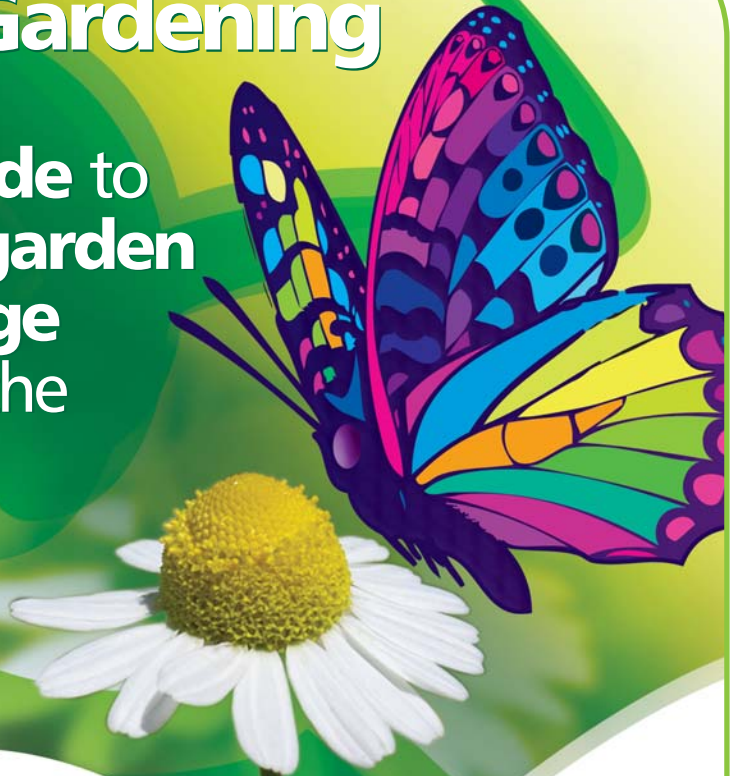


Sustainable Gardening

A practical guide to
making your garden
EASY to manage
and **GOOD** for the
environment



eco footprint
Towards a **ONE planet** lifestyle





Ecological Footprint (EF)

EF is a way of measuring how much of the planet's resources we require to meet our needs. It represents the amount of land and sea we use to live our lives. We use the land for the resources it provides, such as food and drink, fuel, building materials, everything else we buy, to build and live on and for its capacity to process the waste we produce.

Kingston's current EF is 5.6 global hectares (gha) per person per year. This is the same amount of land as **213 tennis courts per person per year**. If everyone on the planet lived like this we would need 3.5 Earths to live on. If we are to live within the limits of our planet we need to use the resources available more efficiently.

It is possible to calculate a sustainable average EF for the current global

population by looking at the total area of the earth's productive land and sea and dividing it by the number of people in the world. The resulting footprint allows approximately 1.8 hectares per person or the equivalent of **68 tennis courts per person per year**.

Every action you take in your garden that makes the use of resources more efficient, will have a direct effect in reducing your EF, e.g. swap your garden hose for a water butt and save 1 tennis court per year, compost your organic waste and save 3 tennis courts per year.

This guide intends to assist you in **reducing your garden's footprint**. If you want to learn more about how you can reduce your EF, by taking simple actions in other areas of your life, visit: www.kingston.gov.uk/eco_footprint

How gardening practices could impact the environment

“The way we **use resources** in our gardens can have a **positive** or negative impact on the **environment**.”

Did you know?



Fertilisers and chemicals can be washed into rivers, underground water sources or accumulate in the soil and plants, affecting native flora and fauna.



Garden products may be sourced from non-renewable or unsustainable resources such as uncertified timber.



Water thirsty gardens could significantly increase the pressure on scarce water supplies.



Extremely tidy and clean gardens reduce the amount of shelter and food sources available for local biodiversity.



Burning garden waste releases carbon dioxide and pollutes the air.



Paving gardens with non permeable surfaces increases the risk of flash floods and reduces the quantity of water moving down to underground water stores.

