



Welcome to the allotment community in our parish!

Nature Friendly Growing Guidance for Allotment Holders in Boughton Monchelsea Parish

Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council is committed to supporting nature recovery on all its sites and hopes you will join us in this crucial endeavour.

Below are some tips and opportunities for further learning.

1. Digging and healthy soils

No-dig growing has become more popular and spares the back too! It helps maintain soil structure, reduces water loss and reduces carbon emission. Plenty of organic matter is the key to healthy, productive soils so composting on site really helps.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/soil-composts-mulches/no-dig-gardening>

2. Mowing

To help pollinators thrive and predators for pests BMAT follows No Mow May and keeps mowing to a minimum throughout the year – sometimes it looks a bit untidy but the benefits for wild life and water retention are worth it

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay>

3. **Hedgerow management** - we are creating lots of native hedges around the parish and managing them by cutting every 2 or 3 years outside the bird nesting seasons i.e. between December and February. We also remove ivy and wild clematis (Old Man's Beard) as they can destroy hedgerow trees. This can lead to untidiness at times and if sightlines are affected for driving this rule is flexible. But it helps birds, insects and small mammals like hedgehogs and dormice.

4. **Choice of seeds and introduction of plants** - please choose varieties with care as importing pests or very invasive plants can have a huge impact on your plot and the local environment. [How To Select Good Seeds For Planting: What You Need To Know](https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/plant-health-in-gardens/protect-your-garden)

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5. Pesticides/ herbicides/fungicides

Please avoid these as far as possible- in fact totally! It is very hard to confine chemicals to just one plot and if your neighbours are using organic methods of control you will scupper these. Many products remain in the soil for years and can also leach into the watercourses threatening wildlife and human health.

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/chemicals-free-organic-gardening>

6. Plastic pollution

Plastics are built from organophosphate chemicals and take decades if not hundreds of years to degrade. Please remove all plastics meticulously from the soil and avoid single use plastics totally. It fun to make plant supports from natural materials and looks better too.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/garden-inspiration/get-gardening/how-to-go-plastic-free-in-your-garden>

7. Pollinators

There are many wild plants (commonly known as weeds!) that support valuable pollinating insects and so please be tolerant of these and allow a few around the edges of your plot. Or you can of course plant them and enjoy the show!

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/research/plants-for-pollinators>

8. Watering

Climate change is bringing a time of water extremes – we either have too much or too little. We need to save and store water in times of plenty and use sparingly in times of drought. To avoid excessive and wasteful watering here are some useful tips

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardening-for-the-environment/water>

Thank you for using your plot to help nature!