

Allotment Checklist

Your First Allotment: Beginner Checklist

Taking on your first allotment is exciting, but it helps to be prepared. Use this checklist to make sure you have everything you need — from tools and seeds to planning and maintenance essentials.

1. Planning & Paperwork

- Confirm allotment tenancy and rules with your site committee
- Note plot number, boundaries, and water access points
- Make a simple layout plan (beds, paths, compost area, shed)
- Keep a gardening journal for sowing dates, planting notes, and harvests

2. Tools & Equipment

- Garden fork & spade
- Hoe for weeding
- Hand trowel and hand fork
- Rake (leaf and soil)
- Secateurs / pruning shears
- Watering can / hose (if allowed)
- Wheelbarrow or garden trolley
- Gloves (heavy-duty and lightweight)
- Kneeling pad or small stool
- Garden twine, plant labels, and stakes
- Storage: shed, box, or crate for tools

3. Soil & Bed Preparation

- Compost or well-rotted manure
- Mulch (bark, straw, or cardboard)
- Soil testing kit (pH and basic nutrients)
- Optional: Raised bed materials (timber, pallets, or bricks)

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4. Seeds & Plants

- Easy starter vegetables: carrots, radish, lettuce, courgettes, onions
- Herbs: parsley, chives, basil
- Fruit: strawberries, raspberries (optional)
- Seed trays or pots (for indoor sowing)
- Labels for plants and rows

5. Watering & Irrigation

- Water butt (if allowed) or container for rainwater
- Hosepipe (if site permits)
- Watering can
- Mulch to retain soil moisture

6. Pest & Wildlife Management

- Garden netting for brassicas and peas
- Copper tape / beer traps for slugs and snails
- Bug hotel or simple wildlife shelter (optional)
- Row covers or fleece for frost protection

7. Seasonal Essentials

- Cold frames or cloches for early sowing
- Garden fleece for frost-sensitive crops
- Stakes or trellis for climbing plants (beans, peas, tomatoes)
- Harvest baskets or containers

8. Maintenance & Organization

- Notebook or digital tracker for weekly tasks
- Calendar for sowing, planting, and harvesting dates
- Labels for compost bins and storage areas
- Path maintenance tools (strimmer, rake, or board for edging)
- First-aid kit (basic cuts and blisters)

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9. Optional Extras

- Bench or small seating area
- Shade netting for delicate crops
- Small solar light for early mornings/late evenings
- Seed-saving envelopes for future seasons

10. Prioritising What You Need

- Focus on what you need **this season** – you don't need everything at once.
- Plan your sowing and planting schedule based on **the time of year**.
- Start with essential tools and easy-to-grow crops first.
- Add optional equipment and plants gradually as you gain experience.
- Keep a simple **calendar or tracker** to plan when to sow, plant, water, and harvest.

Remember: allotment gardening is a seasonal process – patience and planning make it enjoyable and manageable.

Tip: By prioritising, you can spread costs, reduce overwhelm, and ensure you have the right tools and seeds at the right time.