



## Weston Favell Allotment Association

### Spring Newsletter 2025

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2025. It doesn't quite feel as though spring is anywhere near arriving yet, but the current cold wet days are a good opportunity to reflect on the past year and make plans for the next growing season.

As always with growing plants and crops, there are successes and failures. I had some beautiful brassicas until that spell of hard frost, but I console myself that at least they will make good compost. On the other hand, I grew some amazing carrots and huge potatoes!

So, now is the time to plan what you are going to grow where – it's not usually a good idea to plant the same crop in the same place each year. There is plenty of advice on crop rotation on the web and in the gardening press.

The next job is to plan what you are going to grow. Get your seeds ordered – information on how to order from the Kings Seeds allotment scheme is in this newsletter. I like to try something new each year.

Check your tools and make sure they are clean and sharp. Order new tools if you didn't get them for Christmas! Cover your plot, if you haven't already to reduce weed growth – we have porous ground cover for sale in the Shop. It saves a lot of digging and weeding.

After all that, it will soon be time to get up from that comfy chair by the fire and start on another growing year which we hope will be successful and enjoyable.

Good luck to you all, Fran

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Notice Board

Open Gardens 'Hidden Gems'

Seedy Saturday

Composting – Feed the soil

Soil for Potatoes and Care

Chickens Welfare

Photo Gallery



#### Seed Potatoes

The seed potatoes and onions will be available for sale and collection on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February.

The delivery is now scheduled for Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> Feb. We delayed earlier deliveries due to the cold and wet conditions and keeping the potatoes and onions in prime condition would be challenging.

Save your egg boxes for chitting!



## Notices

### **MUSIC NOISE AT THE ALLOTMENT**

The Committee has had some complaints about loud music being played.

We all love our allotments and want to use them as we wish. Some like to visit for the peace and quiet and to recover from a busy day at work. They dislike noise and don't want to listen to other people's music.

In contrast, others want to hear music whilst they work as it cheers them up and they enjoy it.

In order to try to cater for everyone, could the Committee please ask that those playing music keep the volume down and move their radios/music players near to them when they are working. Please do not leave the equipment at one end of your allotment on full volume so that you can hear it whilst working at the other end.

Remember, everyone else around you can hear your music and it may not be their taste.



### **NO BUTTS!**

### **CLOSE YOUR WATER BUTT LID**

We'll be writing notices on all the water butts to "Close the Lid". This saves water and stops algae growing in the water butts that block up your watering cans and the plumbing.

Please help by CLOSING THE LIDS!, Thanks

## **Weston Favell Open Gardens**

### **'Hidden Gems' And Allotments**

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2025 1.00 – 5.00pm**



A number of gardens will be open to the public in the village. Details will be available soon so watch for more details of where the gardens will be and where to get your Programmes.

**All profits in aid of Home-Start**

A charity supporting families with young children



Sponsorship  
Applied For!



## **BEST WISHES TO DAVID**

***I'm sure you'd like to join me in sending our very best wishes to David who is at present poorly in hospital.***

***We look forward to seeing him back soon!***



## **Kings Seeds Ordering**



Kings Seeds have recently changed their website so here is a reminder on how to place your seed order seeds from them. Remember their prices are on average 40% cheaper than retail prices.

### **Existing buyers**

Log in with <https://nsalg.kingsseeds.com/login>

Put in your email as the username

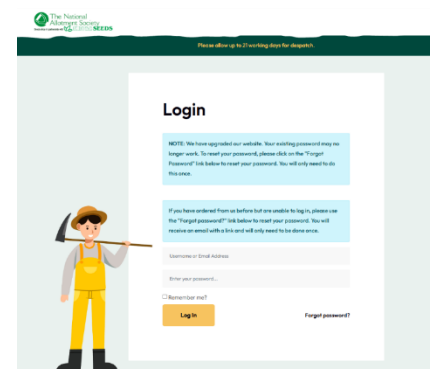
Put in your password.