Bring it to Life



- 1. Remember the birds.** Provide nuts, seeds and fat feeders to encourage a variety of birds in your garden. Bird habitats can be introduced and enhanced by nesting and roosting boxes, bird tables and baths. Natural roosts in ivy and bushes should be maintained and not disturbed during the breeding season.
- 2. Return of the native.** Planting native shrubs and hedges will ensure a garden rich in wildlife. Shrubs include blackthorn, buckthorn, broom, dog-rose, dogwood, elder, guelder-rose, hawthorn and spindle. Hedges include hawthorn, blackthorn, wild rose, holly and hazel. In addition, berberis, cotoneaster and pyracantha produce lots of berries for the birds.
- 3. Pond life.** Build a pond in a sunny site away from over-hanging trees to encourage frogs, newts, dragonflies and damselflies into your garden. Be aware that ornamental fish look nice but are likely to eat the native wildlife such as dragonfly larvae.
- 4. Meadow magic.** To bring vibrant colour into your garden as well as insects, meadow flowers can be sown or planted to produce spring or summer displays. Species such as cowslip, ox-eye daisy, meadow cranesbill, yellow rattle, self-heal and meadow buttercup will do well in most gardens.
- 5. Butterfly gardens.** Attract butterflies to your garden with nectar-rich plants such as buddleia, scabious, ice-plant, primrose, ivy and honeysuckle. Plant in a sunny sheltered spot and don't forget to provide food plants for caterpillars. Nettles are the food plants for some beautiful butterfly larvae.
- 6. Don't be too tidy.** A pile of logs will attract beetles and fungi; leaves can provide shelter for hedgehogs and areas of longer grass provide cover for beetles which in turn can keep down garden pests.
- 7. Night life.** Bats are important pollinators as well as insect eaters. Add a couple of bat boxes to offer shelter to these fantastic mammals.
- 8. Recycle - Reuse.** Use reclaimed stone or stone substitutes to help protect some of the UK's most threatened habitats such as peat bogs and wetlands.

Make it **Drought Tolerant**



- 1. Water your plants early in the morning or late in the evenings.** Watering at the right time avoids unnecessary loss of water by evaporation.
- 2. Water less frequently but deeply.** Less frequent, thorough watering encourages roots to grow deep, where the soil stays moist longer.
- 3. Water the soil, not the plants.** Use a watering can, soaker hoses, drip irrigation or other techniques that saturate the soil while leaving the foliage dry. Install an irrigation system that will deliver water direct to the base of the plants.
- 4. Collect rain water.** Depending on where you live, you may be able to connect a water butt to your drain pipes and use it to water your garden.
- 5. Choose drought-tolerant plants.** Certain characteristics indicate that a plant has low water requirements: silvery, hairy, fuzzy, waxy or succulent leaves are good choices.

Try lavender, buddleia, dianthus, geranium, hibiscus, iris or hypericum, holly and rosemary. Feijoa sellowiana was voted the best drought tolerant shrub in 2007. It is evergreen and produces stunning red and white flowers which are edible and taste similar to cinnamon.
- 6. Prepare major planting projects in advance.** It is best to plant trees, shrubs and herbaceous borders in the autumn, so plants are established by the time the drier summer period arrives.
- 7. Mulch your plantings.** A layer of organic mulch such as shredded leaves, bark or compost slows down evaporation and water runoff. Keep the mulch away from the base of plants to prevent rotting.
- 8. Cut down on mowing, fertilizing, and watering and let your lawn go dormant.** Raise the mowing height and mow during the coolest part of the day. Leave the clippings. Let it go dormant during the summer

Make it **Productive** and **Low Maintenance**



1. **Make room for permanent features.**

Introduce some slow-growing plants that look good over as long a period as possible such as garden trees and a mixture of shrubs, conifers and grasses. Try mahonia, lilac, euphorbia, ilex, juniper, lirope, pennisetum, festuca or phlaris.

2. **Minimize flower bed areas.** Reduce beds with flowers that require regular replanting. Hardy annuals, such as poppies, cornflowers and pot marigolds, will develop self-sustaining colonies which appear year after year.

