

BUSHY PARK ALLOTMENTS – ADVICE NOTE 7

COMPOST & RUBBISH

At the allotments someone's rubbish is another person's compost and vice versa.

As an allotment tenant you have signed up to the Council's Terms and Conditions (T&C) which are drafted for the general benefit of all the plot holders. Study them so that you can comply with the Council's requirements

The "why's and wherefore's" of these basic rules relating to compost and rubbish are as follows: -

- 1) We do not have waste bins for general use by tenants.
- 2) Any vegetable or green material that can be composted should be composted. The compost process takes a few months but the benefits for the allotments are better soil structure, improved fertility and trace elements for your plants and a reduction in waste that has to be taken away from the site. The only materials that cannot be readily composted on your allotment are: -
 - a) Perennial weeds such as dandelion roots, couch grass roots etc. If these are composted whilst they are still soft they just continue to grow in your compost bin. It is best to dry these out by storing under cover and then burn the dry material. The actual volume of material will not be large and can be easily handled on your plot. Once a plot is growing crops this type of material is dramatically reduced. The weed roots are the problem, generally green top vegetation can be composted.
 - b) Woody materials such as soft fruit cane prunings and brassica roots. The way to deal with these is to keep them as dry as possible and burn them during the bonfire season which fortunately coincides with the time when these materials arise on the plot. Burning material that has grown on your plot is roughly carbon neutral and the ash contains nutrients and trace elements that are beneficial to your crops.
 - c) Diseased material such as blighted tomato plants should not be composted.

Some material that seems woody can be composted with some additional effort. An example is sweet corn stalks that can be cut into short lengths for the compost bin. Another example is the large sods of grass and soil that may arise as you clear a plot in wet weather. One strategy is to pull out the perennial weed root that is visible and then pile the sods in a compact stack. In a month or two the annual weed will rot down and the resulting pile of top soil can be sifted to get out any remaining weed roots for the burning pile and the soil returned to your plot.

- 3) If you have a green waste bin at home it is a suitable place to put excess green or diseased material from your plot.
- 4) Soil and stones must not be removed from the allotments. The topsoil on our plot is your growing medium and a valuable resource. Soil clinging to weed roots can usually be knocked off. Any that adheres can go in the compost bin or burning pile as appropriate to get sorted out in the processing of that material. Stones can be collected and used in footpaths or buried under plants such as asparagus that require good drainage.
- 5) **The T&C forbid the import of general domestic rubbish onto the site.** Compostable material can be brought to put in your compost bin. Some items such as timber for edging beds, plastic bottles as safety tops for canes, plastic bags and containers for harvesting etc can be usefully re-cycled for use on your plot. You are responsible for removing the waste that you create that cannot be composted, burnt or re-cycled within the allotment site. **It must not be dumped on empty plots or in the car parks or on the roads and paths.** The amount of waste that you create at the allotments will be small following the initial clearance after taking over a plot.