

2021 Theme – Climate and Nature Friendly

For 2021, Keep Scotland Beautiful has chosen the theme of ‘Climate and Nature Friendly’ as a focus for groups taking part in Beautiful Scotland and It’s Your Neighbourhood.

In 2019, Scotland was the first country in the world to declare a climate emergency, and with Glasgow hosting the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November, 2021 is the year for looking forward and supporting the green recovery. Gardens are important for health and social well-being whilst also supporting the natural environment by helping to sustain wildlife. Gardens also provide positive climate change functions such as mitigating urban flooding, urban cooling, building insulation, pollutant and carbon capture. With populations rising and with the loss of natural habitat to urban development, the role of gardens in delivering the health and positive climate change functions formerly fulfilled by the natural environment is becoming increasingly important. There is great potential for our community groups to help maintain biodiversity, make a major contribution to reducing carbon dioxide emissions and prepare for the growing impacts of climate change. *[taken from RHS ‘Gardening in a Changing Climate’ report]*

Many of you already ensure your activities are ‘climate and nature friendly’, whether that be creating your own compost, planting for pollinators, litter picking, collecting rainwater, encouraging people to walk or cycle to your site, protecting and enhancing your ‘green and blue’ spaces such as your parks and beaches, or by sharing recipes and encouraging people to grow their own. So now we want to celebrate this with you and inspire others to take the simple steps to make their projects Climate and Nature Friendly.

We know that some of our groups had plans in place to celebrate our 2020 themes - The Year of Coasts and Waters and Keep Scotland Beautiful’s 20th birthday. If you’ve already worked on these, we’d encourage you to still celebrate them (now our 21st anniversary year) under the ‘Climate and Nature Friendly’ theme too.

Every group will be sent a pouch of [Seed Ball](#) wildflower seed balls, to get them started, but we would love to hear your plans and share your projects and stories of everything you do to celebrate this theme. Please email beautifulscotland@keepscotlandbeautiful.org throughout the year, and share through our social media channels tagging us @KSBSScotland and using #beediverse - you never know who you might inspire. [Please do [email](#) ‘before’ and ‘after’ photos of your seeds – being sown, growing, full bloom - and also record any pollinator sightings to share with us].

We’ve pulled together some ideas of how you could celebrate the theme, putting them in subsections to make it easy to follow (thank you to Bonnie Dundee for helping us with some of this – view the group’s [informative poster](#) for ideas):

Climate Friendly

Mitigation (reducing greenhouse gases)

- Grow plants from seeds and take part in seed swaps – look for varieties that thrive in Scotland and divide and share your plants through plant swaps/plant sales (good advice in our [Propagation Q&A session](#)).
- Re-use your seed trays/pots; upcycle e.g. yogurt pots into pots for seeds or for making plant labels.
- Reduce digging – concentrate on seasonal, sustainable planting and plugging areas with seasonal colour to disturb the soil less and reduce water evaporation.
- Collect kitchen and garden waste to make your own compost (some great advice [here](#)) or check if your Council makes and gives it away (some Councils offer it for free).
- If you have to buy compost, make sure you buy peat-free. Beware of composts which might contain peat, e.g. those for containers might contain peat for water retention.
- Plant fruit trees – 5 or more makes an orchard! (useful advice and guidance from [Social Farms and Gardens](#) and handy hints for creating a mini-orchard [here](#)).

- Start a community food growing project (some great advice from the RHS [here](#)).
- Could you share extra produce with your local food bank/set up a food pantry/distribute to residents through an open-air food market?
- Share simple recipes to inspire people to experiment with their homegrown fruit and vegetables (check out how The Maxwell Centre do this through their [Grow Dundee blog](#)).
- Hold a [One Planet Picnic](#) to celebrate local, seasonal produce and to reduce waste.
- Buy local and in season! Do an internet search for local suppliers.
- Break up old crockery to use as drainage in your plant pots or to make cheerful mosaics.
- Encourage your members/visitors to walk or cycle to your sites e.g. could you install cycle racks or create a simple map showing quiet walking routes?
- Could you install a wind turbine or a solar panel? Get in touch with [Forth Eco site](#) who have done this successfully).
- More ideas from our Climate Challenge Fund [Food case studies](#), [Waste case studies](#), [Travel case studies](#) and [Energy Efficiency case studies](#)

Adaptation (changing practices due to impacts of climate change)

- Reduce your water consumption – could you collect rainwater, plant more [drought resistant plants](#)/reduce areas of bare soil by planting closer together to reduce evaporation/amount of watering needed?
- Create a rain garden ([good advice](#) from the RHS) to collect water from downpipes etc.: low maintenance, good for wildlife, absorbs runoff - with climate change giving us more extreme weather conditions, we can adapt to that in gardens and keep the seas cleaner if all the water from storm drains isn't going into the sea.
- Adopt new ways of growing. Green roofs and walls can result in year-round home energy savings due to a cooling effect in summer and an insulating effect in winter.
- Reduce use of high energy consumption items on-site e.g. power tools/patio heaters
- Try to source outdoor furniture which is produced from sustainable sources – or re-purpose/upcycle old furniture.

Nature Friendly

- Take care of your green and blue spaces by litter picking (advice and resources from KSB [here](#)).
- Plant native trees (free packs available through [The Woodland Trust](#)).
- Make your areas wildlife friendly (advice and tips from the RHS [here](#)).
- Create a wildlife pond (advice and tips from Froglife [here](#)).
- Take part in this year's [Wild About Gardens campaign](#) and help Bring Back Beetles!
- More ideas in our [2017 theme 'Birds, Bees and Trees' document](#).
- Transform verges into wildlife havens (download Plantlife's [Good Verge Guide](#)). Let people know why you are doing it – NatureScot's free [downloadable sign](#) will explain that you are managing an area for wildlife rather than 'letting it go'.
- Reconnect your green spaces by planting mixed-species native hedges (find out more [here](#)).
- Reduce your use of bedding plants and move towards planting for pollinators without losing the bright colours (a great guide from the Garden for Life Forum [here](#); explore the range of Garden for Life leaflets [here](#)).
- Cut down on pesticides - use companion planting to reduce pests naturally (check out this [great article](#) by Bothwell Community Garden).
- Let your grass grow!
- Look after nature/life under the soil by making and using your own compost (some great advice [here](#) and all about the magic of worms [here](#))

