

## January 2018: Here We Go Again



## Implementing the 2015 Allotment Legislation



*John Grace of Midmar writes:* Keen gardeners moving to Edinburgh in recent years have been shocked to find that they must wait as long as ten years for an allotment. Other interest groups such as golfers can

pursue their chosen activities immediately. It simply isn't fair, especially as cultivating your own vegetables and flowers provides healthy exercise, improved mental health, increased biodiversity and food security, as well as potentially pollution-free food for your family. But now, help is at hand in the form of the 2015 Community Empowerment Act, which places solemn and specific duties on local authorities to look after the needs of would-be growers.

Edinburgh City Council, in particular, will need to work hard to comply.

There is a waiting list of 2500. Yet there are only around 1500 plots - and that figure includes half plots where subdivision has taken place. *John has written an interesting article for the FEDAGA blog exploring the problems that hamper would-be allotment growers (such as lack of supply) and the legislation about to come into force to improve matters. But will it? [Click here to read on.](#)*

---

**45% OFF SEEDS**  
**Save £££s**

**FEDAGA members benefit  
from the Discounted Seed  
Trading Scheme.**

Go to [www.fedaga.org.uk/seed-scheme](http://www.fedaga.org.uk/seed-scheme)  
for instructions on how to register for the  
scheme and place your order.

Seed Potatoes and Onion Sets should be ordered through your site rep  
through the annual Potato/Onion trading scheme. Place your order in the  
autumn for February delivery. Contact your Site Rep. or enquire via  
[committee@fedaga.org.uk](mailto:committee@fedaga.org.uk)  
Keep in touch via the FEDAGA Newsletter: [fedaga.org.uk/newsletter](http://fedaga.org.uk/newsletter)

This poster has just gone out to all sites. With Council allotment rents going up again to **£108 for a full plot and £54 for a half plot** (concessions still apply) it's good to know where a bargain is to be had. And the first one is your FEDAGA membership. Amongst other things, this entitles you to participate in FEDAGA trading schemes. Your Humble Editor declares: "I've just made my annual seed order and **saved £13.69** after my 45% discount was applied. I would have paid

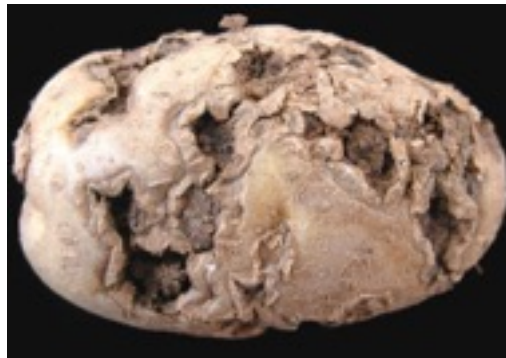
£32.90 (including £1.50 p&p) but ended up paying £18.16. The seeds arrived within the week. And my site funds benefit by 10% of the price as well."

Then there is the seed potato and onion set scheme to consider... (see below).

But that rent rise. The Council confirmed last month to FEDAGA representatives that the rise is now automatic every year and is based on general price inflation which they have calculated to be 4%. This has been applied across the board to all services. The invoice will land later this month. FEDAGA will continue to lobby Councillors to ensure that increases are not out of line with similar charges and will monitor with a critical eye how they discharge their legal obligations under the new allotment legislation.

---

## Why Buy Seed Potatoes?



*Yum yum - not!*

Many people ask 'Why Buy Seed Potatoes?'. They are pretty expensive compared with potatoes from the supermarket or planting potatoes saved from last year's crop.

There may be some reassurance from bought seed of more reliable sprouting and quality but there is a community reason too. A bit like why you get vaccinated for mumps and measles.

Scotland has a valuable potato industry, particularly seed potatoes as well as potatoes for the table. Scotland has so far kept itself clear of many potato diseases which are endemic in other parts of the world. This is why the Scottish seed potato industry in particular is world beating. To maintain this situation the Scottish Government issued [these guidelines](#) a couple of years ago. The basic message is that using potatoes from the supermarket, even if they sprout, could risk spreading disease around the country.

It is actually illegal to sell non certified potatoes for planting, even to amateur gardeners.

