



Allotment rule update – April 2015

Following extensive consultation with allotment tenants, the rules below are due to take effect from 1 April 2015. Almost all are additions to the existing rules and should be read in conjunction with your blue booklet, with the exception of one, concerning keys, which replaces the previous rule. We have cross referenced the new rules where they relate to sections contained in your existing booklet.

Allotment cultivation

1. A minimum of 60 per cent of the plot area must be used for cultivation and crops. This area includes open ground and raised beds used for crops, as well as hen houses and runs, glass houses, tunnels, managed compost heaps, fruit bushes and trees, and areas used for bee hives.
2. A maximum of two fruit trees is allowed per 125 square metre plot or three for a 250 square metre plot. Tenants may be able to exceed the fruit tree rules if planting trees with dwarfing rootstocks that are either trained as cordons or dwarf trees, but permission must first be given by Norwich City Council. **[see also pages 22-23 of existing rules booklet]**
3. Up to 40 per cent of your plot area may be for leisure and other non-cropped uses. This area includes all paths, sheds, and paving, as well as lawns, ponds, managed meadow and ornamental non-shrubby planting.
4. You must not leave either end of your plot unworked and it must be safe and tidy. You must control invasive vegetation such as brambles and ensure invasive plants do not encroach of neighbouring plots, shared paths or track ways.
5. Your plot must be 60 per cent cultivated and produce a crop at least annually, with weeds being kept under control throughout the year. Cultivation includes pruning and training of fruit, or digging, hoeing or mulching for other cropped areas as well as the growing of green manures.
6. Plots will be expected to be 60 per cent worked in spring, with soil prepared and signs of crops or flowers being grown. Managed wildflower areas or cut grass under fruit will also be considered as cultivated land. In the winter, tidy plots free from seeding weeds will be considered as cultivated.
7. The practice of stripping topsoil and piling topsoil at either end of the plot is not permitted, however soil levels may be built up for raised beds.
8. Some of your plot may be sheet mulched with a woven black membrane or black plastic. New tenants may mulch up to 50 per cent of their plot in year one. After year one 20 per cent of the plot may be sheet mulched in summer.

9. During winter months tenants may sheet mulch 100 per cent of their cultivated area. Where perennial crops are grown through sheet mulch then this area will be considered as cultivated and not part of the sheet mulched area.
10. Shaded areas or impoverished or contaminated soils that exceed the 40 per cent already allowed as non-cropped area may be used for lawn or managed conservation/leisure use if agreed with the council in advance.
11. After three months the tenant will have their first inspection. If a new tenant has not made a recognisable start on their allotment, their tenancy will be ended. If a tenant has a reason why they cannot work their plot, they must contact the council and arrange an extension in advance of this inspection. **[see also page 13 of existing rules booklet]**

Waste restrictions

1. Building materials such as recycled doors, pallets, roofing materials, windows, and UPVC may only be brought onto the allotment for constructing permitted structures
2. Tenants will be automatically allowed to build a maximum of two cold frames or cloches constructed from recycled windows. If glass structures are broken on the plot, the tenant must remove broken glass from the allotment.
3. Excessive quantities of any building materials are in breach of rules, however limited quantities of building materials such as blocks, bricks, metal or timber will be allowed as long as they are used to help grow crops. **[see also page 20 of existing rules booklet]**
4. Paving may cover a maximum of 10 per cent of the plot area. Tenants with mobility issues may apply for permission for extra paved areas to improve plot access.
5. Tyres may no longer be brought onto the allotment but existing tyres may be kept on plots as long as they are registered with the council.
6. Imported gravel and other loose stone products, rubble and hardcore are not allowed on the allotments. The use of glass bottles for construction is also not allowed.
7. Some children's play equipment, including small swings and trampolines, will be allowed as long as they are kept in good repair. Paddling pools and bulky play equipment, including large trampolines and swings, are not allowed on site.
8. Carpet may only cover up to 20 per cent of the plot and carpet must be regularly moved if used to cover beds. Only natural woven carpet will be allowed on the allotment and sheet mulch is always preferred to carpet. All overgrown, unmanaged carpet will be in breach of rules. **[see also page 21 of existing rules booklet]**
9. You may not use your allotment to store household furniture, leisure equipment or any other household items that are not used for cultivation. Usable garden furniture for recreation purposes is allowed.
10. After a tenant receives a waste notice, waste must be removed from the allotment. Any tenant found to have burnt waste materials in response to a waste notice is at risk of

immediate tenancy termination. Dry organic waste may be burnt in line with existing rules as found in appendix 2. **[see also page 21 of existing rules booklet]**

Potentially polluting materials

1. The following products are examples of materials not allowed on allotments as they may release polluting chemicals into the soil.
 - Rubber or foam-backed carpet and any lino style products.
 - Laminates and chip boards.
 - Gloss painted timber.
 - Any non-crop related chemicals or fuels.
2. Painted timber must not be brought on to allotments after 1 April 2015. All perished painted or treated timber products that predate these rules will need to be removed from the allotment to avoid possible soil contamination.
3. Only small quantities of crop-related licensed chemicals may be stored on the allotments. These must be stored in a safe, secure place and be for allotment use.
4. Excessive quantities of allotment litter, such as plastic pots, containers, sheeting or cans, may be liable to a waste notice as such materials can pollute the soil and spread onto other plots.

Criminal activity and safeguarding

1. Tenants should report all criminal activity on the allotments to the police and, where possible, create a crime number. If the police investigate and find an illegal act has taken place, the council can then take action.
2. Tenants, who the council has reasonable grounds to believe have been undertaking criminal activity on an allotment site, and where this is supported with information from the police, will have their tenancy ended.
3. Tenants and visitors must act responsibly when on an allotment and not cause a nuisance to local residents or other plot holders **[see also page 5 of existing rules booklet]**
4. Only allotment tenants, guests of allotment tenants and council operatives are allowed on the allotments. The general public should not be accessing the allotments unless invited by a tenant or the council. **[see also page 5 of existing rules booklet]**

Other revised rules

1. **Allotment keys** – As of 1 March 2014, outgoing tenants are not required to return their key to the council when giving up their plot as the key has been bought and is owned by the tenant when taking on the tenancy. **[This replaces rule 14.1 on page 15 of existing rules booklet]**

2. **Hedges** – new hedging may only be planted in agreement with the council. **[see also page 8 of existing rules booklet]**
3. **Shared paths** – where plots are split, the tenant with the front plot must maintain a straight path to the rear plot that can easily accommodate a wheelbarrow. If the tenant wishes to change an access path or lock a front gate then this must be agreed with the tenant on the rear plot. **[see also page 8 of existing rules booklet]**
4. **Allotment infrastructure** – any tenant found to have interfered with council infrastructure eg water supplies, fencing, gates or tracks will be in breach of rules and be at risk of tenancy termination. **[see also page 11 of existing rules booklet]**
5. **Allotment sheds and structures**
 - if you have a shed or structure on your plot then that structure is yours and there is no imperative to share access to, or space within, that shed or structure. If you choose to share a shed with a fellow tenant then this is an agreement between tenants and does not involve the council.
 - The council will automatically allow tenants to construct sheds, glass houses, polytunnels, cold-frames and ponds that are in line with allotment rules and the allotment structures policy as found on the allotment web pages (www.norwich.gov.uk/allotments).

[see also page 9 of existing rules booklet]