

## How to Start Clearing an Allotment Plot

First of all, walk around and see what you're going to have to deal with. If there is any old metalwork, broken glass or building rubble bring it to pile at the end of the plot. Make sure you wear gloves

**If you come across old corrugated asbestos sheets, please let a committee member know**

## What Weeds do You Have?

Next, take a look at what weeds you have. Some weeds like nettles, docks, buttercups and daisy all indicate that your soil is acidic as does the dreaded Mare's tail (*Equistum Arvense*). Other difficult weeds are bindweed and couch grass. They all share the ability to re-grow from small pieces of root. If you've a mass of brambles then I'm afraid you really do have your work cut out, but it isn't impossible.

## What to do to Clear the Plot

**DO NOT ROTOVATE**—its common for people hire a powerful rotovator and churn over the plot, chopping up the weeds including their roots into thousands of pieces. Three weeks later the perennial weeds grew from the root fragments and the plot was absolutely covered in weeds. They then gave up the plot.

**Tall weeds**—Strim down to ground but leave brambles a little longer – anything up to 60cm. to indicate where they are and give you something to grab hold of when lifting out

**Ordinary grass and annual weeds**- can be lifted like turfs. Stack the turfs, grass side down and make into a box which you can cover with a tarpaulin to exclude light and water. In a year you'll have some lovely loamy soil to use.

**Perennial weed roots**—Docks go deep but like dandelions are fairly easy to remove. Nettles have a mass of thin yellow roots which are difficult but you can get them out.

**Bindweed, couch grass and Mares Tail** - hard work, but need digging up or killing chemically

**Don't cold compost weed roots**—either black back and let them rot or burn in an incinerator

**Bramble**—long ranging roots that need digging up

If this is your chosen route, don't try and tackle it all at once and cover your hard work with black plastic else the digging will never end !