Thanks, SAGS, for this [handy advice](#).

Details on the delivery of the FEDAGA Seed Potatoes will be in the February Newsletter.

## Keep Scotland Free From Potato Disease



Scottish Allotments  
and Gardens Society

### *Ever wondered about the difference between a “seed potato” and a “potato”?*

Scotland exports approximately 80,000 tonnes of **seed potatoes** each year to countries outside the EU and about 170,000 tonnes to countries within the EU. We are recognised as an EU High Grade Seed producer because our seed potatoes are free of many of the serious diseases affecting potatoes which are now endemic throughout Europe including England and Wales.

To maintain this highly profitable situation the Scottish Government introduced a number of stringent regulations and procedures for seed potatoes. These regulations apply to amateur gardeners as well as to commercial growers.

- Only the highest grades of seed potato can be sold and planted in Scotland and this extends right through the chain to retail sales to gardeners and amateur growers.
- Lower grades of seed potato known as Certified Seed Potatoes cannot be sold or planted in Scotland.
- All seed potatoes offered for sale in Scotland must be identified by a 'passport' label which states the classification of the potatoes and full grower details and a crop identification number. This also applies to sales in small numbers when there should at least be a label on display.
- Only buy seed potatoes from reputable sellers marketing certified seed. Do not purchase seed potatoes being sold by amateur growers on the internet, etc.

Supermarkets sell **potatoes** for the table. They may have originated outside Scotland. They are safe to eat but, if planted, could start to spread diseases here.

