

Sir John Stirling Maxwell Gardens
Bankhead Allotments
Pollokshaws, Glasgow

Looking after your Allotment



Now you've got your allotment...

It probably won't look anything like the allotments you've seen on television! Your plot may have weeds and debris on it, especially if it has been unattended for some time. It may have a hut or a greenhouse on it, or perhaps neither.

The first thing to do is clear up a bit, so you can see what you've got.

Wood can be burnt between October and April, metal will be stored and will go for scrap metal...ask a committee member about this; and plastic rubbish has to be taken away....so try and avoid bringing too much of it in the first place!

You have to think about

1. Your hut, or greenhouse
2. Your tools
3. Your fence
4. Your path inside and outside your plot
5. Your growing areas

You'll need to decide where your hut or greenhouse will be. There are size limitations on these about which you can consult the committee. If you look round the allotments you'll see most people have their hut or greenhouse at the back of their plot, so they get a good view of their growing area. This also depends on what part of their plot gets the most light. If there is already a structure on your plot you could consider patching it up. If not, you can buy a hut or greenhouse. Or build one! You'll need somewhere to keep your tools and to shelter from the rain.

As far as tools go, you'll need a spade, a fork, a hoe, a rake, secateurs, a couple of trowels, and a watering can. There are many other items you can buy but these things will give you a good start. They can all be obtained in some of the cheaper shops, and very often in jumble sales too.

If there is a fence on your plot, you might get by fixing it up a bit. If not, a fence is easily made. A wooden fence lasts much longer if you coat it with preservative once a year, or paint it. Look around at what other plot holders have done. Once your fence is in place, the path outside it will have to be kept weed free to the centre line. A neat and tidy fence makes a big improvement to your plot almost immediately.

Remember an allotment is 'land for cultivation' and growing on it is what you are meant to do. You can grow either flowers and vegetables, although a mixture of both is nicer. If you know nothing about plants read gardening books, study on the internet, and be willing to ask other plot holders what they are growing. Whatever you grow shouldn't spread into other allotments. Don't plant grass for example; Pollok Park is full of it but we don't want it in here. There may be some bushes or herbaceous plants on the plot that you get, and some of them might be worth keeping. Weeds should be destroyed or composted.

Look round at the good plots around you, and you'll get ideas from them. An allotment is a great deal of work and takes a lot of time. Good preparation will help you a lot. Sort out growing areas, sometimes called 'beds', and have a rough idea what you'll grow in them. Some people enclose these in wooden edging and some don't. Edging can look tidy but won't inhibit the weeds so that can be a matter of taste. Beds can be moved or reorganised each year so you don't have to keep an arrangement you don't like.

We hope you'll enjoy your allotment and your time here. An allotment can cost you a lot, or very little. Buying prepared

plants is expensive and growing from seeds cheap. You will often be able to get cuttings etc from other plot holders. Part of the joy of an allotment is finding out what suits you.

You can spend hours here, enjoying yourself and getting to know others. You'll get great satisfaction from learning about the growing habits of plants and eating what you've grown yourself. Keep your plot well maintained and it will not be too difficult to manage. Several of the current plot holders have been here for more than twenty years so this can be a hobby for a lifetime.

Remember that we have an open day in August when the public can come in. There are stalls selling things, and a tearoom inside. It's our major fund raiser of the year. You can let your family and friends see what you've accomplished. Try to have your plot really nice for this day.

Enjoy your new hobby!