

# A quick guide to greener gardening

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Gardening can benefit the environment - for example, by creating spaces for wildlife or producing food which hasn't had to travel. However, some things we do in the garden are not so good for the environment. Here are a few steps you can take to make your garden greener.

## 1. Ditch the peat

Help protect environmentally precious peat bogs by choosing peat-free mulches, soil improvers and fertilisers that are just as good or better than peat.

## 2. Use pesticides responsibly and only as a last resort

Some pesticides can harm people, wildlife and the environment, so only use them as a last resort – work with nature to control pests and weeds instead.

## 3. Get a water butt

Almost 100,000 litres of water falls on the average rooftop every year – you can easily save on mains water by collecting rainwater to use on your garden. Water companies and councils often sell water butts at subsidised prices.

## 4. Compost garden and kitchen waste

Start a compost heap or get a compost bin and put your kitchen waste to good use in your garden. Alternatively find out how to dispose of it with your local council so they can compost it.

## 5. Welcome wildlife

Encourage animals and insects by creating a variety of places for them to live and providing sources of food when you plan your garden. For example, flowering plants that offer nectar and pollen will attract bees, butterflies and other insects, and trees and shrubs that produce berries will help feed birds.

## 6. Pull on a pullover

Put on an extra layer when it gets cold outside rather than using an outdoor heater. Heaters are very energy-hungry, producing high levels of carbon emissions, which contribute to climate change.

This information is largely taken from the following UK Government website (where you'll also find extra info):

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving>

### **7. Choose your wood carefully**

Look for labels on timber, or wood products like sheds and garden furniture, that show they have been produced sustainably. Common labelling schemes include the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC).

### **8. Reclaim and recycle**

Give old timber, metal and plastic a new lease of life by buying decking, planters and garden ornaments made out of reclaimed materials. Use your imagination and turn old containers of all kinds into unusual plant pots.

### **9. Choose your charcoal**

Make sure the charcoal you use on your barbecue comes from sustainably managed forests: look for labels from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), or other forest certification schemes.

### **10. Make a pond**

It's surprisingly easy to do – and ponds are a haven for frogs, toads, newts, dragonflies and other insects.

### **11. Grow your own**

Growing just a little bit of your own produce can help reduce the environmental costs of packaging and transporting food.

### **12. Grow more drought resistant plants**

Watering your garden can be a massive issue when there's a hosepipe ban. By growing more drought resistant plants – plants used to warmer, drier conditions – you won't have that problem. There are lots of attractive drought resistant plants on sale in garden centres now.

### **13. Use your bath water to water the plants**

A lot of the water goes straight down the plughole – even though it could be re-used. If you can – save bath water and washing-up water - and use it to water the garden.