

Penwortham Holme West Allotments



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You and Your Allotment

Hello and welcome from the Preston City Council Parks Department, the PHWA committee and new found friends!

We sincerely hope that you will experience the full pleasures to be had from your allotment, ranging from growing the freshest produce of your choice to the cultivation of new friendships within this special community.

This newsletter comprises of various articles specifically pulled together to assist in your chosen hobby. It is not a complete guide to managing your allotment but I hope that it will help you make a start.

Should you feel the need for advice and guidance please do not be afraid to ask! You will be surprised at how willing it will be given by your neighbouring plot-holders.

As you walk around the allotment site, you will notice that there is no single style of setting out your plot, or method of growing.

But a little knowledge can go a long way. You'll find articles in this newsletter about crop rotation, weed control, composting and pest & disease control, all of which will help you achieve a healthy and abundant crop production each year.

As well as looking after your own plot, we would also like to encourage you to take an interest in the allotments as a community.

The allotment association has been set up to look after the interests of all allotment

holders and we would encourage you to join.

A very warm welcome to you all.



Growing your own fruit and vegetables has many rewards as well as fresh produce.

David Green

Site Rep

What crops should I grow?

Vegetables tend to be group into five main groups:

Cabbage family: Brussels sprouts, broccoli & calabrese, cauliflowers, kale, Swedes, turnips and radish.

Potato family: potatoes, tomatoes, peppers and aubergines.

Peas and Beans: Includes garden and mange tout peas, broad, French and runner beans.

Onion family: onions, leeks, garlic and shallots.

Root crops: carrot, celery, parsnips and most herbs. Beetroot and spinach are often put into this group, although they are not

related.

Crops such as cucumbers, marrows, celery, lettuce and Sweetcorn can be grown with any of the groups.

You'll find an article in this newsletter about crop rotation, where these groups are important.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *The site shop is currently be renovated. New opening times will be displayed on the notice board.*
- *You can visit the allotment website at <http://www.prestonallotments.co.uk>*
- *Consider joining the allotment association, full details on the back page.*
- *Preston City Council provide skips at various times during the year to help allotment holders clear waste. The notice board by the shop has dates and locations. However, consider using the local recycling centre on Tom Benson Way if you have a lot to remove as skips quickly fill up..*

Crop Rotation

Growing related crops together makes sense. Related crops need similar soil treatment, and it helps to prevent pests and diseases building up in the soil.

Remembering what you planted last year and more importantly where, is essential, to avoid growing the same crop in the same space again.

Keep a notebook in your shed or in your coat pocket.

Depending on the size of your plot, you should aim for a 3 or 4 year crop rotation.

4 Year Rotation

Using 4 vegetable beds

Year 1

- Bed A: Potatoes
- Bed B: Peas/Beans
- Bed C: Cabbage family
- Bed D: Onions/root crops

Year 2

- Bed A: Peas/Beans
- Bed B: Cabbage family
- Bed C: Onions/root crops
- Bed D: Potatoes

Year 3

- Bed A: Cabbage family
- Bed B: Onions/root crops
- Bed C: Potatoes
- Bed D: Peas/beans

Year 4

- Bed A: Onions/root crops
- Bed B: Potatoes
- Bed C: Peas/beans
- Bed D: Cabbage family



Suitable clothing is a good idea

Clearing an overgrown plot

Wearing a good pair of boots or wellies and gloves, walk through your plot removing any debris such as wood, plastic, metal or glass. If you can't reuse these on the plot, the nearest recycling centre is on Tom Benson Way.

Cut down everything near to ground level using shears or a strimmer.

There are two methods to clear weeds. The first is to spray with a non-residual weed killer.

Follow the safety instructions carefully and ensure there is no spray or drift to surrounding areas.

But consider the alternative, many allotment holders prefer not to use

Using weed killer might sound like a good idea, but remember you are going to eat the vegetables you grow in that soil!

chemicals that could affect crops, so the second method is to cover the plot with material that prevents light from reaching the soil such as old carpet, felt, black polythene or thick cardboard.

The covered areas of ground will in time become bare of all plants.

Whatever method you use, clear an area at a time ready for planting, removing weeds and turning over the soil. Don't compost weeds!

Designing your plot

There is no right or wrong way to design the layout of your plot. There might be an existing shed or greenhouse that you are unable to move. Or well established fruit bushes/trees that you want to keep.

Some considerations when designing your plot are:

- Keeping the manure heap (if you have one) away from your shed (for the smell!!).
- Making sure paths are wide enough for a wheelbarrow.
- Build/mark out beds running

north to south, if possible, for maximum sun and so that plants don't shade each other.

- Cane fruit, such as raspberries, should be facing west for the evening sun to ripen fruit.
- Use water butts on sheds and greenhouses to conserve water for the summer months.
- Up to 25% of your plot can be given over to growing flowers. These are good for attracting beneficial insects such as bees, wasps,

ladybirds and lace wings.



Vegetables don't come out of the ground pre-washed!

Weeds

Weeds are either perennial (grow every year) or annual (grow just once).

