

Kendal in Bloom Allotments Category— We are changing the competition. In 2020 the theme for the competition is **biodiversity**. Watch this space, more details will follow in the New-Year.



Article by Ros Taylor, Site Representative for Wattsfield Allotments.

A friend phoned me earlier this year in great excitement. She had seen a mother hedgehog and two babies out and about on the Wattsfield Allotments. And, here's the great thing, many people seem to have seen hedgehogs around this year too, and as they eat slugs, we should do what we can to encourage them.

But, hedgehogs and allotments don't always mix, especially if allotmenters use slug pellets. It's best to avoid using them if you want to look after our wildlife. However, slugs and snails are our biggest bugbear, especially in the spring when plants are tender and trying to

get established. Pellets are widely used as the easiest and most effective solution.

There is a lot of controversy about whether pellets are safe for the environment. There are two kinds of slug pellets available to the public: metaldehyde and ferric phosphate. In December 2018 DEFRA announced that metaldehyde will be banned from most uses in Spring 2020. The ban included all home garden use, but was overturned and metaldehyde continues to be available for the time being.

But the reality is that both types are toxic if consumed in enough quantity, and our hedgehogs are out there gobbling up the slugs and snails which may have already have eaten pellets.

So, if you use pellets, consider these points:

- use one or two pellets at a time. You do not need large amounts.
- put them in places near where the slugs are likely to be during the day so they come across them when they come out at night
- cover plants with netting, cloche or fleece, which will also help them establish.

There are options other than slug pellets though.

- * A biological control ('Nemaslug') specific to molluscs, with no adverse effect on other types of animal. Nematodes (*Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita*) enter slugs' bodies and infect them with a bacterium.
- * Only transplant sturdy plantlets .
- * Torchlight searches on mild evenings, especially when the weather is damp.
- * Raking over soil and removing fallen leaves during winter can allow birds to eat slug eggs that have been exposed.
- * Traps, such as scooped out half orange, grapefruit or melon skins, can be laid cut side down, or jars part-filled with beer and sunk into the soil near vulnerable plants. Check and empty these regularly. Proprietary traps are also available from garden centres and mail order suppliers.
- * Barriers thought to repel slugs include rough or sharp textured mulches and substances thought to be distasteful or strong smelling. Copper-base barriers have been shown to repel slugs in some studies. A recent RHS study in a garden-realistic scenario however, found no reduction in slug damage from barriers made of copper tape, bark mulch, eggshells, sharp grit or wool pellets.

The RHS is carrying out a range of scientific studies to assess these non-chemical methods.

If you wish to look after your hedgehogs, there is more information on the RHS website: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=228>

Tidy pathways. Allotment pathways and boundaries are to be kept tidy. Maintenance of the main access path is the responsibility of the Town Council, but side paths are the **tenant's responsibility** and these should be maintained on a side to edge basis. Encroachment onto the paths and/or boundary **is not permitted**. Internal boundary hedges, trees and bushes should be cut back by the tenant.

Allotments

Newsletter



2019

Kendal Town Council, Town Hall, Kendal. LA9 4DL.

Email: allotments@kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk

www.kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk

Tel: 01539 793495

Chairman's Rambling

As another allotment year draws to a close, a time for contemplation. A big challenge for the Committee this year has been tackling rabbits on one of the allotment sites. Although rabbits are a common problem that individual allotment holders often encounter, this year has seen massive increase in numbers across Kendal with one site in particular being over run. We have put measures in place to try to prevent the rabbits entering the site but the battle is far from over and the Committee and Officers will continue to address this problem.

Once again the demand for allotments is increasing and there currently seems to be a real enthusiasm for growing your own. The Committee have recently been considering biodiversity on allotments and we have a sub-group who are developing an agenda on this exciting issue. This could mean a change in the way we view allotments.

The Committee meet on a quarterly basis and as a member of the public you are welcome to attend. If you would like to speak, please let Janine Holt know prior to the meeting.

I wish you all the best for the forthcoming year.

Regards, The Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Alvin Finch

Payment Drop in Sessions

Payment drop off

There will be two sessions where you can drop in a cheque for your rent. Please note, we **do not** have the facility to accept cash or card payments. The sessions will be held on :

Monday 30th December 2019 from 12.30pm—2.00pm in the Town Council Office.

Tuesday 23rd January 2020 from 2.00pm—4.00pm in the Town Council Office.

It is really important to inform the office if your circumstances change. The Townscape Manager and I visit the allotments on a regular basis. As you know, I do contact tenants who appear not to be working their plot. So if something happens and you are unable to work your plot, please telephone or email the office and let me know. This will avoid me wasting time writing to you and hopefully avoid any upset at times when you are already under pressure.

We have site representatives vacancies on Sedbergh Road, Sandylands, Shaws Brow and Underley Hill. If you are interested in becoming a site representative please contact Janine Holt 01539 793495 or allotments@kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk



**Mayor's Christmas
Coffee Morning**

**Kendal Town Hall
9.30am—12.30pm
Saturday
21st December 2019**

All Welcome

Allotment Office Hours

Janine Holt - Assistant to the Town Clerk can be contacted Monday—Wednesday between the hours of 9.30am and 4.00pm. Her direct line is 01539 793495.

Pierre Labat - Townscape Manager works a five day week and can be contacted via the office on 01539 793490

General Office Open 9.30am—12.30pm Mon—Fri. After 12.30pm messages can be left on the ansaphone.

