



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS



# A PLOTHOLDER'S GUIDE

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Taking on your own Allotment Plot is an exciting and, in Edinburgh, long anticipated event. As with any new venture the individual may be filled with a sense of trepidation as to whether or not they will be able to manage. The Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Associations (FEDAGA) represents most allotment holders in Edinburgh and has had this guide produced. The Guide is not designed to be comprehensive but more a “quick start note” to help new plotholders in their first weeks of allotment life.

The authors of this guide will be happy to receive feedback from this year’s new plotholders and this guide will be reviewed and, if necessary, updated for 2014. Send any feedback to

[findlayalloments@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:findlayalloments@hotmail.co.uk) or

[shegrowspeas@virginmedia.com](mailto:shegrowspeas@virginmedia.com)

## **INTRODUCTION TO YOUR PLOT AND YOUR SITE.**

FEDAGA recommend that the introduction should be by an existing plotholder on your site or the Allotment Officer.

You should have a key to the site.

A site map with your plot marked and clearly identified, and boundaries shown, if necessary. It’s not always easy to tell where the plot boundaries are – if in doubt, ask.

You should be advised of any site amenities, toilets, Site Notice Board, community areas etc.

Also you may be able to get a further key via the Allotment Officer. Chances are you will get site committee contact details, probably for your site representative, if your site has one. At this point it is useful to pass on your own contact details so that you can be contacted quickly if required.

## **ABOUT YOUR SITE.**

Allotment sites are small communities and as such, they have their own ways. No two sites are the same but below are some general pointers that could well be applicable to your site and help you settle in.

Individual sites may have guidance notes particular to their site and you should get a copy if this is applicable. It is always worth checking the site notice board for information.

In addition to CECs general rules for allotment ploholders, there will probably be site-specific rules regarding:

- Bonfires
- Parking
- Water supply
- What you can put in the site waste bin (usually only items which can't be composted or burnt, like glass, metal and plastic) if a bin is available.
- Any site composting facilities and what to put in them.
- Your responsibilities regarding keeping the paths around your plot and on the site in general (including any common areas).
- Some sites are organic in which case you should get appropriate guidance.

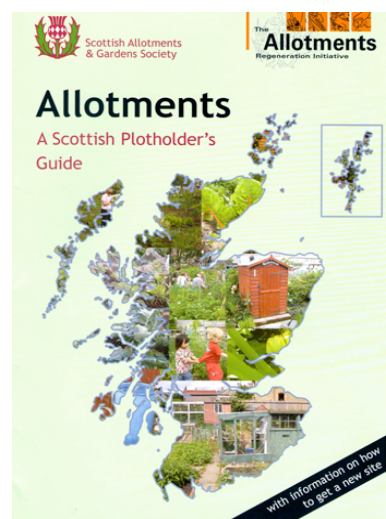
In addition you should be provided with information on

- Site specific problems, e.g. flooding, persistent weeds such as mare's tail and vandalism.
- What to do, and who to contact, if you have a problem.
- Dates and location of any site meetings.

## CITY of EDINBURGH COUNCIL (CEC)

The CEC is owner and landlord of most allotment sites in Edinburgh, they will have been in touch with you already and should have provided you with the following documents:

- Your lease (Missive of Let) with the conditions of let, which you are required to sign and return to CEC. Please read the conditions carefully as you will be expected to follow them.
- A copy of the Allotment Rules and the Inspection and Termination Procedures.
- Guidance on Health and Safety (see page 8 of the booklet, Allotments, A Scottish Plotholder's Guide).
- Advice on Concessionary Rates.
- Contact details for your site representative, if applicable.
- 'Allotments – A Scottish Plotholder's Guide', published by the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS). In particular sections 5, 6 & 9 ('health and safety on allotments', 'what you can and cannot do on your plot' and 'how do I get started) will be of interest. You can also download this guide at <http://www.sags.org.uk/docs/ScotPlotGuide.pdf>



If you have not received any of these please contact the Allotment Officer on 0131 311 7072 or [allotments@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:allotments@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## **FEDAGA represent most allotment holders in Edinburgh**

Apart from endeavouring to prevent sites from being developed for building, and lobbying for an increase in provision of allotments in the city, FEDAGA also run a Trading Scheme for members providing discounted seeds, seed potatoes, and onion sets, and represent members at local and national level on allotment matters.

You are likely to be a member. You can check with your site representative, or FEDAGA directly if you are unsure whether your site is affiliated.

The Federation's web-site is [www.fedaga.org.uk](http://www.fedaga.org.uk) and provides information and advice on all things allotment related, including the Trading Scheme. It also has a handy calendar highlighting gardening related events in the area.

FEDAGA's contact e-mail is [committee@fedaga.org.uk](mailto:committee@fedaga.org.uk)

Keep in touch with FEDAGA via the web-site and e-mail, after all you are a member of the Association that is there to help and can provide access to discounted supplies. By joining the mailing list you will be informed of relevant events.

And finally, here are two pieces of advice that we think are critical to success.

### **ONE – PLOT MAINTENANCE**

Work on your plot regularly; it's fun, but a recent survey showed that, if you have a full plot, from April to September you NEED to spend about 10 - 12 hours a week working on your plot (not in one session - little and often does the job and your back will thank you), for the rest of the year an 1-4 hours will easily do.

If you are new to gardening and unsure where to start:

- Search the internet (see the links page on the FEDAGA website for other useful websites)
- Ask your plot neighbours for advice. There are lots of experienced gardeners on site, who are willing to help, and know what grows on your site.





- Book a course:
  - the City of Edinburgh Council and Bridgend Growing Communities hold training courses throughout the growing season at Bridgend Allotments . Contact Chris Macefield of Bridgend Growing Communities for details:  
T: 0131 664 9559  
M: 07748127041  
Email: [chrism.bgc@gmail.com](mailto:chrism.bgc@gmail.com)  
<http://bridgendcommunity.blogspot.co.uk/>
  - Edinburgh Botanics has advice online and free drop in sessions at the Edible Gardening Project:  
<http://www.rbge.org.uk/whats-on/ediblegardening>

## TWO – SITE COMMUNICATION

**Keep an eye on the site notice board.** Get along regularly to any site meetings (or BBQs!). By doing so you will be accessing a network that has a wealth of allotment experience (at my own site the regular attendees have over a century of “on the plot” knowledge). They will not be at all bothered about your level of knowledge. You will also be able to raise any site issues. Make sure your site representative has your name address and telephone number for emergencies etc, and sign up to the FEDAGA mailing list, details on the FEDAGA web site.