Check your weeds as some are simple to remove, but others will plague you unless you take firm action straight away. If you don't have time to weed, at least remove flowers to prevent seeding.

Perennial Weeds



Bindweed will twine around and strangle your plants in no time.



Couch grass spreads through underground rhizomes that are very tough.



Creeping thistle might look harmless but its tap root sends out new shoots that spread fast.

Docks quickly grow a giant tap root and can produce 600,000 seeds a year.



Ground elder and horsetail spread the same way.



Horsetail

Annual Weeds

Keep these in check with hoeing, hand weeding and mulching. Warm a patch that you are planning to plant early by covering it with black polythene and watering the soil; you will encourage weed seeds to germinate. You can then pull up the weeds before planting.

Using a rotovator helps weeds by chopping and spreading them around!

Composting and recycling

Composting is a system of breaking down the complex carbohydrates and proteins in dead organic material into simpler nutrients which can be used in plants.

Have two compost bins side by side, fresher waste can rot in one whilst ripe compost can be taken from the other bin. If your heap smells, it needs more tough dry stuff such as sawdust or shredded cardboard.

Dig into planting areas to help improve soil structures or use as a mulch around shrubs and trees.

What to compost?

- Garden waste such as grass cuttings
- kitchen waste (fruit/veg peelings, tea bags, coffee grounds and egg shell)
- sawdust and wood ash
- shredded cardboard
- autumn leaves
- shredded woody stems
- pure wool jumpers
- bedding from vegetarian pets such as rabbits.

What not to compost?

- Cooked food, meat, fish or bread
- dog/cat faeces
- Nappies
- glass, plastic or metal
- paper with coloured ink
- plants infected with disease
- corks
- coal ash
- paper (as most is coated so will not compost organically).

Common Pests and Diseases

Prevention is better than cure when it comes to protecting your crops from pests and diseases. Barriers such as cloches, nets and collars all offer protection from pests, while good cultivation practices such as crop rotation should help reduce disease.

Diseases:

The most common diseases seen on the allotment are club root and potato blight.

Club root affects vegetables from the cabbage family and is a very persistent disease. Avoid growing veg from the cabbage family in that area and always clean tools and wellies to prevent the

disease spreading.

Late **potato blight** is more prevalent and can affect main crop varieties when the weather is humid. Brown marks on leaves with white marks on the underside are a sign of blight.

Pests:

The most common pests seen on the allotments are cabbage white butterflies, carrot flies, bean weavils, slugs and whiteflies.



Cabbage white: caterpillars eat cabbages, inspect regularly and net to

prevent butterflies landing.

Carrot flies: Attracted to the smell of carrots and parsnips. These fly low so a barrier of fleece is very effective.



Bean weavils: These nibble on the leaves of peas and broad beans but don't eat the veg.

Slugs: Many, many varieties so you can never get rid of them all. Use copper rings or cabbage collars around individual plants.

White flies: Masses of these will result in plants with a sticky feel. Shake plants to help them move on.

Penwortham Holme West Allotments

Liverpool Road,
Preston

<http://www.prestonallotments.co.uk>



**Happy
Growing!**


Designed and created by
Clare Green, Penwortham
Holme West Allotments.

Penwortham Holme West has an allotment association. It's currently optional to join when you accept your tenancy. The association encourages all tenants to join. It costs £5 per year (price correct Jan 2010) to join. £3 of this is retained by the allotment association to enhance the allotment site to ensure an enjoyable and safe experience for everyone. The remaining money is sent to the National Society for Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) to promote and maintain a national society.

The association has been fund-raising and has raised money to replace the fencing around the allotment site, and to plant a heritage fruit orchard on waste ground. A replacement main gate and renovating the shop are new projects currently under development. It is always on the look out for new projects that can enhance the allotment site and benefit all tenants.

The association has a voluntary committee who devote some of their free time to ensuring that the allotments are maintained and plots are not allowed to go to ruin. There is also a shop on site, again, run voluntarily, selling onion sets, netting etc.

General meetings are held throughout the year to keep all allotment holders informed with latest news and events. There are also plant swap days and recently liaising with the local community police we have been able to offer postcode marking days for all your tools and equipment.

Becoming a member of the associate means that you receive a King's Seed catalogue, offering an array of seeds and potatoes. Deliveries are made direct to the allotment shop, so you can collect your order at your own convenience. The seed catalogue is available from late August/early September, and all orders have to be submitted by October.

The committee are elected through member votes. Currently serving are:

Chair Person: Sheila Melrose, plot 58, 01772 744826

Treasurer: Carol Johnstone, plot 3b, 01772 735332

Secretary: Clare Green, plot 29, 01772 460562

Site Rep: David Green, plot 29, 01772 493150

Shop Manager: Peter and Val Von Holsbecke (plots 24 and 26)

In addition, the following allotment holders kindly volunteer their services:

Shop Volunteers: Peter and Val, Elaine, Sam, Bob, Bill & Judith, Shaun.

Fund raising: Paul, plot 125a

Web site: Clare, plot 29