

Guidance relating to fair usage of water on allotment plots.

Water is extremely precious and increasingly expensive. On those sites with a mains water supply, the need for each tenant to use the service in a sensible and considerate manner is essential if water bills are to be kept at a minimum. So the need to save rainwater and use any mains service (where applicable) in a sensible and sustainable manner is vital.

There are many different methods of saving and minimising water usage, many of which are very cheap, simple and but cost effective. Below is a list of measures that can help reduce water use.

Collect

Collecting rainwater from sheds and greenhouses, in butts and other containers, is the best way of saving water. Of course you need to make sure that any containers are secured and are safe for children/small animals. Water can be collected in times of rainfall and stored for use during dry spells, so helping to reduce the need for using the mains water supply.

Watering Cans

The best method of watering your plants is by watering can. Putting water at the stems of your crops/plants and leaving surrounding ground dry limits water evaporation from areas not covered by the plant's foliage as well as limiting the growth of weeds, which compete with crops for water and nutrients. Where a mains supply is available, hoses and sprinklers should not to be used for watering, although hoses can be used to refill water butts.

Best time to Water

The best time to water your plants is early morning or even better late evening, this gives the crops all night and early morning to make best use of the water put down before evaporation due to the sun taking its toll.

Mulching

Applying mulches or planting through plastic sheeting reduces evaporation from the soil but more importantly reduces the growth and competition from weeds. This helps to save water. Planting through thick plastic sheeting also slows down weed growth as well as allowing water to be delivered to the exact place it is required. This will help direct any rainwater to the plants stem so making the best use of any rainfall.

Information can be made available in other languages, or other formats such as Braille or Audio Tape, on request.

Please ask a member of our staff for more information, or if you need any other help or advice.

They can arrange to speak to you in your own language if you need them to.

Weed regularly

Weeds compete with crops for vital resources (water and food). Regular weeding and weed restraining measures are a vital part of saving water as well as being a key requirement of your tenancy agreement.

Composting

This is very important part of gardening. In using composted material from your allotments you return important nutrients back to the soil as well as improving water retention, so reducing the amount of watering that is required.

Choose drought resistant crops where possible

Some vegetable crops are less demanding on water than others, french beans, beetroot, chard and carrots are less demanding than peas, broad and runner beans. Cabbages need much less water than Brussels sprouts and cauliflowers, and sweetcorn and pumpkins can manage with very little watering.

Report leaks immediately

If there is a mains water supply on site please report any leaks as soon as possible so that the Council can take action to repair and minimise losses. Please phone 01302 737339 to report any such leaks.

It is hoped that the above guidance and advice will help plot holders minimise the amount of water used on allotments across the borough. Increased water conservation by individuals will assist in reducing usage of the mains supply where applicable. This helps keep water bills to a minimum for the benefit of all plot holders, as well as maximising the use of collected rainwater, where no mains are available.

For more information contact: Doncaster Council

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