

Welcome to Allerton Allotments Society

If you are asking to join the waiting list for an allotment at Allerton Allotment Society (AAS) we are giving you this information to help you decide if an allotment on this site is the right thing for you.

If you are lucky enough to be taking up a plot: Welcome!

- AAS is a popular site, and we are rightly proud of the site and our community.
- We would love you to join us, but it is worth realistically considering if this is the right time and place for you as it does mean a serious commitment. The information contained here is designed to help you make an informed choice.
- Between 6 and 10 plots/half plots become available each year on this site and there is always a waiting list, so it can be some years before a plot becomes available for you.
- Plots become available usually because plot holders can no longer commit the time or become less able to manage the work needed to keep a plot to a good standard.
- We welcome different styles of gardening and respect your choices as you must respect others but there are basic rules that must be followed.
- **If you genuinely want to spend time outdoors with great people in a friendly environment then an Allotment plot is a real opportunity to achieve that, provided you are prepared to spend sufficient time and effort working your plot.**

Top Tips

Keep your first season simple : Grow things that are easy and are usually guaranteed to give you good crops with not too much effort to look after! Potatoes, Onions, Pumpkins/ Squash, Beans, Peas, and Courgette. If you really want to grow something a bit trickier consider buying them as plug plants.

Look after your paths. You are responsible for the path on the Keswick Road border of your plot. Keep it edged and safe.

Weed and turn/ prepare your plot in sections so you don't feel overwhelmed. When you are weeding make sure to remove the perennial weeds including couch grass, bindweed and Mare's tail illustrated below. Try to remove weeds regularly so they don't reseed on yours and your neighbour's plots.

Put perennial weeds in a bag and take them to the tip/ add to your council green waste. These will come back each year but if you are thorough removing them, it will get easier!

Try temporarily covering parts of your plot that you are waiting to work on with a ground sheet to suppress the weeds from growing while you work on other areas.

Don't be afraid to ask the committee and other plot holders for help and advice, also take a walk around the site and look at other plots for inspiration either for their layout or for what they are growing.

Consider the position of your plot and where will get the most and least sun: this will help with the growth of your crops as some may like sun while others like shade.

Get compost bins and water butts for your plot: annual weeds will eventually rot down and turn to compost and rainwater will come in handy especially when the site taps are off from end of October until Spring!

Feed your soil with manure, compost or slow-release fertilisers like chicken manure pellets these can be bought from the main shed and don't forget to mulch around fruit bushes if you have them too!

Plant flowers for pollinators if you want to maximise crops. Some even repel other insects such as Marigolds and Nasturtiums, but Sunflowers always look good too!

Be aware of plants that get out of control e.g. If you are planting mint put it in a pot as it contains it and stops it from spreading like crazy! Jerusalem artichokes have beautiful flowers, but rhizomes can multiply and be hard to control.

Most important!

Make sure you have fun and enjoy your time on the plot it will be hard work but worth it once you reap the rewards of your labour and taste your produce!

Couch Grass



Bindweed



Mare's tail



The official important bits

Allotments are historically an area used to produce vegetables and fruit for personal consumption by a family. They also play a great part in assisting with positive mental health and an opportunity to make new friends and a fantastic way to get some exercise and fresh air in today's busy city environments.

When you take on a tenancy for an allotment at Allerton Allotment Society (AAS) you are entering a contract with both Liverpool City Council and AAS and agreeing to follow the conditions of the contract. There is an annual fee for both. Allotments are regulated as to what can be grown and how tenants conduct themselves on site. This is not meant to be too restrictive, rather to ensure that all plot holders can enjoy themselves safely and that the risk of expensive and time-consuming restorative work is reduced. We would advise that anyone considering applying for an allotment should fully understand the commitment required and the by-laws for the specific site.

Allotments have a committee, elected by its members at an Annual General Meeting, who are tasked with ensuring the site is a safe environment for all members and that all members adhere to the rules and guidelines of the Allotment Association.

There will be a probation period before the contract is signed, during which time the plot holder will be expected to adhere to the guidelines and complete certain tasks, thereby proving they can manage their plot to an acceptable standard. On rare occasions, failure to achieve these requirements may result in the probation being terminated and the plot holder being asked to surrender their key before the end of the probation period. It is important that any new plot holder understands and accepts these conditions.

The Allerton Allotment site is not on any direct bus route, closest would-be Mather Avenue (86 and 86A) and you should be able to travel to the site regularly and be able to remove waste from the site as required.

Thriving in the probationary period

Plots may be in an untidy state when they are offered (the previous tenant may have left as they were unable to manage) : you should be prepared to accept this, as not all plots offered can be fully cleared by the committee.

During the Probation Period the plot will be inspected on a regular basis, this is to ensure the new plot is showing progress and the new plot holder is genuinely interested and able to make a success of their new plot.

