

Growing together

6 ways to help make your garden more environmentally friendly



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Whether you're searching for adventure, relaxation, or simply a place to escape the demands of the world, our **green communities** can provide us with a wonderful space to do so. What's more, research from the Royal Horticultural Society and the universities of Sheffield, Westminster and Virginia found that a greener front garden can make you feel happier, more relaxed and closer to nature¹. So if our **green communities** can help us to take care of our wellbeing, what can we do to help return the favour?

There are many steps that we can all take to help protect our environment, such as recycling more, printing less and choosing greener travel options to name a few. However, we can even go one step further and look at the simple, but effective ways that we can help to protect our green community through caring for the green space that is right on our doorstep. With 15 million gardens in the UK², that's a whole lot of outdoor space!

In this leaflet we explore 6 ways that you can enjoy and care for your garden with the environment in mind.



1 | Avoid buying new

Filling a trolley full of new gardening equipment might not be the most environmentally friendly or cost-effective way of getting the supplies that you need. The good news is that there are plenty of everyday household items that can be used to get you started. If you're growing seeds, instead of purchasing new plastic pots, why not think outside the 'pot' and re-purpose your recycling waste? Newspaper moulds and food waste containers such as yoghurt pots and egg boxes can make ideal housing environments for your seeds.

Instead of buying new gardening tools, you could try picking up some pre-loved treasures at a car boot sale (when such events are permitted to go ahead), renting gardening tools, or even making things yourself. For example, an empty plastic milk bottle with a few piercings in the lid could become your new watering can!



2 | Grow your own

You can't get much fresher than growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables straight from your own garden. Not only can home growing help to reduce the amount of packaged goods you buy from the supermarket, it can also bring a great sense of achievement. Plating up a meal with ingredients that you've grown yourself can be so rewarding, and what's more, you can collect seeds from your crops and save them up for years to come, which may help you to save money too.

If you don't have growing space in your own garden, you could try starting off small and grow smaller plants indoors, such as herbs. If you're confident you'd like to take on a bigger challenge, you could look to apply for an allotment plot near you (if available). As well as being ideal growing spaces, tending to an allotment can also be a great way to meet fellow growers, share gardening knowledge and feel a sense of community.





3 | Feed your garden

Not only is composting a great way to help reduce your food waste, it's also a rewarding way to give back to your garden. There are many foods and other everyday items that are compostable, including vegetable kitchen waste, paper and cardboard¹. If you don't have space for composting, why not see if you can donate your food waste to a local community garden instead?

4 | Use preventative ways to deter pests

Pests and diseases can be a real nuisance in your garden. The good news is that there are plenty of preventative steps that you can take to help reduce the likelihood of them causing damage to your garden. Some examples include: soil care and maintenance, cleaning your gardening tools after use, installing barriers, carefully considering your plants' positioning, spacing and watering requirements and regularly monitoring your plants¹.

You could also try experimenting with companion planting. By mixing up your plants, you can confuse insects with different plant scents. For example, mixing strongly scented French marigolds with vulnerable crops such as runner beans¹.



5 | Install a water butt

If you have the space, water butts can be a great environmentally friendly addition to your garden. According to The Royal Horticultural Society: harvesting rainwater reduces mains water use and is better for your plants than mains water. It can also help reduce pressure on drains during periods of intense rain¹.



6 | Get creative with garden décor

When it comes to purchasing large plant pots, they can be heavy, cumbersome and difficult to transport, which will likely require a trip in the car or arranging a home delivery. To help reduce your carbon footprint, for a greener option, why not try making use of any existing materials you have hanging around or were planning on throwing away and make a feature piece out of them? You could try upcycling an old pallet or a car tyre and introduce a new, interesting talking point to your garden.

We hope these tips have given you some food for thought on how you can look after your green community. If you decide to give some a go, we'd love to see what you get up to. Share your photos with us on social media and tag us **@SimplyhealthUK**.



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Sources:
1 www.rhs.org.uk
2 www.gardenorganic.org.uk

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