If this doesn't work, start again but when you get to the log in page, put in your email and then click on 'Forgotten password' straight away. This will trigger an automatic response from Kings allowing you to reset your password.

### **New buyers.**

Contact me – I am the Seeds Secretary – on [woodley11@virginmedia.com](mailto:woodley11@virginmedia.com) with your full contact details – (it saves me looking them up!) I send your details to Kings and they will email you so that you can set up your account. Check your spam folder.

Let me know if you have any problems. Fran



## Speeding

Please don't use excessive speed on site. Speeding causes damage to the road surfaces which are maintained by volunteers.

The road has loose stones which pepper parked cars with stones.

Please take care and respect the speed limits



**Community Seed Swap**  
**Stalls • Seed potatoes • Café**  
**22 February • 10 am to 2 pm**

**The Doddridge Centre**  
**109 St James's Road (opp. Church's Shoes)**  
**Northampton • NN5 5LD**

**Free entry and onsite parking**



facebook: northamptonseedysaturday  
www.nseedysat.epizy.com



## Seedy Saturday

Seedy Saturday approaches, put it in your diary!

Save your own seeds and swap them for something new, or buy some for a small donation. I have grown some lovely heritage tomatoes, acquired at the event.

You can also swap excess seeds from gardening publications. There will be lots of stalls with other interesting gardening stuff, as well as a cafe using food saved from landfill, but which is still good to eat.

It's a lovely event.

I will be on the seed swap table and can offer growing advice if needed. It would be great to see you!

**Debbie Roberts** (plot 49) 🌱🌱🌱

## Bonfires

Bonfires are banned on the site between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Complaints from neighbours to the Council Environmental Officer about excessive smoke may result in a total ban on ALL bonfires.

Please store the material you want to burn for some time and place under a simple cover that allows the wind access to the sides dry it well.

**BE AWARE ALL BONFIRES ARE BANNED**

**From the 1<sup>st</sup> March until 31<sup>st</sup> October**



## Smoke Pollution

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/environmental-health/smoke-pollution>



### Composting and Good Soil

Producing soil in good health is not a short-term or one-off job. Transforming a shallow, nutrient-poor soil to a deep healthy topsoil over 12 ins. (30 cm) deep can take a little time and planning. Every time we take our crops into the kitchen, we remove vital nutrients from the ground.



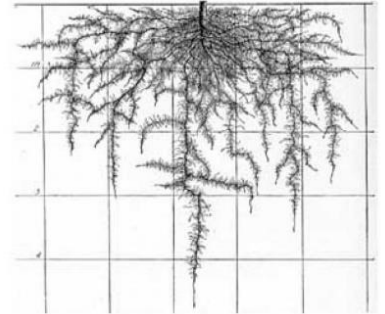
**This makes it important to keep adding compost and manure to replace the nutrients and feed the soil creatures that benefit your plot.**

### Feeding the Soil - What do plants need?

#### - Soil

This really has to be the starting point when growing. The ideal soil for any plant will be:

- Deep enough for the roots to develop freely
- Friable so roots can easily grow through it.



Roots naturally follow the easiest route to get where they want, be that horizontally or vertically. They find gaps and pores as small as 0.2 mm to grow in.

#### - Water

Rain comes intermittently but plants need it consistently to grow well. The ideal soil allows water to percolate down and with enough organic matter (humus) incorporated it can store that water when it's not raining.

#### - Air

Roots do require air. Friable soil has enough gaps in it to allow air in and to allow water to drain so that the roots don't drown. They don't need a lot of air, but they do need some. That's why plants in a waterlogged or compacted plot die.



#### - pH

Most vegetables grow best in a soil pH between 6.00 - 7.00; 7.00 being neutral.

As a general rule, both the major nutrients (NPK) and micro-nutrients (manganese, iron etc) are most available at pH between 6.0 to 7.0.

