



NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YORK ALLOTMENTS



Photo credit: Brendan, Holgate Allotments plotholder

LOOKING OUT FOR SUMMER WILDLIFE

It's only just July and we've already had two heat waves this summer. Intense periods of hot weather cause a bit of stress for us gardeners, and the weather is also hard on the wildlife many of us enjoy at our allotment plots. There are some really simple things that we can all do to help.

Water is really essential for wildlife. Birds, insects, hedgehogs all need access to water along with the frogs, toads and newts. Shallow dishes of water with stones used as landing places for bees and other flying insects can be really helpful. If you have a bit more space, providing an area for a bird bath or pond can really draw wildlife to your allotment plot. Whatever water you provide, ensure that there are easy ways out. In some cases a few stones or sturdy sticks may do the trick. If you have a pond, you may need a plank for creatures like hedgehogs to be able to walk out if they've tumbled in.

Could you be a YACIO trustee?

Details inside!



WHAT'S INSIDE:

Cabbage patch caterpillars - 2

Dealing with tree saplings - 3

Administrators report - 4

Also consider your personal water butts and those across your allotment site. Keeping water butts filled to the brim is a courtesy to other gardeners where these are shared, and it also means birds and insects can perch on the edge to get a drink.

In addition to water, if you have a small area that gets shade during the day, this may be a good place to establish a small rockery or log pile. These areas can provide refuge for creatures like frogs, toads and newts who need to stay out of the intense sun. Including some flowers on your allotment will benefit wildlife and may reduce garden pests. Flowers will draw in pollinators and if left, may provide seed for birds later in the year. Native, open flowers can be good. But bees also love some ground cover crops too, including phacelia and clover which also benefit your soil.

Occasionally wildlife needs even more help from us. Whilst hedgehogs are becoming more and more rare across the country, allotments can be a real haven for them. Most hoglets are born in June and July, so they may be exploring about now. Be extra vigilant when strimming and consider leaving gaps for hedgehog routes if putting up fences. Heatwaves reduce the number of slugs and snails that make a large part of their diet and moisture intake. Ensuring water is safely accessible will help. You may also feed hedgehogs meat-based cat or dog food, but do this with caution as it's best for them to have a natural diet and having food on your plot is sure to attract rats. And remember, healthy hedgehogs are not active during the day. If you see a hedgehog foraging in daylight (unless really early or very late), it's in trouble. Please contact a rescue or veterinarian for appropriate action.

Looking out for nature can make gardening even more rewarding. It's usually simple to do and provides other benefits for the garden. It's a real joy to put down the tools at the end of the day and appreciate the buzz and birdsong which accompanies us through the summer gardening season!



CABBAGE PATCH CATERpillARS

If you grow brassica (cabbage family) plants you'll probably have had problems with caterpillars, especially later in summer when the culprits, several species of butterfly and moth, reach peak numbers.

It's often assumed that it's the caterpillars of the cabbage white that are responsible. That's true if

you are neglectful and don't take steps to prevent or remove the very obvious yellow and black patterned caterpillars. But there's also the yellowish or brownish green caterpillars of the cabbage moth and the pale green caterpillars of the small white and green veined white butterflies. Unlike the cabbage white caterpillars, which mainly cluster on outer leaves, these tend to feed on the inner leaves, often going unseen and boring into the heart of cabbages and cauliflowers.

To prevent caterpillars there's a number of options. Perhaps the best is to use anti-butterfly net. This needs to have a mesh gauge of no more than 5mm. Ideally it is also suspended above plants to prevent butterflies laying eggs on leaves touching the net. For the more masochistic allotmenteer, those prepared to spend time picking and squashing caterpillars, there's 'manual control'. And if you want to splash some cash there's the costly *Bacillus thuringiensis* biological control.

Or, of course, you can do nothing and do your bit for conservation. Unfortunately, especially if the cabbage whites are about in numbers, the reality is that plants will be skeletonised. Toughies like kale may regrow, but more fussy types like sprouts, many cabbages and cauliflowers will not recover enough to produce a worthwhile crop.

