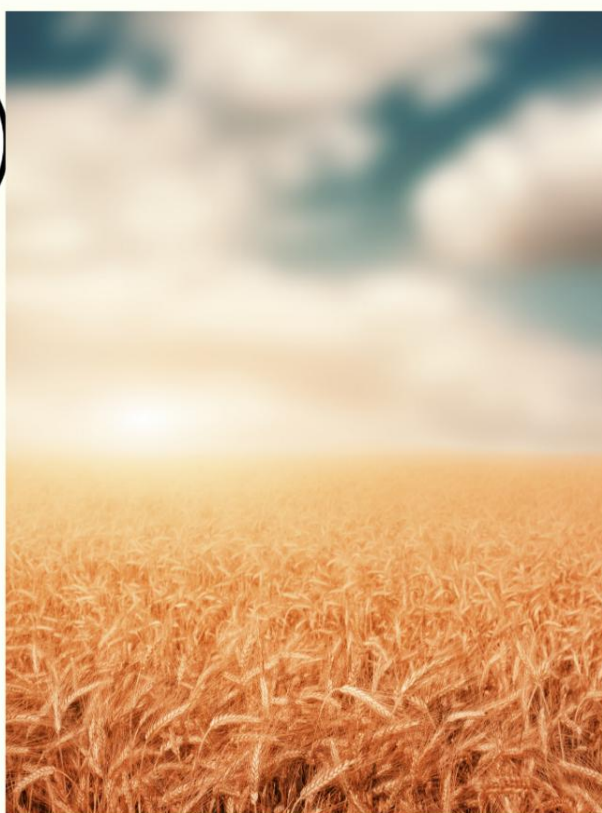


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The Community Allotment Help Desk- July - August 2026

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- Text us on 07566294012
- Email: : info@womensculturalarena.org.uk

THE COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT HELP DESK

 July/August 2026 Edition 

Growing Through the Heat — and Planning for What's Next

Hello, gorgeous growers! 

If your allotment is looking a little more **crispy than cosy** this summer, you're definitely not alone!

With hot weather, dry spells and water restrictions making growing a little trickier, this edition of **The Allotment Chronicles** is all about simple, practical ways to keep your plot going — without wasting water, overheating yourself or spending hours in the kitchen.

We're also looking ahead to **autumn and winter**, with ideas for seed saving, storing your harvest and getting those next crops started.

So grab a cold glass of minty water, find a shady spot and enjoy our **Summer Survival & Winter Planning Special!** 

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PART 1: SUMMER SURVIVAL ON THE PLOT

Hosepipe Ban? Don't Panic!

When water is precious, a few simple habits can make a big difference.

Become a morning gardener

Water early in the morning, ideally around **5am–8am**, or later in the evening when temperatures have dropped. This helps reduce evaporation.

Make every drop count

Collect suitable household water such as water used for rinsing vegetables or salad. Avoid salty or chemically treated water, and always check local water-use restrictions before using greywater on an allotment.

Mulch, mulch, mulch!

A good layer of straw, compost, bark or other suitable mulch helps keep the soil cooler and slows moisture loss.

Give tender plants some shade

Use horticultural fleece, shade netting or a light sheet supported

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securely above plants. Avoid trapping hot air around them – and make sure coverings are safely secured.

Why Are My Veggies So Tiny?

When temperatures climb above **30°C**, many plants slow down because they're concentrating on surviving the heat.

Don't worry if your courgettes, cucumbers or other crops aren't reaching their usual size. **Picking them young can still give you delicious, tender vegetables – and regular harvesting encourages many plants to keep producing.**

Sometimes the little ones are the tastiest! 😊

PART 2: COOL, EASY & NO-COOK SUMMER EATS

Too hot to turn on the cooker?

Take your harvest straight from **plot to plate** with these quick summer favourites.

1. Courgette & Mint Ribbons

Use a vegetable peeler to make long ribbons from young courgettes.



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Add: Fresh mint , Lemon juice, A drizzle of olive oil, Crumbled feta, A little black pepper, Fresh, simple and ready in minutes!



2. Five-Minute Plot-to-Plate Gazpacho

Blend together:

- 500g ripe tomatoes
- 1 cucumber
- 1 garlic clove
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar

Chill, pour into a bowl or glass and enjoy cold. 🌿



3. Smashed Cucumber, Tomato & Chickpea Salad

Roughly crush or chop your cucumber, then add:

- Cherry tomatoes
- Chickpeas
- Lemon juice
- Fresh dill
- Olive oil



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Give everything a good toss and you have a filling, refreshing lunch with almost no cooking required.



