

## THE TRIAL AND TRIBULATIONS ON THE ALLOTMENT.

Gardeners seem to come and go at an alarming rate these days on our allotments. It could be that they find it a bit overwhelming initially, but it's something that can only be overcome by perseverance and hard work, daunting as it may seem.

Part of the problem could be that Monty Don or any T.V. gardener can make it look easy as you are taking it all in sitting in your arm chair. Trust me it's not. The reality is to be prepared to work hard and get ready for the onslaught of the birds sweeping down devouring your crops, and watch for the hoards of slugs that can suddenly take over the salad bed.

It's not all doom and gloom though if you are prepared to put up a fight against these little beasties. Your greens have to be netted, something that new gardeners forget until it's too late, and you have to have a plentiful supply of slug repellents. To be honest if you don't like to get rid of them in this way, well I think you are fighting a losing battle.

Other battles include gale force winds to knock the bean sticks down, heavy rain to swamp everything, and frost and snow when you least expect it. O.K. I'm sounding like a miserable old so and so giving you all the worst scenarios, and I confess It can be fun when everything is more or less under control.

It's excellent exercise, digging sowing and planting, so you can give up your gym subscription and work out with your spade and hoe instead. Look at the money that can be saved ! When the ground is prepared and you watch the seeds shooting up and the plants thriving it can give you a smug feeling of satisfaction.

It's much easier to go to a shop and buy all of your veg and fruit but it will cost you a lot more, and will not taste half as good as the home grown. There is usually enough produce from your ground to give away to friends and neighbours. So take heart If Winters here can Spring be far away?

Some people like to plan in the winter where to grow their crops, and others just leave their plots and not worry until they arrive again in the spring time. Not a good idea really as it's so much easier if you spend time in the winter months preparing your ground by digging it over and getting all the weeds out. What ever your decision here's to next year 2014. Happy gardening.

M.B