



Lenthall Road

Allotments

Watering



Vegetables need a lot of water and, in general, they need most water when they are fruiting. The important thing is to water the right amount at the right time.

I'm afraid watering isn't as easy as you may think. Different vegetables respond differently to different amounts of water at different times. Leafy vegetables tend to grow more leaves in response to a steady water supply. So lettuce and cabbages will produce a bigger (not necessarily tastier) harvest if the water is never checked, whereas root vegetables will respond in the same way- by growing more leaves-which does not necessarily mean more root. You may conscientiously water your carrots and get no more food than if you water less.

Fruiting vegetables such as tomatoes need more water as they flower. This will dramatically increase the size of the crop, while helping them mature faster, enabling you to harvest them earlier. To make the most of the available rainfall and create good drainage, dig in lots of organic material such as compost, and mulch thickly. This means covering the soil around the plants with a 5cm (2in) layer of compost or well-rotted manure to improve soil structure and stop evaporation from the soil.

Have as many water butts dotted around the plot as you can accommodate; they will catch rain from the outbuildings, providing water for watering the plots.