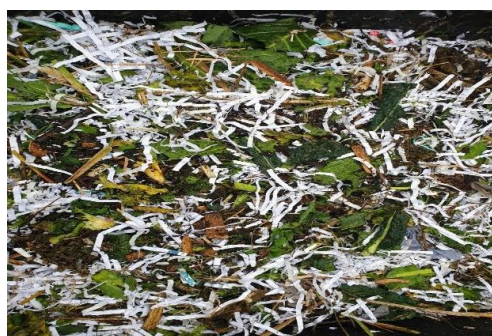
(see our article "What are NPK" at <https://westonfaveallotments.co.uk/Garc>

**Leaf Mould**

#### - Nutrients available

The operative word here is '**available**'. For a start, the pH of the soil affects nutrient availability. Its recently been discovered that there are beneficial relationships between plants, microbes and fungi in the soil.

The relationship of fungi and plants is one of mutual benefit. The fungi make nutrients more available to the plant and in return the plant helps feed the fungi.



**Shredded  
Paper mixed  
with  
Compost**

## In Conclusion

**The ideal soil is deep, friable, retains water but sheds excess water, has the right pH and high nutrient availability.**

## Feeding the Soil

Now from the above, we're getting to the meaning of 'feed the soil'. You can feed the organisms that live in the soil, from bacteria to earthworms, beneficial bugs and everything in between.

As you can see this goes hand-in-hand with a "No Dig" policy which adopts these practises.

The addition of compost (both vegetative and from rotted manures), partially composted matter, leaf mould and even freshly dead vegetation like grass clippings as a mulch will, with aid of the army of soil creatures, enable the creation of more humus.

The earthworms will burrow around, improving the soil as they go and leaving tunnels behind to help with water absorption and drainage.



*Leaf Mould*

Maybe all growers should put effort into improving their soil. I think I can learn from this and not add fertiliser at the wrong time; of the wrong type and in the wrong quantity. But that doesn't stop them from amending and adding to the soil to get the best crop they can.

*Article 1 in Compost Series*

<https://www.allotment-garden.org/composts-fertilisers/feed-soil-not-plants/>

### Stencils for budding artists

**You can download these stencils from the web site.**

**Print them as large as you like ready to colour in.**

**Here's are some examples**



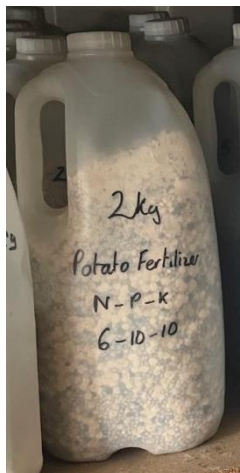
## Soil for Potatoes

*Part 1 of Potatoes Series from Web site*

Potatoes like a rich soil so use plenty of manure or other organic matter. They also like an acid soil so don't lime before planting, as this will make them susceptible to scab.

They don't need a fine tilth but they do need deep soil, so you will need to dig your potato patch, preferably in autumn so that winter frosts can break down the soil.

Potatoes are usually planted in soil that has been formed into ridges and furrows; this allows the emerging plants to be "earthed up" i.e. have soil banked up over them to protect the foliage from frost, to which it is very susceptible, and to prevent the potatoes greening in the light.



Don't apply a high nitrogen fertilizer as this delays maturity in the crop – high potassium fertilizer, however, increases yields. If you can organize the rows to run North – South, this allows the sun to warm both sides of the ridges. Get your Potato fertiliser from the hut – N-P-K 6-10-10



Potatoes are a useful crop to grow on grassland or wasteland that is being brought into cultivation. The earthing up and dense foliage helps to clean up the soil. However, on newly dug grassland, wireworm can be a problem so a chemical treatment may be applied before planting.

### Plant Care

Protect early sprouted foliage from frost by covering with earth or compost and continue to earth up until the ridges are about 20cm high.

Weed between the rows as required.  
As the haulms grow they will shade out most weeds.



