

Morpeth Town Council Spring 2019

Spring gardening Suggestions from the RHS and MTC

How to start your allotment

Clearing your plot

- Clear the plot of unwanted materials and debris. You may be able to get help with this from the allotment management team
- Trees, shrubs and other woody plants such as [brambles](#) are best cut down and dug out; woody waste can be [shredded and composted](#)
- Vegetation can be buried during digging after removing the roots of perennial weeds such as [bindweed](#), [couch grass](#), [ground elder](#) and [nettles](#). Do not compost these
- [Smothering weeds](#) with opaque mulches (carpet is no longer recommended) requires at least one growing season to work well. This can be an effective way of dealing with parts of a plot that are not intended to be planted for that season (it's easy to overdo it with a new allotment so take your time and don't worry if it takes several seasons to fully bring an overgrown plot into cultivation)
- Limited use of a weedkiller might be worth considering on more challenging plots, for example [a stumpkiller](#) might be used where woody stumps cannot be readily removed. And where the deep-rooted pernicious weed [horsetail](#) is present, repeated use of a non-residual systemic weedkiller based on glyphosate applied from mid-spring until mid-autumn should help knock it back (though it is unlikely to eliminate the problem)
- Gardeners wishing to grow [organically](#) should employ [non-chemical weed control](#) measures only
- **Working your plot**
- When clear of weeds the [soil can be broken up](#) and ideally add organic matter by digging or rotovating, or while building [raised beds](#).
- Take a soil test to find out the [soil pH](#) and whether it is lacking in any nutrients. This will help plan any [lime](#) or fertiliser application.
- Add a compost bin, a shed and other useful items.
- If you need any advice please ask your friendly neighbouring plot holders or email terry.garnick@morpeth-tc.gov.uk
- Google can be a good source, try searching Allotments, RHS, Crop Rotation for lots of helpful advice, but always check its for the UK and not America!