POLYTUNNELS ON ALLOTMENTS
All polytunnels have to be approved by the Allotments Committee . Each individual case is judged on its own merits. The polytunnel policy is available upon request. If you would like a copy, please contact Janine .



A “National Collection” on a Kendal Allotment

The South Lakeland Orchard Group (SLOG) has just been awarded National Plant Collection status for their collection of “*Malus domestica*: North West English Apple Cultivars” by the UK governing body Plant Heritage. This is a prestigious award which very few other apple collections have earned; there are only five other such regional apple collections in England.

The collection was started in 2012 on the Underley Road Allotment siter and is open to the public. An

information board explains the orchard layout of more than 160 different varieties of apples and pears in eight rows. There is one row of Cumbrian varieties, one row of Lancashire varieties and one row of Yorkshire varieties.

Some of the better known Cumbrian varieties are Keswick Codlin, originating before 1790 at Gleaston Castle, and Duke of Devonshire, raised in 1835 at Holker Hall. Other, lesser known varieties have arisen from Cumbria’s two main fruit growing areas, the Lyth and Eden Valleys.

Other local heritage collection orchards exist but what makes the SLOG collection unique is that each variety’s identity has been validated by DNA analysis – unfortunately mistaken apple identities are more frequent than people realise, especially among the older, lesser know heritage varieties.

One of SLOG’s aims is to preserve the diversity of Cumbrian and Lancashire apple varieties. These local heritage varieties have survived for generations because they are adapted to local conditions so this collection was established to preserve these unique and valuable varieties.

The award of National Collection status recognises that these North West English Apple varieties are proven authentic, meaning that we are preserving only genuine original heritage varieties and that the SLOG orchard is the official reference point for them. SLOG is a voluntary community group, for further information see the website: www.slorchards.co.uk



NO-DIG CULTIVATION ON THE ALLOTMENT PLOT

The allotment ritual of the winter dig is still popular with many plot holders. They appreciate the exercise and the winter frosts can help to break up rough dug, heavy clay soils. However, there is a growing interest in the no-dig cultivation technique and a belief that it is better for soil health and plant growth. I have tried it on my half plot this year and have been very pleased with the results. I cleared any perennial weeds and put a 15cm layer of compost on top of un-dug

soil. It does take a large quantity of mulch (this could be a mix of garden compost/leaves/grass clippings and composted manure), which has required an increase in my composting capacity for next year. I grow brassicas, squash, sweetcorn, French beans and tomatoes and they have all done very well. I fed with some chicken waste pellets, and liquid seaweed in the rare times I needed water. Annual weed growth was very sparse and dandelion seedlings came out with ease. I have chatted to many committed diggers who are resistant to the no-dig argument but I would encourage them to give it a try on a small part of their plot and before long, they’ll be reaping the rewards.

Article by Di Appleyard, mentor co-ordinator for the National Allotment Society

Stay vigilant over the winter months as this is the time of year when more break-ins on allotments occur. This year we have experienced an unusually high incidence of anti-social behaviour mostly centred around the Castle Hags & Castle Hags Ext allotment sites. Please always report any incidents to the Police and the Town Council office.

Promoting Biodiversity on Allotments in Kendal More Veg – More Life

‘Working with Nature on Your Allotment’

Background

At the September Allotments Committee meeting it was agreed that we should move to a more diverse approach towards allotmenting. Historically Kendal Town Council has encouraged tidy, traditional looking allotment plots. The Committee acknowledges that this view is probably now outdated and they would like to encourage biodiversity if a tenant is interested in this.

To progress with this idea it was agreed that a working group would meet to discuss how we can promote a more biodiverse approach to allotmenting.

What Is Meant By The Term Biodiversity?

Existence of a wide variety of plant and animal species living in their natural environment.

Biodiversity is the term that is now routinely used to discuss the vast number and wide variety of organisms in the world, including humankind. The term was coined by joining the words **biological** meaning relating to life and living processes and **diversity** meaning range, variety, mixture. The UK is lucky enough to have rich biodiversity, but our modern lifestyles are rapidly threatening much of this natural variety. Land is being built on, marshes drained, new species of plants, animals, insects and fishes introduced to the UK often accidentally via ships and planes and then start to flourish here as climate changes take hold.

The good news is that there is much we can do to manage the threats these changes might pose. It is recognised that keeping an Allotment is at the frontline of maintenance of biodiversity. So if we all pitch in and make slight changes in the way we maintain and manage our plots, not only can we continue to bring home fresh veg for our tea, we can also help to ensure that our grandchildren inherit a world that is teeming with biodiverse life and will also be able to enjoy keeping an allotment.

Biodiversity versus Neglected Plot

A biodiverse plot is one which is managed and looked after by the allotmenteer to produce healthy vegetables and fruit by encouraging/supporting a multitude of beneficial organisms both below and above ground.

Please note, a neglected plot is not being managed.

A Biodiverse Allotment Plot

- **Soil Preservation –**
- ⇒ *Never walk on your fruit and veg growing area, walk on paths between the beds*
- ⇒ *Reduce digging and work towards a no dig policy*
- **No use of pesticides or slug pellets**
- **No artificial fertilisers**
- **Compost**
- **Use water butts for rain water collection and watering crops**
- **Use a variety of crops and include some flowers**
- **Use of natural weed suppressant-**
- ⇒ *Mulch*
- ⇒ *Ground cover*
- **Habitat creation**



Article by Allotment Biodiversity Sub-Group, Kendal Town Council