

Response from the Chair of Long Meadow Allotments.

Biodiversity Questionnaire for Allotment Associations

The Council, through its Transport, Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel, is conducting a review into biodiversity enhancement in urban Portsmouth with the aim of positively contributing to re-wilding and support for other approaches to re "greening" Portsmouth.

The views of allotment holders are very important to us, so please keep reading and please do complete our short questionnaire on behalf of your Association.

Biodiversity is the variety of living things on earth, from the smallest insect to the largest mammal and tree. Allotments, especially those in a compact city such as Portsmouth, are important habitats for wildlife as they provide food, shelter and breeding sites for many species of insects and wildlife. By growing food and gardening in harmony with nature, we benefit as much as pollinators and wild creatures.

In your experience what proportion of allotment holder members of your association:

(please tick relevant box):

	None	Some	Most
Add compost to soil (helping to increase earthworm activity and improve soil life)			√
Rotate vegetable crops (to maintain nutrient balance)			√
Grow a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs (to offer nectar to bees/ other insects throughout the seasons)		√	
Have fruit/ orchard trees on their allotment (to offer nectar to bees/ other pollinators)		√	
Grow companion plants (to reduce disease and increase pollination)		√	
Include a pond/ pond in a pot to provide shallow water (for wildlife)		√	
Provide food and shelter for wildlife in autumn (eg. leaves raked into netted container)		√	
Avoid the use of chemicals and pesticides		√	
Provide nesting boxes/ insect hotels/ bee blocks/ bird feeders		√	
Avoid the use of peat-based compost		√	
Have a log pile or bug houses (to provide a home to insects/wildlife)		√	
Include a <u>maintained</u> wild area within their allotment for wildflowers and/ or wild grasses?		√	
Please add any comments about other activities your allotment holders take to improve biodiversity:			
Many members already plant flowers on their plot to encourage bees, along with vegetables which require pollinating in order to produce i.e., beans, pumpkins, marrows and peas.			

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In the communal areas of your allotment site, do you:

(please tick relevant box)

	Yes	No
Use fences as frames for climbers/ivy (to create wildlife havens)?	√	
Grow hedges around the perimeter of the site (to encourage wildlife)?	√	
Cut grass only when it is 5cm+ long (leaving it for more than 2 weeks in the summer)?	√	
Have a <u>maintained</u> wild area?		√
Have a log pile?	√	
Provide nesting boxes/ hedgehog houses?		√
<p>Please provide comments about other activities your Association undertakes to improve biodiversity on your allotment site:</p> <p>Some members encourage foxes to stay on site because of their catching and eating rats on site.</p>		

Thinking about your Association and its allotment holder members:

	Yes	No
Is your Association in favour of areas of rewilding on individual plots?		√
Do you feel that there is a problem with dirty plots?	√	
Do you think it would be helpful for your members to receive more information about the role they can play in increasing biodiversity on their allotment?	√	
Would you like help/ advice/ training on identifying biodiversity opportunities?	√	
Are there any projects you have in mind which would enhance the biodiversity of your site?		√
<p>Please expand on your responses here:</p> <p>The problem with rewilding plots is that of a weed spreading problem caused by seeds spreading throughout the area. Plot holders have enough problems with this as is, often being accused of dirty plots because of fast growing weeds, without close by plots being turned into weed havens.</p>		

If you have any other comments about biodiversity enhancement, please include them here:

Thank you very much for contributing to our review.

If you would like a link to the review report when it is published in March 2022, please insert your email address in the box below:

My email address is:

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You can also follow the progress of our review by keeping an eye out on the Portsmouth Council website at [Browse meetings - Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel Portsmouth City Council](#) or subscribe for updates at [Logon to Subscribe to Updates Portsmouth City Council](#)