Historically the main reason for failing the probation period, is insufficient time and effort spent on the allotment, usually leading to the plot being full of weeds. Be realistic especially if you are working full time and have a busy family/social life?

A full-size plot (approx. 26m x 7m) could require **12-16 hours per week** for the first 12 weeks to achieve an acceptable standard.

A half-size plot (these vary in size) could require **6-8 hours per week** for the first 12 weeks to achieve an acceptable standard.

After the planting period most people still spend several hours daily during the peak growing times, to water and feed their vegetables and fruit plants, and to remove weeds which can be relentless!

Plots must be made ready for planting in the next growing period to an acceptable level as agreed with the committee. **NB** In the first year, having passed the probation period, a plot **must** be planted and in cultivation to a **minimum of 50%**, this is why you must prepare the plot to ready the soil for planting in the first 12 weeks.

If you are fortunate, and the plot offered has an existing greenhouse or shed on the plot, then they may be retained at a cost agreed with the committee.

We would seriously recommend that you can genuinely allocate sufficient time to work the plot, before signing a tenancy agreement.

Some Basic rules

No more than 25% of the allotment can be used for hardstanding/ composting to include, a base for a shed and/or Greenhouse and any seating area. Greenhouses **must** be used for growing crops or removed from the site. This means that a minimum of 75% of your plot is used for cultivating crops.

Of the remaining area a maximum of:

- 25% could be planted with soft fruit plants/fruit bushes.
- 25% could be planted with flowers.

All remaining space must be planted with edible crops or ready for the next crops to be planted.

- During the probation period, you **must not** erect **new** structures such as greenhouses or sheds.
- Plastic ponds or liners are not allowed, due to the safety risks of standing water.
- Do not plant shrubs or non-edible plants directly into the soil, although after discussion with the committee it may be acceptable to have shrubs in pots, depending on the expected size of the shrub.
- Fruit trees must be an M26 **dwarf** variety with full botanical certificate of expected growth and agreed with the committee before planting after the probation period. After the probation period a maximum of 3 fruit trees can be planted on a half plot or 5 on a full plot and these must be 1.5m in from the borders of your plot. Beware shade from trees limiting success with other crops.
- Grass paths and edges must be kept tidy and weed free.
- Do not bring items onto the allotment that are not for the benefit of ensuring a successful and productive plot.
- **If in doubt speak to the committee members for advice and clarification.**

Useful tips and thoughts

- Before digging, draw up a plan, bearing in mind the type of soil you have, the way the sun hits your plot, if any area is shaded by buildings or trees, the wind direction and access pathways. You should include the expected area required for each plant type you have chosen to grow.
- You need to equip yourself with excellent quality gardening tools (fork, spade, hoe, rake, hand fork, hand spade and gloves) and don't be overwhelmed by the size of the task ahead. A strimmer or lawnmower will also be required to keep your paths trimmed and tidy. (both are available to hire from the allotment main shed.)
- You will need seed trays, plant pots and compost to start the germination of your selected seeds. You will then need cloches or nets to cover some plants as they grow.
- Speak to more experienced gardeners at the allotment who will know instantly what *does* and *doesn't* work, saving you time and effort. You'll also gain a green-fingered friend who can help you through your first year.
- Keeping a diary can help as families of crops should be grown in different areas each year to prevent disease in your soil (crop rotation.)

- Some plants can give a lot of impact in the first few months and help achieve the 50% cultivation target in your first year.
- Examples:-1 Butternut Squash plant (can easily cover 1 square metre); 1 Courgette plant (can easily cover 1 - 2 square metres); 1 Pumpkin plant (can easily cover 2 to 6 square metres depending on the variety); Potatoes (depends on number of seed potatoes planted, but a 2kg bag can cover 6 square meters, depending on required spacing)

Other easy to grow examples:- Onions (Red or White, usually grown from Onion Sets sold in small bags); Strawberries (12 Strawberry plants can cover 2 square metres, depending on the variety) Peas (Usually grown in rows); Broad Beans (Usually grown in rows) Always read seed packets, which will provide, suggested times for sowing seeds (indoor/outdoor), expected growth and spread of plants and harvesting times.

Liverpool City Council offer cheap deals on composters and water butts and tips on composting. [Composting - Liverpool City Council](#)

A useful source of information is the Royal Horticultural Society Web site – please visit the site and read all information on your selected vegetables and fruit plants, to understand any issues with pests and diseases.

www.rhs.org.uk

Sheds and Greenhouse are often a cause for concern and the dimensions for both are clearly shown on the Liverpool City Council Website. Sheds should be painted Green or a wood colour.

[allotment-guidance.pdf \(liverpool.gov.uk\)](#)

We hope the above will assist you in your decision to determine if you will be able to commit the required time, to ensure you will be successful on your new allotment plot.

If you genuinely want to spend time outdoors with great people in a friendly environment then an Allotment plot is a real opportunity to achieve that, provided you are prepared to spend sufficient time and effort working your plot.