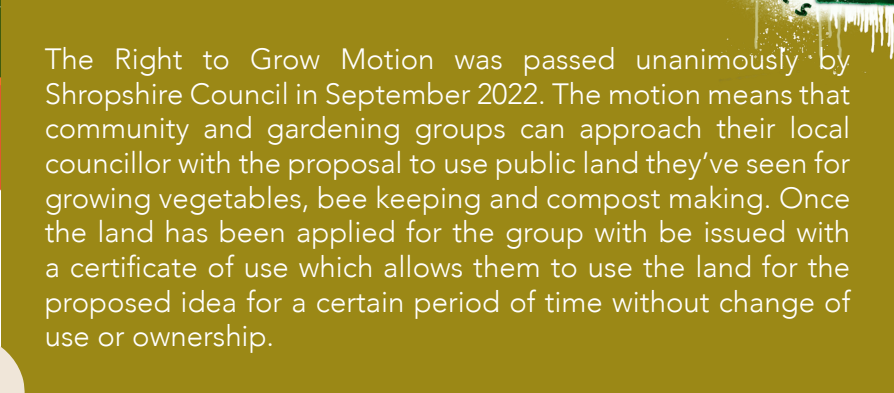




# RIGHT TO GROW



The Right to Grow Motion was passed unanimously by Shropshire Council in September 2022. The motion means that community and gardening groups can approach their local councillor with the proposal to use public land they've seen for growing vegetables, bee keeping and compost making. Once the land has been applied for the group will be issued with a certificate of use which allows them to use the land for the proposed idea for a certain period of time without change of use or ownership.



## THE PROCESS IS THIS:

- Locate Land
  - Establish Council Ownership
  - Create a proposal for your Local Councillor
  - Ask the councillor to present this to the Community Asset Transfer team
  - Await Result
  - Keep trying
- 



Come to one of our open meetings to find out how you and your community could take advantage of Shropshire's Right To Grow! Details are on our Facebook page and on our website.

# RAISED BEDS

Raised beds are a great way of growing a wide range of plants, and are particularly popular for growing fruit and vegetables.

## **BUILDING RAISED BEDS:**

### **Construction**

Clear the site of existing vegetation and level as required. We have used pallet collars for square raised beds or used 4" x 1" tanalised timber to create the edges which can be cut into any shape you wish your raised bed to be. A very good resource for information about constructing a raised bed from scratch is the RHS Website.

### **Filling the Bed**

Place a double layer of non printed cardboard on the base of your bed. Using larger pieces of fallen branches and the like, complete a layer. Above this finer branches, place organic kitchen waste and good top soil.

### **A Top Dressing of Homemade Compost**

The bed will need to do some settling before direct planting but from season to season should only need topping up with homemade compost.





# PROBLEM SOLVING ON THE PLOT

As with all endeavours there will be some troubleshooting to overcome.

## Vandalism

Acts of vandalism can happen and so we suggest simple ways of minimising this. Try to use as little as possible garden 'architecture' - By architecture we mean raised bed edges, sheds, tables and chairs. Bring tools and seating with you for your allotmenting sessions rather than keep them on site. Be inclusive rather than exclusive. Try no dig gardening rather than raised bed gardening. Although disappointing try not to be disheartened if a crop is damaged by vandals as much as if damaged by pests. Use the waste for compost, and start over, the garden will always grow back

## Water

The best solution for water is always rainwater collection. If the plot appears not to have a roof which can be collected from in the vicinity it there a way the near by community can be asked to share the burden of collecting water for the plot? Water is essential and will often define where you are able to grow.

## Composting

Compost bought from shops is treated to make it sterile and it is the bugs and organic living organisms within the compost which makes it such a powerful tool in the garden. Start composting yourself and in a year you'll be self-sufficient. If the community can't dig or maintain the garden, maybe they have enough room in their garden for composting for the plot. We would always recommend starting with dalek type compost bins and even better a three bay compost system with pallets. The biggest resource and training for compost making is thorough Garden Organic.

