

Garden Bonfires

The bonfire gets its name from the medieval bon-fire of animal bones. While modern day bonfire ingredients may not be as gruesome, they still cause pollution and local nuisance.

Please Note: BONFIRES are not permitted at Eden Allotment Gardens.

What's Wrong With Bonfires?

Air Pollution

Burning garden waste produces smoke, especially if it is damp and smouldering. This will contain pollutants including carbon monoxide, dioxins and particles. Burning plastic, rubber or painted materials not only creates an unpleasant smell but also produces a range of poisonous compounds. Making a bonfire will also add to the general background level of air pollution. Air pollution in the UK often reaches unhealthy levels – do you really want to make it worse?

Health Effects

Emissions from bonfires can have damaging health effects. Serious harm is unlikely if exposure to bonfire smoke is brief. However problems may be caused for asthmatics, bronchitis sufferers, people with heart conditions and children.

Annoyance

The smoke, smuts and smell from bonfires are the subject of many complaints to local authorities. Smoke prevents your neighbours from enjoying their gardens or allotment, opening windows or hanging washing out, and reduces visibility in the neighbourhood and on roads. Allotments near homes can cause particular problems, if plot holders persistently burn waste.

Safety

Fire can spread to fences or buildings and scorch trees and plants. Exploding bottles and cans are a hazard when rubbish is burned. Piles of garden waste are often used as a refuge by animals, so look out for hibernating wildlife and sleeping pets.

What's the Alternative?

Rather than burning garden waste or putting food waste in the dustbin where it will end up buried or incinerated, a compost bin will produce a useful soil conditioner, saving money on commercial products. Woody waste can be shredded to make it suitable for composting or mulching, you can buy or hire shredders and the allotment society may purchase their own. If using a shredder be considerate they can be very noisy. Take care not to replace one nuisance with another.

Further Information

Carrickfergus Borough Council, Environmental Services Dept, Civic Centre, 11 Antrim Street, Carrickfergus, BT38 7DG. Tel: 028 9335 8000. Web: www.carrickfergus.org

Composting advice is available from The Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 QAZ. Tel: 01854 702400

National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection, 44 Grand Parade, Brighton, BN2 20A. Tel: 01273 878770. Web: www.environmental-protection.org.uk