

Environmental Sustainability Guidance

Keep Scotland Beautiful is your charity inspiring action for our environment. We work with you to help combat climate change, reduce litter and waste, restore nature and biodiversity and improve places. We aim to inspire changes in behaviour to improve our environment, the quality of people's lives, their wellbeing and the places that they care for. We support the ambitions of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

It is important that, while addressing local environmental quality issues, the wider environmental impact of the activity is minimised. To help you do this we have gathered some helpful information below (also, if you have a good top tip to share, please [drop us an email](#) so we can inspire others too):

Community Gardening

Check out the Garden for Life Forum's series of handy leaflets for lots of advice, hints and tips on designing, developing and maintaining environmentally friendly gardens. The leaflets are available on the [Garden for Life Forum's web page](#).

The RHS also has a great article on the '[12 ways to grow a low carbon garden](#)' which includes ideas and inspiration.

Compost and soil

The best way to look after your soil is to add organic matter, such as compost or mulch. Recycling your garden waste into home-made compost is both easy and environmentally friendly. Check out [this advice from the RHS](#) which looks at the basics of making this valuable soil improver and mulch. If you're not able to make your own, many councils have compost freely available. If planning to purchase compost, make sure they're peat-free – these are now widely available, making them an excellent choice both for your plants and the planet. This [RHS advice](#) looks at how to choose suitable peat-free composts for all your garden needs.

Bulbs, plants and seeds

Please purchase native bulbs wherever possible – especially if buying bluebells. Spanish bluebells are readily available in supermarkets/garden centres, so make sure you only buy ones labelled with the name *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (or wild hyacinths as they are known in Scotland). For more information, read The Woodland Trust's '[Growing native bluebells](#)' blog.

Plants should be native wherever possible, as this helps increase biodiversity. For example, honeysuckle is native to Britain and will support more wildlife than clematis, which is of Latin American origin. The [Scottish Wildlife Trust](#) website has a good list of wildlife-friendly plants.

If thinking about planting bedding plants, there is a good '[Bedding Plants for Pollinators](#)' guide available on the Garden for Life website.

A great way to be sustainable (and save money) with seeds and plants is to propagate them – check out [this RHS advice](#) on the different ways to do this.

Vegetable seeds should be organic wherever possible (check out [Seeds of Scotland](#)), and wildflower mixtures should ideally be purchased from suppliers that use native species – [Scotia Seeds](#) is worth checking out.

Water

Every litre, or gallon, of mains water you use adds to your carbon footprint. Rainwater harvesting (connect water butts to downpipes for an eco-friendly water supply) will keep your dependence on mains water supplies to a minimum in summer. Check out this [advice from the RHS](#). The best approach of all is to minimise your water use, wherever it comes from, by mulching and picking your plants carefully.

Wood

If creating raised beds/fencing etc., think about recycling old timber (e.g. pallets) and make sure the wood you use is non-treated. If purchasing wood products, look for the forest-friendly FSC logo - it's the best way to be sure you're buying a product that's been harvested legally and with respect for forests, people and wildlife. The [Friends of the Earth](#) website has further information and guidance.

Tools

Can you refurbish/recycle old tools or is there a tool sharing 'library' in your area? If buying new tools, look for the forest-friendly FSC logo - it's the best way to be sure you're buying a product that's been harvested legally and with respect for forests, people and wildlife. The [Friends of the Earth](#) website has further information and guidance.

Clean Up events

If you're planning to organise a litter picking event, we have lots of support, advice and resources available through our [Clean Up Scotland campaign](#) and our [Community Litter Hub](#). Some top tips:

1. promote active travel to volunteers – encourage people to walk or cycle to your event/car share/use public transport;
2. separate the litter collected into rubbish and recyclables to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill;
3. contact your local authority to see if it offers an uplift service for the waste and recyclables collected;
4. make use of the discount voucher available through our Clean Up Scotland campaign if purchasing litter picking equipment; and
5. register your event with our Clean Up Scotland campaign.

Ponds

If you're planning to develop a pond, please check [Froglife's Just add water guide](#) for guidance and advice on how to create a pond to allow wildlife to flourish.

Bug hotels, bird feeders & bird/bat boxes

Before purchasing 'off-the-shelf' items, why not recycle old wood etc.? Check out [this 'How to build a bug hotel' video](#) from the RSPB for more information. Use your money instead to pay for minibus transport to bring school children to your site for a workshop on building bug hotels/bird feeders etc., or pay for someone to come and teach group members how to monitor what species are using them/purchase camera trapping equipment to record what species are using them and show the video footage to everyone. Make sure to upload any species monitoring to national databases such as [iRecord](#).

Refreshments

If you're planning an event to celebrate the work of your group, instead of buying expensive readymade refreshments why not buy the raw ingredients and get children and members of the community to bake or cook for the event. Or ask people to bring edible donations – check our ['One Planet Picnic'](#) guide for advice and ideas. If purchasing readymade items, please support your local businesses and try and limit packaging used.

Paints

If wanting to purchase paints for decorating tubs/pots/creating murals etc., please choose ones without chemicals as these are better for you and the environment. Check out [The Guardian's Eco and Natural Paints Guide](#) for more information.

Suppliers

When purchasing materials, please support your local businesses.

Training

To further your own knowledge, why not sign up to one of our accredited [Climate Emergency Training courses](#) or our [Nature and Biodiversity training](#).