Not to be confused with the orange and black banded caterpillar of the Cinnabar moth which will feast only on Ragwort and leave your brassicas well alone! [Visit the Woodland Trust for ID help.](#)



IN MEMORY

George Hay
Holgate Allotments



Holgate Allotments Association would like to pay tribute to George Hay, a much loved and long-time allotmenteer at Holgate allotments. George was always ready to lend a helping hand and quietly got on with fixing gates, locks, helping to build pergolas and generally making everyone's life at the allotment a bit easier. All that, while also managing, with Jen, to create a beautiful and productive allotment. You'll be missed, George.

SELF-SEEDING SAPPLINGS

Have you noticed tiny trees appearing on your plot? They may look harmless now, but self-seeded saplings are much easier to remove while they're young. Left to grow, they quickly develop deep roots, making them difficult and eventually costly to remove.

The focus of allotments is to grow fruit, vegetables and cut flowers. Mature trees cast shade, compete for water and nutrients, and can make it much harder to grow productive crops. They can also affect neighbouring plots.

A very common self-seeded tree which can quickly become a problem in the wrong place is sycamore, recognised by its distinctive five-lobed leaves. You may also spot ash (leaves made up of several smaller leaflets), silver birch (small triangular leaves with serrated edges), rowan (feathery leaves with many leaflets) and willow, whose young leaves are long and narrow.

The good news is that young saplings are usually easy to remove. After rain, simply pull them out by hand, making sure you remove the roots, or use a hand fork if needed. A quick check every few weeks can prevent a small seedling becoming a much bigger problem.

IDENTIFYING SAPPLINGS



ADMINISTRATORS' REPORT

Administration and paperwork, or rather its on-line equivalent, is not what comes to mind when we think about allotments. To help manage the paperwork, answer related queries and manage the waiting list, we employ two part time administrators, Janet and Nick, who are here to help answer relevant queries. Between them they are usually available to take your calls between 10.00 and 16.00 on Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri. They can be reached by email using contact@yorkallotments.org, by calling 07887 529 195, by post, or using the online form on our website.

Just as on the plot, we have seasonal variation in the office, with our busiest time being early in the new year sending invoices and responding to any queries arising. Fortunately nearly all are now sent by email; the days of stuffing over 1500 invoices into envelopes by hand is happily in the past. And the postage saving is meaningful too. This time is also especially busy with tenancies ending and consequently with new tenancies starting. So the first 3 months of the year are by far the busiest for us. After that it quietens down a little, decreasing over the summer and autumn until we start to prepare invoices for the next year. On the plus side, this means that we are busiest in winter, and less so in summer when we want to be gardening ourselves.

As things stand our allotment management software is showing its age and starting to creak when working hard, so we are aiming to replace it with something easier to maintain by October this year. All being well there will be little impact for tenants, and the change will also allow us to update our website and payment systems at the same time.



In case we need to contact you
Have you moved house, changed your email or phone number? Please let us know.

ARE YOU A FUTURE TRUSTEE?

YACIO's trustees work behind the scenes to help ensure that our allotments remain well managed, financially sustainable and continue to flourish.

Being a trustee isn't about knowing everything or having years of committee experience. It's about bringing your ideas, asking good questions and helping make decisions that benefit allotment holders across York. Whether your background is in horticulture, finance, communications, IT, project management or simply getting things done, your experience could be invaluable.


Trustees work as a team, supporting one another and helping ensure that York's allotments remain productive, welcoming and financially sustainable for years to come.

If you've ever thought, "Someone should do something about that," this could be your opportunity to be part of the solution.

We're looking for new trustees who care about the future of York's allotments. If you'd like to find out more, we'd love to hear from you – there's no obligation, just an opportunity for a chat. [Express your interest via our website.](#)

CONTACTING US

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