

NEWS RELEASE

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



PR 3467

West Norfolk residents encouraged to make the most of garden activities

“Composting is quite straightforward. It’s just common sense.”

That’s the advice from Derek Cosby, Plot Manager at Northfields Allotments in Hunstanton which comes as - given the current situation in the UK - more and more people may be looking for different ways to dispose of food and garden waste.

According to the Royal Horticulture Society, not only is composting the most environmentally-friendly way of dealing with kitchen and garden waste, it also results in compost that can be used as an ‘excellent soil improver.’

And Derek agrees. “There is so much stuff going to landfill now but it’s surprising how many different materials you can use on a compost heap. I use whatever I can on the allotment. It’s much better for the environment, and I get a great fertiliser at the end of it.”

One common misconception is around the space needed for a compost heap but Derek explained: “You don’t need a big garden to have a compost heap, homes with small gardens can have one just as easily.” His remarks are echoed by the Royal Horticulture Society who suggest it may only be the smallest of spaces where a compost heap may not be possible, in which case, an alternative could be worm composting.

Composting also has the advantage that it can be done all year round and you don’t have to be a keen gardener to be able to compost: “It really is such an easy thing to do and you don’t need much equipment to get started,” said Derek.

Here are some easy tips to get started:

1. The Royal Horticulture Society recommends that composting takes place in a shady area not subject to extreme temperatures. The container should have an earth base so it can drain and have access to soil organisms. This can take place in a composting bin which keeps warmth in and rain out. Or, it could be in a homemade structure as Derek explained: “We have a make do and mend approach at the allotments and we’ve made bins out of pallets and bin liners – with holes in them. I’ve also seen a compost heap

made out of old tyres. Anything with sides can work, and you can make a structure to fit your garden.” Similarly, the Royal Horticulture Society also says that an open heap not in a container can also compost.

2. The Royal Horticulture Society recommends that a compost heap should include a mixture of soft green materials (such as weeds, lawn clippings and vegetable waste) as well as woody brown materials (such as prunings, leaves, cardboard). Derek added: “There is loads of different stuff you can put in, for example, I put in shredded paper. And the great thing, especially at this time of year, is you can keep layering it with grass cuttings which is useful as we’re all cutting our lawns much more frequently when the weather improves.”

3. It’s important to turn the heap regularly as this adds air which is essential for composting. The Royal Horticulture Society suggests that not doing this is often the main cause of poor results. They also recommend that the heap is kept moist in dry weather.

4. Compost can take between six months – two years to reach maturity but according to Derek, it’s worth it: “The compost at the end can be almost like a soil which is great for your vegetables.”

Councillor Ian Devereux, Cabinet Member for Environment commented: “We know that many people are keen to make changes that benefit the environment, and particularly, may be thinking about different ways to get rid of household and garden waste at this time.

“Composting is an easy way to do this, and I am really grateful to Derek for sharing his thoughts and advice which may help people to have a go at establishing their own compost heap.

“What seems so useful about composting is the great range of food and garden waste that can be used for this purpose, and of course, how simple it can be to set one up.”

More information can be found from the Royal Horticulture Society:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=444>

Garden activities for children

It’s not just adults who may want to be getting out into the garden at this time of year and whilst we stay home and stay safe this April, there is a whole host of activities which children can enjoy in the garden. These could include:

1. Making a sign for a compost heap
2. Making a pressed flower frame

3. Creating a drinking tray for birds
4. Designing a measuring stick for plants
5. Keeping a garden diary
6. Setting up a garden trail
7. Being a nature detective
8. Painting rocks
9. Creating a fairy garden or pot
10. Building a den

Councillor Elizabeth Nockolds, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Health said: "With the weather getting nicer, we know that many families will want to be outside. But at this moment, it is vital that we stay home and stay safe and make the most of our own gardens, if we have them.

"There is a whole range of crafts and activities available online, using resources we may already have in our homes and gardens, which families can enjoy together.

"What is vital is that we all enjoy being outside safely at this time."

More great ideas and activities can be found here:

<https://growingfamily.co.uk/gardening-with-children/60-fun-garden-activities-for-when-stuck-at-home-with-the-kids/>

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/gardening-children-schools/family-activities/Activities>

<https://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/grow-plants/10-gardening-projects-for-kids/>

<https://www.childrensgardeningweek.co.uk/fun-things-to-do/>

Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds added, for those that don't have their own garden, but live close to a park, beach or area of public open space, there is still an opportunity to get outside for your daily exercise, be that a run, walk, skip or jump. Signs have been placed in council parks to encourage people to follow the social distancing rules while still being able to enjoy being outside. We thank everyone who is doing their bit by staying at home and helping to prevent the spread of this vile illness. No-one is immune, so it is vital that we all continue to following the guidance - stay home, protect the NHS, save lives. The council is doing all it can to support the vulnerable in the community and we need everyone to do the same."

The Borough Council would love to see people's photos of their garden crafts and activities, for example bug hotels, garden trails, or planting. Please share these to the Borough Council's or Love West Norfolk's social media accounts and maybe inspire others with your green-fingered activities!

The Borough Council's allotments remain open but strict guidance has been provided for each site.