## Pests

You will have pests. We have found that prevention is always better than a chemical cure. Not only does this wipe out the pest but also it wipes out the building of natural predators as they have nothing to eat. Be wise about keeping of cabbage white butterflies with netting, pinching out fresh sappy buds to inhibit aphids but also allow there to be some loss in the garden as you develop integrated biodiversity on your plot, so eventually you'll be working with nature to protect your garden. Crop rotation is essential to inhibit the possibility of ground borne disease of similar family plants, so planning where and what goes hand in hand with creating an allotment.

# NO DIG GARDENING

No Dig gardening is as it sounds. Gardening without the heavy work of digging the soil. Developed over 40 years No Dig uses mounds of compost within which gardeners plant directly.

## **SETTING OUT A NO DIG BED IS EXTREMELY EASY:**

1. Lay down a double layer of cardboard to the size you wish your bed to be and mound up homemade compost to a level of about 12 cm to cover the cardboard.
2. Now plant either seeds or seedlings directly.
3. A no dig bed will no enjoy being left to dry out so be careful to keep the compost moist alhouth not waterlogged.

The best resource for No Dig Gardening currently is a chap called Charles Dowding. His methods are made plain on his facebook/you tube and instagram channels.





# CROP ROTATION

Crop rotation is the practice of planting different crops sequentially on the same plot of land to improve soil health, optimize nutrients in the soil, and combat pest and weed pressure.

## DETAILED BELOW IS A SEVEN YEAR CROP CYCLE:

**Year 1 + 2:** Lucerne/Green Manure to Nitrogen Fix

**Year 3:** Potatoes over winter with Red Clover

**Year 4:** Brassicas/Broccoli/Cauliflower/A Large Amount of Cabbage & Purple Sprouting Broccoli. Grow the brassicas on ridges to help keep predators and weeds at bay

**Year 5:** Onions/Leeks/Alliums  
Start of in seed bed, plant with groth breaks so they come to fruition at different times (load with corn starch mulch - find description).  
Grow clover between the rows as the alliums grow.

**Year 6:** Root Vegetables - Carrots/Parsnips/Umbelliferous Family & Beetroot

**Year 7:** Squashes and Sweetcorn (which can be planted successively).  
When tall enough, start growing red clover and lucerne to lead into the start of the cycle again.

Join hedge edges consisting of hedges, wild flowers, nettles and berries with beetle banks and a free grass border.



# HUGELKULTUR

Translated, the word Hugelkultur means hill or mound and can be created by digging a small 1/2 spade depth trench lined with cardboard, mounding big logs first, then smaller and then smaller again to a height of about 45 cm.

Cover this with small branches, woodchip, and grass clippings. Continue this layering until your Hugel bed is the height you want. This pile is covered in a goodly layer of soil and compost. The resulting mound has many advantages. Within its walls the logs gradually decay providing long term nutrient supply and are remarkably good at storing water.

It is recommended that the sides of your mound are steep to avoid compaction over time but this also provides you with greater surface area for planting. Many types of timber will break down in a Hugelkultur bed but some of the best are Alder, Apple, Aspen, Birch, Maple, Oak, Poplar and Willow, although if the willow is not actually dead it will regrow. Trees to avoid would be Black Locust, Black walnut, old growth Redwood.

For best results the Hugelkultur bed should be on an adjacent line to the passing of the sun so most light is over the bed throughout the day. It is also good to have a form of windbreak to protect the plants which could be trees already present or some planted to grow to help in the future.

Hugelkultur beds have been used through the ages, store moisture and retain nutrients so well they are one of the easiest style of raised bed to maintain.



# SPREADING THE WORD

A community garden needs to be helped along by the community and the best way is through social media and meeting.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Whats App
- Next Door
- Local Communities already set up
- Posters
- Flyers
- Your local pub