### **Please don't mix up the two.**



**Dickeya Solani.** A new pathogen. A major threat in Europe and Israel.

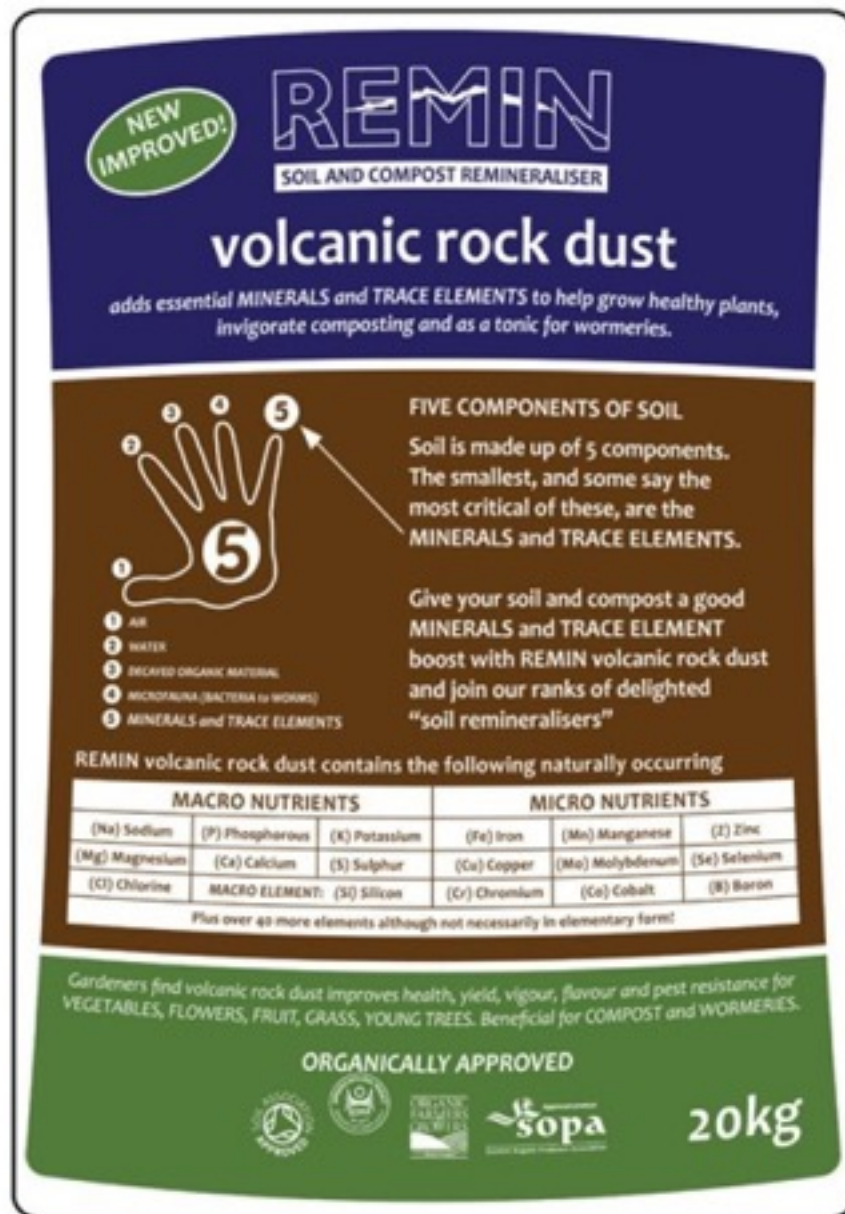


**Brown Rot.** A quarantine disease, notifiable in the UK. Have been 5 outbreaks in England but mainly flourishes in warmer temperate climates.



**Ring Rot.** A quarantine disease, notifiable in the UK. Widespread in USA, North and East Europe. One outbreak in UK: in Wales.

# Rockdust News



On **Saturday 27th from 10am** - pick up your order from the FEDAGA Shop\*. In addition, there will be a limited number of 20kg bags available at an unbeatable £7 each. That's about half of the retail price - and no delivery charge either! Come on down.

■ Inverleith Allotments (West Gate), East Fettes Avenue.

# Garden Design Course



*Anouska Curzon writes:* Scotland's Rural College has introduced a 9 week Garden Design course which will be delivered on Saturdays commencing February 3rd for 9 weeks at the King's Buildings campus. This course consists of two modules and aims to provide the basic tools to become a garden designer.

For more information about the course and how to book a place go to [www.sruc.ac.uk/saturdaygarden](http://www.sruc.ac.uk/saturdaygarden).

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me on 0131 535 4033 or

[anouska.curzon@sruc.ac.uk](mailto:anouska.curzon@sruc.ac.uk)

---

## From The Royal Grounds



*Her Majesty Fires Up Another Brew*

Coffee grounds are widely considered to be a Good Thing for allotments. They will deter slugs and can provide a useful mulch or soil conditioner. They could be particularly helpful to plants that prefer acid conditions, such as blueberry or cranberry. They're even claimed to be good for onions and garlic (source: [Grow Your Own](#)).

So, where can I source a goodly supply of this fine brown material?

From 1st February you could go to the top: The Palace of Holyroodhouse has a cafe on Horse Wynd and they're happy to give away spent coffee grounds to FEDAGA members.

If you require a large quantity at one time please contact the café manager Laura Amos, at [holyroodhouse@ampersandcatering.co.uk](mailto:holyroodhouse@ampersandcatering.co.uk), who will be able to facilitate this.

---

## Community Compost Survey



The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, which hosts the legacy of the previous Community Composting Network organisation, would like to find out more about the composting activities that community growing projects including allotment associations do on their sites.

This information will be useful in helping FCFCG to devise their information, training and advice services, and will be reported back to you for interest and to encourage networking.

FCFCG will also use this information to promote the work that community growing projects do, with the aim of making the rules and regulations around composting more straightforward for community groups.

Answers will be anonymised so please answer as honestly and fully as possible.

With your permission, survey responses will be entered into a prize draw on 28th February to win a £25 voucher for Bulldog Tools.

To take part in the survey, please click [here](#).

---

## Big Garden (or Allotment)

### Birdwatch

The RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch takes place over the weekend of 27th to 29th January. More information including details of how to download a Big Garden Birdwatch pack [here](#). Allotments are best for wildlife so maybe this year you could take out time on the plot to participate.

---



The Caley

Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society

# Winter Fruit Pruning Workshop

**led by George Anderson**

Beechgrove Garden presenter

**on Sunday 11 February 2018, 2pm–4pm**

**at Bridgend Allotments, Edinburgh**

*(On the Old Dalkeith Road, a short distance  
south of the Cameron Toll roundabout)*

Numbers are limited – booking advised

email: [rchsallotment@gmail.com](mailto:rchsallotment@gmail.com)