



Clearing an Overgrown Plot



The 'long term' object is to remove every trace of weeds including the roots. This can prove to be a lengthy operation for which the use of a rotovator is not practical because some types of weed, particularly the more persistent ie. couch grass, docks, nettles, bindweed, will be chopped up and will spread and multiply as a result.

Getting Started

Commence by cutting down everything to near ground level using shears or a strimmer.

Place all cut materials for composting then concentrate on the remaining growth.

There are 2 methods which could be used:-

1. Spray the area with non-residual type weed-killer such as 'Roundup' taking care to ensure that there is no spray or drift to the surrounding area and follow the instructions regarding amount, application and safety precautions. Wait for its effect to take place then dig or rotovate the ground, remove all traces of plants and dispose of them. **Do not** place such materials in a compost heap. *See our factsheet on Composting for further information.*
2. Cover part of the plot with material which will prevent light from reaching the surface i.e. black polythene, thick cardboard. The covering is usually unsightly and should not be left for a long period.

To prevent wind blowing the material away cover the edges with soil, then concentrate on the uncovered area digging the ground, removing all weeds and gradually preparing it for the crops.

The covered areas of ground will in time become bare of all plants and as a result make digging less difficult.

Planning is important!

The time of year will determine which, if any, crops can be planted, hence the need to plan. Experience has shown that spending a little time planning can save some endless regrets and avoid many problems.

As each section is cleared and completed, manures and fertilisers can be added in readiness for a subsequent crop.

There is need to 'rotate' crops just as there is need to establish some 'permanent' areas.

Remember! to obtain permission before erecting any building – it may be a condition of your tenancy agreement. Once permission has been given you should ensure bases are flat and level, access easy and also that the building be 'anchored' to withstand severe weather conditions.

Handy Hints

- A record of where and what has been planted eliminates the probability of loss of labels and can be referred to as a means of establishing which crops are more suited to any particular area.
- The use of water butts to catch rainwater is a must.

Contact Details:

National Society of Allotment &
Leisure Gardeners Ltd
O'Dell House
Hunters Road
Corby
NN17 5JE

Tel: 01536 266576/Fax: 264509
Email: natsoc@nsalg.org.uk
Web: www.nsalg.org.uk