

# **Taking on an Allotment**

## **Approximate costs, time and work required**

### **LIST OF TOOLS**

#### **Essential Tools/Equipment**

- Spade - £11 to £40
- Fork - £10 to £40
- Trowel - £4 to £15
- Rake - £8 to £30
- Hoe - £11 to £30

The common types are Dutch or Draw hoe, but there are other types or combination types available.

- Garden Line - £12 to £20

These can also be cheaply made with a ball of string and two short canes.

All of the above can often be picked up quite cheaply from Car Boot Markets.

#### **Useful Tools/Equipment**

- Wheelbarrow - £25 to £200
- Compost bin - £20 to £100. These can also be made from wooden pallets.
- Canes/Stakes - these vary in costs depending on size (length) and bundle size. For supporting tall growing crops like runner beans, broad beans, peas and tall brassicas and also nets/netting, tunnels and fleeces.
- Nets/Netting - these vary in costs depending on mesh size and material used. Good for protecting crops from birds (pigeons mostly), foxes and insects.
- Cloches/Tunnels/Fleece - these can be used to give protection from the elements on early planted/sown crops and insects, and can also vary enormously in cost depending on size and material used.

Please note that Bognor Regis Town Council cannot supply any tools or equipment to tenants.

### **WORK REQUIRED**

#### **Initial Work**

There could be quite a substantial amount of effort required once the allotment has been taken on, depending on the state the plot has been left in by the previous tenant. An overgrown, weedy plot will require much more effort to get it into a cultivatable state than one which has been left in a neat and tidy state. This should be realised and considered when accepting and taking on the plot. Typically, many hours of hard physical work will be required initially to get the plot in a workable state. This could amount to every weekend for the first few weeks, or even over a couple of months depending on the time of year and size of the plot. Some of the green waste can be composted, but perennial weeds and their roots are best not composted; these should

be disposed of at the green waste recycling centre. This should also be factored in, including bags and time to transport any waste.

### **Ongoing Work**

Once the plot is in a cultivatable state, only routine maintenance is required: weeding, planting, sowing, and harvesting will be regularly required. Finished crops will need clearing and composting and the bed re-planted with the next crop depending on the time of year.

Most of this work will occur in the SPRING (sowing and planting), SUMMER (harvesting), and AUTUMN (clearing the ground of finished crops and weeds).

Although WINTER is the least busy season, there are still jobs that will need carrying out (harvesting winter crops like parsnips, swedes, sprouts, cabbage, etc.). Also pruning of tree fruit and soft fruit shrubs. Ground can be cleared, if not already done, and (more importantly) the empty ground can be dug over and left for weathering by the elements (rain, frost and wind) which will give it a crumbly texture ideal for preparing for sowing and planting in the spring (if you are following the traditional way of gardening). The plot cannot be neglected and not visited for weeks on end. Weeds can grow very quickly and can quite quickly overtake the plot; they even grow throughout the winter (depending on the weather). An overgrown plot will take far more work to maintain than one which is kept cultivated year round.

### **REGULAR TIME REQUIRED**

Time required will vary by season and plot size. The following is based on a 100m<sup>2</sup> plot. The estimated amount of time required to attend the plot to keep it in good order would be approx. 365 hours per year (averaged to 1 hour per day, or 7 hours per week). Obviously, you wouldn't spend 1 hour every day of the year tending to your plot. These hours would be spread out in blocks over the year depending on the seasonal work required and crops being grown. For example, you might need to spend all day one day and then not need to go for several days. Another time you might need to attend every other day to harvest crops.

### **REGULAR ONGOING COSTS**

- Seeds and Plants - prices can vary quite considerably. Shops and mail order catalogues often have special offers.
- Fertilisers - prices can vary quite considerably. Shops are normally cheaper than mail order.
- Manures - not an absolute essential. They are usually bulky and expensive unless sourced from stables which often can be free. Homemade compost can be made on the plot and applied when ready. Quite often it is acceptable to just manure a bed a year rather than do the whole of the plot each year. Tenants should not store more manure on their plot than is required for immediate use.

You can spend a little or a lot on your allotment. It all depends on your personal circumstances and preferences.