The National Allotment Society

National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd

Drought Risk and You

Introduction to drought, climate change and growing

Climate change projections for the UK predict: wetter winters, drier summers and higher average temperatures across all seasons.

Being aware of climate change can help you to prepare for likely shifts in average rainfall and temperature on your allotment but also changing patterns of weather extremes.

Summer rainfall may become more intense, which may increase localised flood risk and soil erosion, even though the overall amount of summer rainfall is likely to decrease.

Allotment growers often observe the early stages of drought through their growing. The Drought Risk and You project (DRY) found growers were adapting in creative ways to collect water and reduce water use on their plots. Read more: https://dryutility.info/allotment-information/

The DRY project has worked with allotment holders, the National Allotment Society and commercial growers to bring together the knowledge and advice in this guide

UKRI Natural Environment Research Council

What are the implications of possible future climate changes for growing?

- There may be a need to store more winter rainfall for summer uses, and to reduce any dependency on public water supply.
- The growing season may be extended. Warmer winters will reduce the number of hard frosts. This means that aphids and other plant eating insects will not be killed during the winter.
- Changing climate might affect crop/ plant choice to mitigate climate change. For example, Lollo Rosso is more heat resistant than Webbs Wonderful, and French beans are more drought tolerant than runner beans.
- Be prepared for periods of intense rainfall in summer. This might include avoiding exposed soils on sloping plots, or ensuring fragile plants are staked or have some protection.

What were some water management solutions shared by allotment holders in the DRY project?

- Use practical ways to collect and store more rainwater.
- Use a watering can and direct water to the base of the plant.
- Watering in the early morning and late afternoon reduces evaporation.
- Add mulch around plants.
- Crop yields are particularly affected by water availability at times when drought stress would affect the part of the plant that is harvested.

Available DRY/NAS guides include:	**Hardcopy**	**Online**
	Format	**Downloadable PDF**
Introduction to drought, climate change and growing	A5 sheet	✓
Introduction to sustainable water collection and use on allotments	A5 booklet	✓
Advanced sustainable water collection and irrigation on allotments	A5 booklet	✓
Growing drought resistant crops on allotments	A5 booklet	✓
Ground level rainwater collection on allotments	A5 booklet	✓
Climate predictions for allotments	A5 booklet	✓
New allotment site design for sustainable rainwater management	A5 booklet	✓

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