

Autumn 2025



NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YORK ALLOTMENTS



A SNAP SHOT OF ALLOTMENTS

Unfortunately we weren't able to hold the best plot competition this year, but don't worry - it will return next year possibly in a new format with new categories, so watch this space! In the meantime, we're delighted to share some wonderful photos from across our allotment sites, kindly collected by our site secretaries.

As you can see from the photos, there's a lot of crop variety, with a creative mix of fruit, vegetables and cut flowers. The dry weather, which has made watering such a challenge, has at least resulted in several beautiful displays of dahlias and the sweetcorn definitely seems to have enjoyed the sun. We spotted some unusual crops like the highly ornamental and edible red orach and noticed the inventive use of homemade archways to provide extra vertical growing space for climbers. All in all, we have some beautiful and productive plots!

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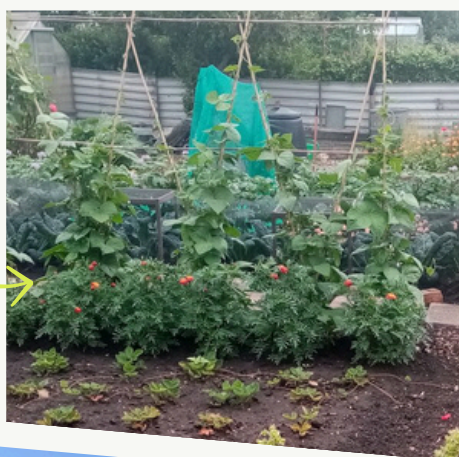
A bumble bee
enjoying a late
summer feast



Red orach and
impressive lantern-like
squash at Holgate



A feast for the eyes at
New Lane



Companion
planting in
action at
Scarcroft



How is this kale not
pecked at Carr?



Optimising growing space with
an archway for climbers at
Fulford Cross



OVER-WINTERED ONIONS

There's not a lot to plant on the plot in autumn, but one crop worth a try is over-wintered onions, sometimes known as Japanese onions. You can grow these in two ways: from seed, which really needs to be sown by mid-August so it's too late for it this year now, or from sets.

Starting from sets is a lot easier and can be done in much the same way as with maincrop onions planted in March or April. Don't be in too much of a hurry to get the sets in the ground. Late September or early October is soon enough. Planting earlier can induce bolting (seed heads instead of bulbs). Another option is to start the sets in pots or modules and grow them on under cover in a greenhouse or polytunnel planting them out in early spring.

There are several different varieties to choose from. For yellow onions there's Senshyu and the newer Radar and for red onions Red Winter and Electric.

Overwintered onions should be fully mature and ready for lifting by early June. If wanted, some can be harvested earlier and used as spring onions.

One advantage of over-wintered onions is that they can be less susceptible to white rot, the dreaded fungal disease that makes growing onions so difficult on many plots. Although not immune to this affliction, overwintered onions tend to get to a better size before being affected. This is probably because white rot prefers an optimum soil temperature of 14-8 Celsius, a temperature often not reached until well into May.



Are your contact details correct?

Have you moved house, changed your email or phone number? Please let us know.



COURGETTE CHUTNEY

Ingredients

- 1 kg grated courgettes including skin.
- 400 g diced cooking apples
- 500 g diced red onions
- 200 g Sultanas (optional)
- 1tsp Chilli Flakes (optional)
- 25g Fresh Ginger (grated)
- 1tsp Sea Salt
- 400ml Apple Cider Vinegar
- 400 g light brown sugar
- 2tsp Coriander Seeds
- 2tsp Mustard Seeds
- 2tsp Black Peppercorns

Method

- Put Courgettes, apples, onions, Sultanas (if desired), chilli flakes (if desired), salt and ginger into a large pan.
- Put Coriander Seeds, Mustard Seeds and Black Peppercorns into a muslin spice pan and put into pan.
- Add cider vinegar, give a good stir and slowly bring to the boil, cover and simmer for approx. 30 mins, stirring occasionally to stop bottom sticking.
- Take off the heat and stir in sugar until dissolved.
- Return to heat and let simmer for approx. 1 hour, stirring to stop bottom sticking and liquid is reduced.
- Ladle into prepared hot sterilised jars. Makes approx. 4 x 450g jars. Leave for 2 weeks before eating.
- Goes well with cheese or meats.

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SAVING YOUR SEEDS



As summer crops reach their peak, September is the perfect time to start saving seeds from your allotment. It's a rewarding, sustainable way to carry your plot's success into next year - and over time, saved seeds adapt better to your specific soil and growing conditions. It's also a great way to protect heritage and unusual crop varieties.

What you Can Save in September

Some of the easiest and most rewarding crops to save seeds from now include:

French and Runner Beans

- Let pods dry on the plant until brittle and rattling.
- Shell the beans, dry fully indoors, and store in a paper envelope.
- Label with variety and date.

Tomatoes

- Choose your healthiest, tastiest fruits.
- Scoop out seeds and flesh into a jar with a little water.
- Let ferment for a few days (this removes germination inhibitors).
- Rinse, dry on paper, and store.

Lettuce

- Allow a few plants to bolt and go to seed.
- Harvest once the fluffy seed heads appear.
- Rub the seed heads gently and winnow out the fluff.

Calendula, Nasturtium, Borage

(and other edible flowers)

- Pick once seeds are brown and dry on the plant.
- Great for pollinator planting next spring.



SEED TOP TIPS

- 1 Always save from open-pollinated (not F1) varieties - these will grow true to type.
- 2 Dry seeds thoroughly before storing - damp seeds = mouldy seeds.
- 3 Use paper bags or envelopes, not plastic.
- 4 Store somewhere cool, dark, and dry.
- 5 Label everything clearly!

RESEARCH - CAN YOU HELP?



Caleb Morris a Master's student at York University is carrying out some important research looking the feasibility of forming an Allotment Cooperative as an Urban Food System in York. As part of this research he would love to understand the opinions of allotment holders on the use and purposes of their allotments and produce. He is looking for 50 participants to complete an online survey which should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Please visit:

https://york.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7UL8pCAXXGYlscm

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