



## **News release: Keeping gardens and allotments secure this spring**

Dear Watch Member,

Spring is in the air and Hertfordshire Constabulary is launching its seasonal crime prevention campaign, Operation Gnome, to help remind residents to keep their gardens, sheds and allotments secure.

At this time of year there's lots of activity in gardens and allotments across the county, and people are buying new gardening tools and equipment. It is also traditionally a time when burglars target sheds, garages and outbuildings, looking for power tools, bikes and other expensive items. Thieves also look for tools left in gardens such as spades, garden forks and ladders, which can be used to help them break into homes.

These are some of the ways you can make your garden and outbuildings more secure:

- Always lock your shed, preferably with two 'hasp and staple' locks (one near the top and one near the bottom of the door) or use or an alarmed padlock
- Secure your rear garden by locking entry gates with a padlock
- Burglars can use garden tools to break in, so make sure you securely lock away any tools after use
- Ensure boundary fences are secure and in good condition. Spiky plants along garden boundaries are good additional deterrents
- Tools and gardening equipment should be visibly marked with your postcode and house number - this can deter thieves and help police identify the rightful owner
- Remember to lock your garage door securely. Metal 'up and over' doors can be secured with extra locks fitted either side and/or a floor-mounted locking 'T' bar with a closed shackle padlock. Wooden garage doors can be secured with two substantial 'hasps and staple' locks and closed shackle padlocks (your local DIY store can advise on the most secure options)

For more detailed security advice, please visit [www.herts.police.uk/crimeprevention](http://www.herts.police.uk/crimeprevention) or contact us on 101.

In addition, please consider the following crime prevention advice to secure your sheds and when tending to your allotments:

- Make sure external lighting covers your garage or shed
- Secure windows internally with steel mesh or bars
- Strengthen the door
- Fit coach bolts to external door hinges
- Use a quality padlock or additional locks
- Try to store valuables such as bikes in a secure garage rather than a shed
- Where possible, store high value items in the house rather than a garage or shed
- Property mark valuable items with a UV pen
- Insure and photograph valuable items
- Chain and Padlock valuables together and secure them to an anchor point"
- Register your valuable items with [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com) It is free of charge, quick and easy to do and helps police to identify and return your property and catch criminals."