

KIDBROOKE PARK ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

CULTIVATION AND ALLOTMENT USE POLICY

APPROVED AT THE May 2023 Committee Meeting.

The primary purpose of an allotment is for the cultivation and growing of vegetables, fruit, herbs and ornamental flowers. Your allotment must be used for this purpose.

Plots must be fully cultivated and weed free. This is a basic requirement. To eradicate as much doubt as possible, and in keeping with other societies and associations the Committee have decided to be more definitive about what is acceptable as "fully cultivated". Our agreed standards are as follows.

FULL CULTIVATION, DEFINITIONS AND ALLOWABLE CROPS

The cultivated area is defined as being cultivated for the production of the allowable crops and will be a minimum of 75% of each individual plot(s). The 75% of each plot for open cultivation should be fully cultivated within a complete growing season. This area includes compost bins, fruit cages, water butts and internal plot paths.

The remaining 25% of any plot will include sheds, lawns, ponds, uncultivated areas under fruit trees and any other ground not being used for cultivation. These areas should NOT be left to grow wild and should be managed. Internal plot paths will be included in this area if they are wider than 24 inches (600mm).

Although it is recognised that conserving wildlife is an important function of allotments, the Committee recognise that the boundaries are already natural wildlife areas and an uncultivated area just left to go wild is NOT acceptable on any part of a plot. Ponds are allowable but must be no larger than 1.5m² in total area and no deeper than 450mm deep with at least on sloping side to allow access by wildlife. Ponds are not to be surrounded by hard standing.

It is understood that new systems of cultivation such as 'No Dig' are becoming more popular, however these systems are very complex to maintain and they do not advocate overgrown plots (see Sitopia, Shooters Hill Road as an example of No Dig flower & food production. See also Charles Dowding, Organic Gardening, 2007 p19 for information on weed control for No Dig cultivation.

FRUIT TREES

Fruit trees must be maintained in good condition and regularly pruned. Branches should NOT be allowed to cause obstruction on pathways and should be planted well within the boundary of the plot. Trees must not cause undue shade on any neighbouring plot.

No tree should be allowed to grow above 3 metres tall. Any tree taller than this may be reduced by the committee and the plot holder will be liable for the cost of pruning.

Existing fruit trees which are very overgrown and above 4.5metres high on 1st June 2023 will be identified by the committee as 'Heritage Trees'. Heritage Trees will not benefit from major pruning however, they must be maintained so as not to cause any blockage, over shading or excessive drying out of neighbours soils. Should any of these conditions apply the Committee retain the right to order the tree to be cut down and recover the costs involved from the plot holder.

PERMISSIBLE FRUIT TREE ROOT STOCKS

All fruit trees must be of dwarf rootstock. It must be possible to harvest the tree without climbing the tree or any other structure. Suitable root stocks are:

1. Apples M27, M9, M26 dwarfing
2. Plums - Pixie dwarfing
3. Cherries - semi dwarfing Gisela 5 or G5

4. Quince A or for pears, semi dwarfing
5. Quince C for pears, dwarfing

ALLOWABLE CROPS ARE DEFINED AS VEGETABLES, FRUIT, HERBS, AND ORNAMENTAL FLOWERS.

FULL CULTIVATION IS CONSIDERED TO MEAN AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. The plot is in readiness for growing.
2. The plot is well stocked with growing produce relevant to the time of year.
3. The plot is in the process of being prepared for the allowable crops or season.
4. The plot is not used for single crop (monoculture) cultivation and must have a wide range of allowable crops grown across the growing season.

UNCULTIVATED AND NEGLECTED PLOTS

The committee recognises that taking on an allotment can be a big commitment. One of the most difficult issue for the Committee is issuing letters where plot holders have not achieved the cultivation standards. The Committee does its utmost to apply standards fairly. The Committee recognises that every tenant has his/her own personal circumstances that impact on and can influence their ability to attain the agreed standards. However, the Committee acknowledges that the Association has to be managed in a professional way and that every plot holder has to share that responsibility.

If you cannot commit the time necessary and you are struggling to keep your plot cultivated, talk to to your designated Committee member or write to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

You must keep the allotment in cultivation, keep weeds under control and maintain the soil in a healthy and fertile condition at all times. Any plot where ground is annually cleared of weeds and not used for crop production for a period of one year will be deemed to be uncultivated.

NEW TENANTS

The Committee will expect New Tenants taking up a plot to commence cultivation of the plot immediately. The Committee will expect you to have 25% of the plot fully cultivated and planted or ready for planting within two months.

You will be expected to have achieved the 75% full cultivation after after 6 months or sooner depending on the condition of the plot you take over. During this period you must demonstrate continuous progress towards full cultivation.

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MAY 2023