

## **Plot 3 Tofts Allotments**

### **Observe:**

This is a design form my own allotment. I decided to start on my own plot so that mistakes wouldn't affect others and so that I had more freedom to explore ideas and experiment.

### **Principle Start at the backdoor**

Completed: Client interview, PASE sheet,

Seasonal observation:

Narrative history

I have had the plot for 3 years

**Year 1** When we started it has fairly derelict, the site had been neglected for long enough to allow silver birch to be colonising parts of the plot. There was a small fence which offered no security and young people use the path as a route too and from the pub and park, often hopping over into the plots to mess about. We took advantage of a clearing in the 8 foot brambles to start cultivating, keeping brambles as a hedge between us and the foot path.

The children each cleared and planted a bed and we grew some annuals.

I encouraged a friend to take on a plot on the site, with increased activity on the site, more people took an interest and we had 4 plots taken on a 10 plot allotment.

I discovered the rhubarb, raspberries and comfrey on the site

The children loved the bramble fox tunnels and the young fox that lived on site.

**Year 2** During the second winter, the council found some end of year money in the budget and cleared the site and put up a security fence, with in hours of obvious activity on the site, the other 6 plots were taken on – 2 as half plots. The cleared site felt really bare, but people soon developed their plots and by the summer much of the site was producing food. The foxes moved, but lots of people put in wild life attractions, there are 2 ponds, numerous stone walls, log piles and wild life planting plots.

I started a gardening business and had little time to work on my plot, and used it as a composting site for garden waste and covered some of the site with carpet.

I clear some land with potatoes, but found the initial spiral bed has the strongest patch of couch on the site, so have changed how I work. Using carpet to clear, then digging out the couch roots, followed by potato planting and green manure.

I saved comfrey, raspberry and rhubarb from the council clearance, sharing them with the new plot holders.

**Year 3** Now have a tap on site and the other plot holders are ready to start the process of going self managed.

**Observation –** The site is on the protected side of the hill, so is a week or so ahead of the garden plants.

Tall trees next to the site on the south side of the plot protect against the wind, but shade a third of the plot in the summer, with only evening sunshine getting in. Up to half the plot is in full sun the whole day all year.

2 sides of the plot are protected form the wind, but it can get really windy – the shed blew down until I dug it in.

Water – I get some water from the rain butt under the shed roof, but it doesn't collect enough. The new tap has really low pressure which makes it a really long process to use it.

The plot has a slight slope towards the south east corner.

The soil is quite compacted in patches, but is responding to cultivation and mulching. The soil is medium clay and fairly deep.

See:

PASE sheets

Client interview

Sector analysis