## Planting Guide

	First Earlies	Second Earlies	Early Maincrop	Maincrop
Space between Potatoes	30cm	40cm	45cm	45cm
Distance between Rows	60cm	75cm	75cm	75cm
Planting Depth	8cm	8cm	13cm	13cm
Planting Date	End February to late May	March to late May	March to late May	March to mid-May
Weeks from Planting to Harvest	10	13	15	20



**\*\*STOP PRESS\*\***

## **CHICKEN KEEPERS – ACTION YOU MUST TAKE NOW**

### **TO PREVENT AN INCREASE IN AVIAN FLU**

Due to the increased cases of avian bird flu, the whole of England is now in an AIPZ zone. We need to enhance our biosecurity measures to ensure that poultry does not come into contact with wild birds by ensuring wild birds cannot enter the pens or perch on top and defecate in them, as this is a common source of spreading avian flu.

Footwear can also be a means of transmission, and waterfowl have an increased chance of catching avian flu. Walking along the river in your wellies and then going into your chicken pen could spread the disease. I keep a spare pair of shoes specifically for going in with my chickens.

Consideration of contamination from other sources through secondary contact with wild birds, such as rats, mice, and squirrels. These animals can carry diseases in their fur or feet.

With the current high-water levels, rats are above ground in greater numbers, and it is essential to keep food locked away and discourage nesting places. Chicken keepers and all birds housed in an outside pen including budgerigars, parrots, etc., are required by law to take these precautions.

Maintain your birds housing – Prevent wild birds and rodents getting access

Clean and disinfect Your Birds housing - Keep birds' housing clean at all times.

Use a disinfectant disinfect regularly:

Clean:

- hard surfaces
- equipment wheelbarrows, crates, containers, buckets and plastic egg trays
- vehicles (to stop disease spreading between premises)

#### **Look after your Birds Welfare**

Remember to Register your Birds. Forms available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66fc1a403b919067bb482a54/IRA82\\_Kept\\_bird\\_registration\\_form- less than 50 poultry or other captive birds.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66fc1a403b919067bb482a54/IRA82_Kept_bird_registration_form- less than 50 poultry or other captive birds.pdf)

The law states that all birds kept in external cages or pens must register with APHA.



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

*MANY THANKS TO STEPHANIE FOR KEEPING US UPDATED*





# AVIAN INFLUENZA PREVENTION ZONE

## REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL POULTRY AND CAPTIVE BIRD KEEPERS

- ✓ **Keep free-ranging birds in fenced areas to minimise contact with wild birds, neighbouring poultry or captive birds.**
- ✓ **Inspect outdoor areas, removing wild bird contaminants like faeces, feathers and wild bird carcasses.**
- ✓ **Fence off or put netting over areas of standing water or ponds.**
- ✓ **Provide feed and water undercover, so wild birds can't access it.**
- ✓ **Make your premises unattractive to wild birds. Use bird scarers, foils or streamers.**
- ✓ **Keep ducks and geese separate from other poultry.**
- ✓ **Store bedding under cover to reduce the risk of contamination.**
- ✓ **Clean and disinfect footwear before and after tending to your birds. If you own more than 50 birds, place foot dips containing Government approved disinfectant at all entry and exit points.**
- ✓ **Clean and disinfect hard surfaces regularly.**
- ✓ **Clean and disinfect equipment and vehicles to avoid disease spread between premises.**
- ✓ **Minimise the movement of people, vehicles and equipment to and from bird areas and keep records of movements.**
- ✓ **Keep records of poultry, captive bird and egg movements.**
- ✓ **Maintain buildings that house birds to prevent water ingress**
- ✓ **Ensure pest control is effective.**



Animal &  
Plant Health  
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**Non-compliance with these biosecurity measures may be an offence.**

