

## REDUCING THE NEED TO WATER

**Mulching:** Apply organic matter to retain moisture and suppress weeds.

**Weed Control:** Weeds compete for moisture, so keep plots well-maintained.

**Grow Suitable Crops:** Choose varieties suited to your local climate.

**Water Retaining Granules:** Mixing these into compost can help soil retain moisture, reducing the frequency of watering. They are particularly beneficial for container-grown crops.



## WATERING WISELY

Water in the **early morning or evening** to reduce evaporation. Use a **watering can** at the plant's roots, not the foliage. Water **deeply once a week** rather than little and often.



## HOSEPIPE BANS & DROUGHT RESTRICTIONS

During dry periods, water companies may enforce restrictions, including:

**Hosepipe bans:** A breach can result in fines. Use hoses only to fill water butts where permitted.

**Drought orders:** Can prohibit non-essential water use, including sprinklers and pond filling. *Some exemptions may apply (e.g., for Blue Badge holders). Stay informed via your water company's website or media updates.*

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Apr 2025



## WATER WISE ALLOTMENTS



Water is essential for growing crops, but it's also a limited resource. Managing it efficiently can reduce costs, improve yields, and support the environment.



Water is essential for all plot-holders growing fruit, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. However, it is a precious resource and can be a significant cost for allotment authorities. On sites with a mains water supply, tenants should use it responsibly and report leaks or infrastructure issues to their association or landlord.



## WATER SUPPLY REGULATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Allotment holders must comply with the **Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999**, which aim to prevent water waste, misuse, and contamination of the public drinking water supply. This means:

Only using approved water fittings. **The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS)** provides a directory of approved materials and fittings: [www.wras.co.uk/directory](http://www.wras.co.uk/directory).

Preventing contamination by avoiding hosepipes submerged in troughs, puddles, or manure piles. Backflow prevention devices should be installed where necessary.

Reporting leaks and water infrastructure issues promptly to your allotment association or landlord.

## WATER HARVESTING

Regardless of access to mains water, allotment holders are encouraged to **harvest rainwater** to reduce costs and environmental impact. Benefits include:

- Lower demand on treated water, reducing chemical use and energy consumption.
- Reduced risk of surface water runoff and flooding.



## WATER QUALITY REGULATIONS 2016

For sites relying on private water sources like boreholes or wells, the **Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016** apply. These regulations ensure that water is safe for consumption, including washing produce. Key requirements:

- **Regular Testing:** Water must be tested for contaminants such as bacteria and heavy metals.
- **Risk Assessments:** Local authorities assess private water supplies to identify potential hazards.
- **Maintenance:** Water storage and distribution systems should be maintained to prevent contamination.

For more information, visit the **Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)** website: <http://dwi.defra.gov.uk/>.

## HOW MUCH RAINWATER CAN YOU COLLECT?

$$\text{Annual yield (m}^3\text{)} = P \text{ (annual precipitation)} \times A \text{ (collection area)} \times 0.8$$

Example: A 2m x 3m polytunnel in Bristol (800mm annual rainfall) can collect 3.84m<sup>3</sup>(3,840 litres) per year.

**Secure storage:** Ensure collected water is covered and safe for children and wildlife. Adding a few drops of cooking oil can prevent mosquito breeding.

**Using IBCs (Intermediate Bulk Containers):** These 1000L tanks can be repurposed for rainwater storage but should be cleaned thoroughly and painted dark to prevent algae growth.

