. Test your soil to determine its pH and nutrient levels. You can then establish which plants are best suited to your allotment.

2. Avoid Synthetic Chemicals

These chemicals can kill beneficial insects, degrade soil health and pollute nearby water sources. Instead, rely on natural methods to control pests and feed your plants.

3. Companion Planting and Crop Rotation

Embrace biodiversity and companion planting. Planting certain crops together can deter pests, enhance growth and improve soil fertility. Rotating your crops each year prevents soil depletion and helps break cycles of pests and diseases.

4. Mulching

Mulching is a great way to protect your soil, help it retain moisture and suppress weeds. As it decomposes, the mulch will feed your soil, helping it to stay rich and fertile.

5. Collect Rainwater

This provides untreated water that's better for your plants and the soil.

6. Encourage Wildlife

Encourage biodiversity by creating habitats that support local species. By increasing biodiversity, your allotment will become healthier and more resilient.

Link to full article: www.thenas.org.uk/Starting_Your_Organic_Allotment

Other : www.gardenersworld.com/plants/10-companion-plants-to-grow/

www.rhs.org.uk/prevention-protection/controlling-pests...

Website

Our website www.hertford.gov.uk/services/allotments/ contains links to the site plans, structures application form and links to helpful websites.



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Lovely Grub Garden

While clocks are now back to GMT, gardening sessions continue on the weekly basis of Fridays/ 1st Sunday & 3rd Saturday of the month but with hours switched to mornings from 11 am – 1 pm. Surplus produce continues to be shared with nearby neighbours as well as amongst volunteers working at the sessions.

Members of the Lovely Grub Garden had a display at the All Saints Church Environmental Climate Hope Day on 21st September where we had leaflets, photos, produce from the garden and ‘tasters’ of preserves such as jams, chutney and fruit ‘leathers’ made from dehydrated pureed apple – something of a novelty for most people who tried them. Alan M also had a feature display on different composting methods. Our thanks go to Councillors Carter, Woodward and Crystall for their support and interest in our project.

The aims of the stall had been to both promote the garden activities and resources, and educate the visitors about the principles of permaculture/organic growing. Most of the visitors to the stall were either other stallholders or people who knew us already.

Garden Activity: The “Little Green Fingers” toddlers and parents group run by Terri over the summer months and into Autumn half term is shifting to sessions indoors to focus on a cookery club using vegetables grown by the group. She also plans to introduce ‘woodworking for wildlife’ sessions to create bird tables, houses, hedgehog homes or similar to see if that will also attract other family members.

Garden Maintenance: All the original raised beds, as well as the temporary one created for the ‘Little Green Fingers’ group, are now getting beyond repair. This provides us with an opportunity to re-design their number, size and layout. This is the most urgent task especially as two new raised beds will be needed for the spring to accommodate the ‘Green Fingers’ group and one to replace an existing bed.



Mudlarks Community Garden

Allotment Report

At the Inner City Show, our gardeners won 1st prize for our flower arrangement, unusual planter, pumpkins, red onion chutney and mini garden, 2nd prize for our herb bouquet and miniature bouquet and 3rd for our display of produce.

We used some of our produce to make a vegetable frittata at the allotments, as well as red onion chutney and pumpkin soup which were enjoyed by all.

Wood donated by a staging company has been used to build the staging at our newly built polytunnels at Haileybury School.

The path from our pedestrian gate was very uneven, so we levelled the ground and sowed the area with grass seed. This has grown beautifully and is now open for use.

Our manger beds are getting to a point where they need replacing. These are very expensive so we are emptying them and where possible repairing them. We will use some of the money raised by Cllr. Vicky Smith last year to buy new ones. Thank you Vicky!

We are busy making willow wreaths ready for the wreath workshops at the end of the month. This is fully booked for both sessions.

We will continue to keep ourselves busy over the coming months, maintaining and repairing woodwork around the site, and having bonfires to get rid of greenery and prepare ourselves for Christmas.

Larking About

We are delighted to now be maintaining more of the castle grounds under our new contract, and to have been involved in the Castle Greenspace works.

A huge amount of clearance work has been done to the beds has transformed the area, revealing long lost floriferous shrubs and allowing light into all the beds. The whole area has some structure again and feels much safer, with no areas hidden from view. It took a lot of work and van loads of green waste to get rid of all the weeds.

Now that we can see the beds, we can start to make plans for planting, and we are really looking forward to the transformation of the castle grounds.

Huge thanks to Meg for all her work and support!

North Road Plot Holders Group

Recent Activities

September was a busy time on site, with our AGM/Barbecue, Annual Show, and Apple Pressing days all happening within a few weeks. The AGM was well attended as usual, with members staying on for a barbecue picnic afterwards.

We also judged a number of competitions, including the tallest sunflower competition with a 3.1m specimen and the best scarecrow was “Supertato”.

The competition to build a toad house was also a success, and hopefully our new friends will help us keep down the number of slugs in the future.

The annual Apple Pressing Day was held at the end of September. Around 10 wheelbarrow-loads of apples were pressed into delicious fresh juice. The day is always a big hit with our children, who particularly enjoy helping to prepare and crush the apples.

On the same day we had our Biggest Pumpkin competition. The winning pumpkin managed to defeat our scales, so all we can say is that it was more than 25kg!

We have recently installed a small wind turbine on site. This will supplement the energy generated by our solar panels to keep all our electric mowers and strimmers fully charged.



The Council is saddened to hear of the retirement of Vic Broscomb, CEO of Mudlarks, but we wish her every happiness and extend our thanks for all she has achieved with such a wonderful charity organisation.