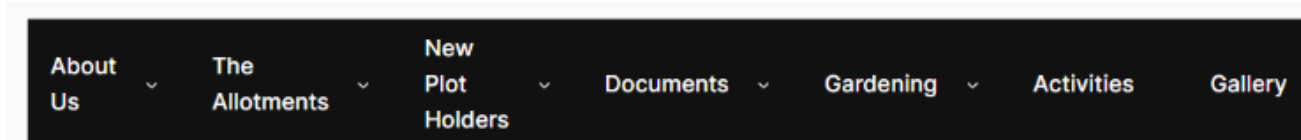
# Weston Favell Allotments Web Site

<https://westonfavellallotments.co.uk>

The Allotment web site is in the process of being updated. At present changes are frequent as work continues. We're writing new articles and updating some from past Newsletters, editing and including them on the web site.

There will be archived articles for any that you may have missed and many new ones are there to help, inspire and amuse.

They'll be a Gallery of photos which we've been collecting and if you have some you'd like to add please send them to [westonfavellallotments@gmail.com](mailto:westonfavellallotments@gmail.com)



The image above is from the front page of the web site. The Names in a block are names of categories that expand and contain information that fall under those headings.

Articles include:

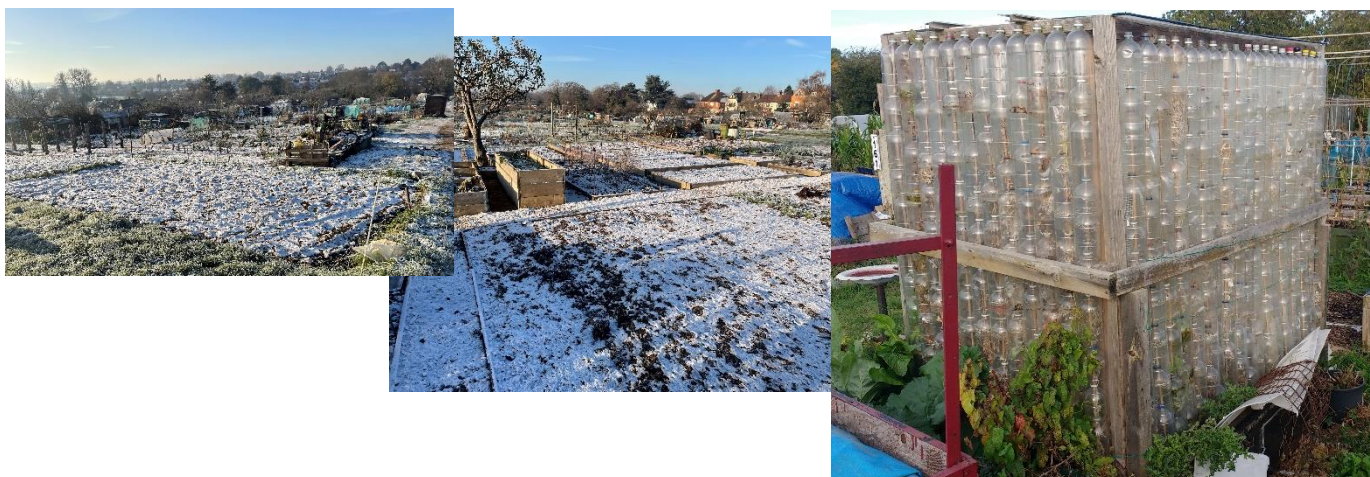
- Pests and Prevention
- What is N-P-K
- Composting
- Keeping Chickens

A huge thankyou to Geny who has been doing most of the work on the web site.

If you have ideas or would like to contribute get in touch, details on the web site!

## Gallery

Here are some examples of photos that could be included in the gallery







If you have some photos you'd like to share send them to  
[westonfavellallotments@gmail.com](mailto:westonfavellallotments@gmail.com)

Ensure you have permission of any people included in the photo.

We cannot guarantee that all photos submitted will be included.



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Sue Wray – Events & Open Gardens  
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If you would like to contribute to the running of the allotment,  
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