

Barton Lane Allotments

Health and Safety Guide

Allotment sites and gardening is relatively risk free if people are aware of the hazards and take steps to ensure that they themselves, other people and wildlife are not put at risk. Please read and consider the following points before allotment gardening.

1. Hazardous rubbish

1.1. Ensure that you do not leave broken glass and other hazardous materials on the allotment. If you discover a significant amount of buried rubbish, such as broken glass, plastics etc, then please dispose of it sensibly.

2. Skin irritations

3.1. Wear gloves and a long-sleeved shirt when pruning plants that can cause skin irritations for example ivy, euphorbia or rue.

3. Garden tools

3.1. Garden tools can be a hazard if they are not stored properly or are left lying around, e.g. upturned spades, forks and rakes.

4. Pesticides and fertilisers

4.1. Ensure that chemicals are kept securely locked in their own cupboard in your shed, away from children and in clearly marked containers. Do not keep them in lemonade bottles or other food containers or leave them lying around your plot. If you must use chemicals, please keep them on your own plot and do not allow them to stray on to your neighbour's. They may garden organically and will not thank you for it!

4.2. When using pesticides or fertilisers ensure to wear suitable clothing.

4.3. Please ensure that pesticides or fertilisers are disposed of responsibly. Pesticides should never be included in household rubbish, burnt, placed in skips or poured into any kind of drainage system or watercourse.

4.4. Please note that Garden Organic provide advice and publications on methods of pest control that do not require pesticides and gardening methods that reduce pest attack.

5. First aid

5.1. A first aid kit is a wise addition to tools kept in the garden shed. A small selection of adhesive plasters, antiseptic ointment, tweezers, and a gauze or lint pad to staunch bleeding.

6. Power Tools

6.1. Most power tools need specific safety and handling training e.g. chainsaws, strimmers, mowers and rotavators, and all are potentially dangerous. Wear protective clothing and equipment, and always follow the manufactures' instructions.

7. Mini ponds, water and children

7.1. Mini ponds offer numerous benefits to wildlife and give pleasure to people of all ages. Even a mini-pond can be a hazard for small children, so position it where it will be safe. Children should be supervised on allotments at all times and must not stray onto other peoples plots without permission.

8. Hazards for wildlife on allotments

8.1. These include: litter, low-level fruit netting, pesticides, open drains, slug pellets, mowing, strimming, broken glass and pre-built bonfires. Certain wildlife e.g. badgers, slowworms, some birds of prey and reptiles have specific legal protection concerning their management.

9. Vermin

9.1. Rats carry 70 diseases including Weil's disease, which can cause death via contaminated water. Plot holders must be vigilant and report any signs of infestation, which include burrows, tracks, droppings and observation.

10. Risk of infection

10.1. Tetanus or Lockjaw. This is a serious infection caused by bacterium that live in the soil and especially manured soil. It enters the body through the tiniest abrasion, scratch, puncture or cut. Always wear gloves when handling any type of manure. Fresh manure should be heaped for 6 months, giving time for e-coli to break down. It is the responsibility of the plot holders for basic

10.2. Legionella. In very hot weather, especially in green houses, it is possible, although very rare, for Legionella (Legionnaires' disease) to multiply in warm water to potentially harmful levels. Avoid storing potting media in greenhouses or spraying fine mists

10.3. Wash hands before eating. Keep hand-sterilising gel handy.

10.4. Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before eating.

11. Personal safety

11.1. Allotment gardeners often spend long periods of time alone on site. Take personal safety seriously and tell another person where you are going and what time you will be back. If you have a mobile telephone take it with you.

11.2. Gardening has many physical and mental benefits but be aware of the hidden dangers. Overexertion and repetitive movement, dehydration, over exposure to the sun, chemical use, noise from power tools, slip and trip risk, are all potential hazards to be wise to.

12. Bonfires

12.1. There is no law preventing bonfires, or specifying the time that you can have them. The Environmental Protection Act (1990), however, prohibits a statutory nuisance being caused by smoke.

12.2. Check weather conditions to ensure that there is not significant wind, do not leave a fire unattended and ensure that it is completely put out with water before you leave. Please see the Council's Guidelines on Domestic Bonfires for more information.

12.3. Check your bonfire for wildlife before lighting.

13. Dogs

13.1. Dogs must be kept on lead at all times and all fouling removed. Bacteria harboured in dog faeces include E. coli, faecal coliform bacteria, salmonella and giardia. In rare cases it can lead to a disease in humans called toxocariasis (caused by parasites known as toxocara canis or roundworm).

This document must be read in conjunction with the Allotment Tenancy Agreement.