

OUTDOORS

Not only should your property be secure but you can also make it difficult for the thief to get access to it.

1) Lights fitted with sodium tubes which come on when it gets dark and turn themselves off when it gets light are a low cost security measure. This is especially important in dark areas of your garden. Don't under-estimate the effect of good lighting as a crime-prevention measure.

2) Keep shrubs, hedges and large plants cut back. They can provide a screen for thieves to work behind.

3) Check your boundary fences, walls and gates. Keep them in good repair as they do provide a useful barrier to the would-be thief. The harder it is for him to get in, the more suspicious his actions look to others.

4) Get your neighbours to always keep an eye on your garden at all times. You can do the same for them. Report anything suspicious to the Police as soon as possible. Remember - it's not being nosey, it's being sensible.

5) Laying a thick gravel path makes it impossible for the thief to approach without making a noise and is a good crime reduction alternative to slabs and monoblock.

ALLOTMENTS

Allotments are harder to protect but much of the above advice can be applied to them. Get to know your neighbours on the allotment - if they know you they are more likely to be suspicious if someone else is in your plot. Remember, don't leave expensive equipment on-site if you can avoid it.

GET SHEDUCATED



How to reduce the chances of theft from your garden

Crime Prevention Advice **Reducing crime and the fear of crime**

Many people take a great deal of trouble securing their house and the property within it, whilst at the same time leaving valuable property in a shed, which is either unlocked, or so old and run down as to prove no obstacle whatsoever to the thief.

Remember that ladders, spades and other items left around can be used to break into your home.

Ensure that your shed is in sound condition. If it isn't then take steps to improve it or don't leave valuable items, such as a lawnmower inside.

Once the fabric of the building is sound you can then improve physical security.



Having improved the fabric of the building you can then improve physical security:-



A) Fit a good lock on the shed door. A little expense can be money well spent and may help with insurance claims later if the worse does happen. The fittings should be bolted through the shed door and reinforced at the back with a steel plate. The hasp should have concealed screws

B) The padlock itself should not be less than 2.5 inches in width and made of hardened steel. The lock should have no less than five pins. A closed shackle type will reduce the risk of the lock being forced. Any locksmith or good DIY shop will advise you on the strongest available. If you already have a small padlock, change it now. It could save you time and money in the future.



C) Fit windows with a grille fixed to steel plates inside the shed. Remember, it is no good securing the door if the windows are an easy target. At the very least consider fitting reinforced glass or impact value acrylic, and a good lock if the window opens.



Fitting a simple low cost battery operated shed alarm, or personal alarm, to the door of your shed or garage will warn of any attempted intrusion to your property, and will stop the thief in his tracks.

NOTE: Much of this advice should be applied to a garage if you have one.

PROPERTY

Gardening tools and furniture are not cheap, and they are very saleable items for the thief.

Don't make it easy to steal them and remember that tools stolen from your shed could be used to burgle your house.

Postcode all property such as lawnmowers, hedge trimmers and garden furniture. Post coding can be done with ultra-violet marker pens, stamping or even paint.



Property marking may not stop the items being taken but it could dissuade a thief if you advertise the fact that your property is coded and will certainly improve the chances of tracing the item and catching the thief.

Take photographs of any valuable garden ornaments. If they are stolen, the Police can circulate the photo to dealers who can then look out for your property.



Never leave items unattended, especially valuable ones, even if you are just popping into the house. Remember, you may only be gone for a minute but the item could be gone forever.



If you leave valuable items such as bicycles in your shed, ensure that they are postcoded and chain them to the superstructure of the building. You could also chain a number of objects together, making them difficult to move.

A little bit of effort can save a lot of grief!