



NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YORK ALLOTMENTS

Paying for
your plot
See Page 4
for details

Photo credit: Gavin Aitchison

MAINTAINING HEDGES

If your allotment has hedges, you are required to manage them through an annual cut as specified in your tenancy agreement. This must reduce the height of the hedge to 1.5m (or about 5 feet tall). Timing is important. On allotments you should only cut hedges between September and February in any year by law. This helps prevent disturbance to our declining bird populations during breeding season.

Later cutting provides benefits, especially if your hedges have any fruit that might help wildlife through winter. Hedges are an important source of nutrition and shelter during the more challenging months. Birds may also continue nesting later in the season or start to establish nests in February. It is always good to spend a little quiet time on the allotment just observing before beginning hedge work. Disturbing breeding birds at any time of year is an offence. And it's a good excuse to have a peaceful cuppa!



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When cutting back your hedges, consider both the width and the height of the hedge. Although a maximum height at cutting has been set, paths need to be kept clear too. Hedges often grow more than you might imagine over a full year! If your hedges extend more than 18 inches beyond your plot boundary, you probably need to reduce their width as well as managing the height.

Although hedges can look a bit bare when cut back, regular management won't harm most hedge plants and you'll soon see green shoots in any gaps as spring approaches.

If you have a tall hedge which you genuinely cannot manage, it's a good idea to have a conversation with your site secretary or to reach out to YACIO directly.

If you are interested in more information about hedges, wildlife or the law, the following links may be useful.

[How to manage a hedgerow for wildlife | The Wildlife Trusts](#)

[Hedgerow management rules: cutting and trimming - GOV.UK](#)

[Hedgerows - British Habitats - Woodland Trust](#)

[Hedge and woodland edge habitats | RHS Advice](#)

3 OCT - 1 NOV

YORK ENVIRONMENT FESTIVAL

York Environment Festival returns this autumn, running from Saturday 3 October to Sunday 1 November, with more than 100 free events taking place across the city, (though some organisers may ask for donations to help with expenses).

The annual festival celebrates the work being done across York to tackle climate change, support nature and biodiversity and make our city more sustainable.

There's a huge variety of events on offer, but this year's programme has plenty that should be of particular interest to York's allotment community – from growing, gardening and permaculture to local food, farming and the future of our food system.

You can get hands-on at York Steiner School's Allotment Jamboree, with allotment-grown fruit and vegetables, jam making and soup around the fire; discover the moths living among the plots at Scarcroft Allotments; or explore how permaculture principles are being put into practice at Homestead Park.

Food and farming feature strongly too. Events look at how our food system might need to change by 2050, what happens when food systems come under pressure, and whether community-supported agriculture could help build a more resilient local food system for York.

Later in the month there are opportunities to celebrate the autumn harvest, with community apple picking and pressing events around the city.

FESTIVAL EVENTS FOR ALLOTMENTEERS

Saturday 3 October – York Long Table – a community meal featuring food from local producers and growers.

Monday 5 October – What happens when the food system breaks down?

Saturday 10 October – York Steiner School Allotment Jamboree!

Saturday 10 October – Permaculture, the park, and climate justice guided tour

Saturday 10 October – Moth Evening at Scarcroft Allotments

Tuesday 13 October – How do we transform our food system for 2050?

Thursday 15 October – What would a community-supported farm bring to York?



STORING PUMPKINS & SQUASHES

If you've grown pumpkins or squashes now is the time to get them harvested. Leaving on the plot into late autumn increases the risk of damage from rots and rodents.

It is important though to try to get pumpkins and squashes fully ripe before storing. Unless there's a risk of damage they should be left on the vine until the skin is hard. Hardness can be tested by pressing a fingernail into the skin. If you can make an indentation it is not fully ripe.

An option, if you've unripe pumpkins or squashes is to put them somewhere warm and sunny to 'cure' for a few weeks. A greenhouse or sunny windowsill is ideal.

Once pumpkins and squashes are ripe how long they'll keep depends on the type and where they're kept. Halloween pumpkins usually last only a month or two whereas others, especially the grey skinned Crown Prince and some butternuts, will store for months if conditions are right.

What are the right conditions? Not a greenhouse or shed. These will become too cold and damp as winter sets in. Bringing them into the house is best. An unheated spare room or loft is perfect but anywhere dry with a stable temperature is better than outside.

Inspect stored pumpkins and squashes regularly for signs of rot. This usually starts on or near the stalk. Which brings to mind another point about pumpkins and squashes: never carry them by the stalk. This risks it weakening or even pulling off, a disaster because stalkless they'll only keep for a week or two.



COMING SOON

NEW YACIO WEBSITE



Our brand-new York Allotments website will be launching in October!

The new site has been designed to make it easier to find the information you need, whether you're an existing tenant, looking to apply for an allotment, or want to find out more about allotments in York.

We've reorganised and updated the information across the site, with clearer guidance for tenants, improved information about our allotment sites and a simpler application process. The website will be the place to go if you want to apply for an allotment plot, with applications then managed through our new allotment management system, Scribe.

For existing tenants, the website will continue to be the place to come for news, useful information, guidance and everything you need to know about York Allotments.

We'll continue to develop the site and add useful information over the coming months, so once it launches, do have a look around – and if there's something you think would be particularly useful to include, let us know.

NEW WAY TO PAY ALLOTMENT RENT

We're changing the way you pay your annual allotment rent – so here's what to expect when your next invoice arrives in January.

York Allotments has recently moved to Scribe, our new allotment management system. As part of this change, the way we send invoices and take online payments is changing too.

Previously, tenants received an invoice and then went to the York Allotments website to pay, using their Tenant ID and invoice number. From January, the process will be much simpler.

What will happen in January?

At the beginning of January, you will receive your annual allotment rent invoice by email.

The email will show **York Allotments** as the sender, but the email address behind it will be: **no-reply@scribeaccounts.com**

This is a genuine email sent on behalf of York Allotments, so please don't delete it!

Your invoice will include a unique payment link. Click the link and you will be taken to a secure payment page where you can pay your rent by debit or credit card.

There is no longer any need to go to the York Allotments website and enter your Tenant ID and invoice number.

A couple of small jobs to do now

Because your invoice will be sent by email, **it's important that we have your current email address.**

If you have changed your email address, or think the address we hold for you may be out of date, **please let us know as soon as possible** so that we can update our records before invoices are sent in January.

We'd also like you to add:

no-reply@scribeaccounts.com to your email contacts or safe senders list. Because invoices are being sent through our new system, there is a chance that your email provider may initially put them in your Junk or Spam folder. Adding the address now should help make sure your invoice reaches your inbox.

When January comes around, please keep an eye out for your **York Allotments invoice**. If you can't see it in your inbox, remember to check your **Junk or Spam folder** before contacting us.

Prefer to pay by cheque?

You can still pay your allotment rent by cheque if you prefer.

Please make cheques payable to:

York Allotments Charitable Incorporated Organisation and post them to **York Allotments** at the address below.

So, before January: make sure we have your correct email address, add no-reply@scribeaccounts.com to your contacts - and then look out for your York Allotments invoice at the beginning of January.



Have your contact details changed?

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

CONTACTING US

 **contact@yorkallotments.org**

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