YOUR FIVE-A-DAY SUMMER HARVEST

Meal	Easy idea	Fruit & veg boost
 Breakfast	Chilled overnight oats with raspberries & mint	 Berries
 Lunch	Gazpacho or chilled cucumber soup with sourdough	  Cucumber & tomatoes
 Snack	Sugar snap peas & radishes with lemon hummus	 Peas & radish
 Dinner	Courgette, sweetcorn & runner bean salad	  Beans & courgette
 Treat	Chilled watermelon or berries with Greek yoghurt	 Melon & berries

Plot-grown food + plenty of water = summer sorted! 

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PART 3: SAVE IT, STORE IT, GROW IT AGAIN

Your allotment doesn't stop working when summer ends.

This is the perfect time to think about **saving seeds and storing your harvest**.

Five Simple Seed-Saving Rules

1. Save tomato seeds properly

Ferment mature tomato seeds in water for a few days, then rinse and dry them thoroughly before storing.

2. Let beans mature on the plant

Leave runner and French bean pods until they are dry and brown and the seeds rattle inside.

3. Know your varieties

Seeds from **open-pollinated or heritage varieties** are generally the best choice for saving. F1 hybrid seeds may not produce plants like the parent.

4. Choose your strongest plants

Save seed from healthy plants that performed well in your growing conditions.



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5. Keep seeds completely dry

Once thoroughly dry, store seeds in labelled paper envelopes or suitable airtight containers in a **cool, dark and dry place**. And don't forget to write the **crop name and year** on every packet!



OFF-GRID HARVEST STORAGE CHEAT SHEET

Crop	Where?	How?	Ideal conditions	Approx. storage
 Potatoes	Dark shed or cellar	Hessian/paper sacks	Cool, dry & dark	3–6 months
 Onions	Airy shed or porch	Mesh bags or braids	Cool, dry & well ventilated	6–9 months
 Ripe tomatoes	Indoors	Single layer on a tray	Room temperature, out of direct sun	1–2 weeks
 Green tomatoes	Indoors	Cardboard box or tray	Dry, moderately warm	Several weeks

Storage tip: Check stored crops regularly and remove anything showing signs of rot before it affects the rest.

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PART 4: AUGUST — TIME TO THINK AHEAD

Summer isn't over yet, but now is the perfect time to start planning your **autumn and winter plot**.

Quick Autumn Salad Crops

Try sowing:

- Mizuna
- Lamb's lettuce
- Winter land cress
- Other suitable oriental salad greens

These can provide fresh leaves as summer crops begin to slow down.

Hardy Winter Greens

Think about:

- Perpetual spinach , Swiss chard, Kale, Spring cabbage

These hardy crops can help keep your plot productive through the colder months.

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Autumn Roots

Depending on your conditions and variety, you can also consider:

- Mooli/daikon
- Kohlrabi
- Turnips

Crops for an Early Spring Harvest

Planning ahead can pay off!

Japanese-type overwintering onions and suitable broad bean varieties such as **Aquadulce Claudia** can be started at the right time to establish before winter.

AUGUST SOWING TIP

Water the seed drill before sowing.

This gives seeds a moist starting point without having to disturb them with heavy watering afterwards.

And during very hot spells, give young seedlings some temporary shade until they're established.

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COMMUNITY CARE: GROWING TOGETHER

An allotment is more than a place to grow vegetables.

It's a place to **share knowledge, swap surplus produce, lend a helping hand and look out for one another.**

If you're struggling with the heat, chances are someone nearby has already found a clever solution.

 Share your spare crops.

 Share water-saving ideas.

 Share seeds and growing tips.

 Check in on older or vulnerable plot neighbours.

Because the best harvest isn't always what's in the wheelbarrow.

Sometimes it's friendship, confidence, knowledge and community. 

UNTIL NEXT TIME...

Keep harvesting, keep learning and don't worry if your plot isn't looking perfect.

Gardens aren't meant to be perfect — they're meant to be lived in, grown in and enjoyed.

Stay cool, stay hydrated and keep growing!

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 See you on the plot! ✨

Closing Thoughts & Keeping in Touch

Our Core Summer Community Message

"In the warmth of Summer, we celebrate the growth.

We share the harvest, we support each other through every storm,
and we flourish beautifully – together."

Stay Connected!

We love hearing from you. Whether you want to share a picture of your plot, ask a question, or find out more about our upcoming green events, get in touch:

-  Text Us: 07566 294012
-  Email Us: info@womensculturalarena.org.uk

Together, we aren't just letting Summer pass us by...

We are embracing every single moment of it – side by side.

Thank you so much for being a wonderful part of our community! 