3. **Grow Vegetables.** You don't have to have a dedicated area in your garden to grow vegetables successfully. You can mix them in with your flowering plants. There are many varieties which have ornamental qualities such as red flowered beans, crinkly leaved lettuce, black French beans and yellow tomatoes. You can also grow them in containers. If you are very serious about growing vegetables, why don't you take up an allotment plot, further information on allotments in Kingston:

www.kingston.gov.uk/allotments

4. **Introduce fruit trees.** Fruit trees such as apples, pears and plums are an excellent way of introducing permanent features in

the garden. Choose traditional English varieties that are naturally resistant to pests and have wonderful taste and texture. You could also try edible nuts such as hazelnuts, walnuts and chestnuts which are a great source of sustainable protein.

5. **Grow plants in containers.** Pots and containers are easier to maintain and water efficient. Remember to put a saucer in the base of the container to stop water running off.

6. **Reduce the size of your lawn.** Introduce an area of **permeable** paving, gravel or other permeable surface instead of grass/soil. If using wood, ensure it is coming from sustainable sources. e.g. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified timber products.

7. **Dedicate areas for ground cover.** This will avoid the need for weeding. It is best to choose plants that grow well together and to select plants that grow in each of the four seasons. Try brachyglottis, sStachys, vinca minor, crowberry, pachysandia, genista or hedra.

8. **Prepare the soil when introducing new plants.** Begin with lots of organic matter, this will help plants grow strong and will require less looking after.

Make it Organic



- 1. Stop the use of peat compost.** Make your own compost by recycling vegetable peelings, tea bags and plant prunings. Compost improves the soil structure and encourages insect and slug-eating creatures (such as frogs, birds, bats and hedgehogs). For advice on home composting visit www.kingston.gov.uk/compost
- 2. Care for your soil.** Improve your soil by digging in leaf mould or garden compost or just leave the leaves on the surface and let the worms do the job.
- 3. Companion planting.** By combining plants carefully, you create plant communities, which help each other. Plant strongly scented flowers next to edible crops to deter pests e.g. plant marigolds in between tomato plants to deter aphids.
- 4. Choose local.** Use seeds and plants suitable for local climate and soil as well as naturally pest and disease resistant varieties of vegetables and fruits.
- 5. Go natural.** Use natural methods to control pests such as slug barriers (e.g. beer traps), diluted household detergent which is effective against greenfly and black fly.
- 6. Prevent weeds.** By spreading a blanket of composted bark across the surface of bare soil you create a natural weed barrier.
- 7. Don't make it perfect.** Accept a degree of imperfection and you'll learn to live without fertilisers and pesticides.
- 8. Keep an eye on it.** Regular inspection of your garden and plants will help to prevent problems from getting out of hand.

Drought Tolerant



Lavender



Hypericum



Dianthus



Geranium



Cotoneaster



Berberis

For wildlife



Buddleia



Pyracantha



Lilac



Ilex

Permanent Features

Pennisetum



Festuca



Ground cover

Crowberry



Camomile



Vinca Minor



Hebe



Other initiatives

Kingston in Bloom (KiB) is a gardening competition open to all residents from beginners to experts. It promotes sustainable gardening practices with the support of Kingston Sustainable Gardening Group. If you have a garden, large or small or even a window box, why not enter this year's KiB competition and get to know other residents keen on gardening and concerned about the environment.

www.kingston.gov.uk/inbloom.htm

London in Bloom

Each year the borough makes an entry to the London in Bloom awards. Residents can directly contribute to this entry through the creation of high quality, sustainable gardens.

Adopt-a-plot scheme

Kingston Council is encouraging residents to take over the maintenance of local wayside gardens. We have identified a selection of potential locations for this purpose. For further information or to declare an interest in the 'adopt-a-plot'

scheme please contact the Environmental Services Contact Centre on **0208 547 5929** or environment@rbk.kingston.gov.uk.

Kingston Permaculture Reserve (KPR) at Knollmead

Permaculture is a way of increasing productivity of the land whilst maintaining a range of wildlife habitats. The site covers an area of 20 allotments including a forest garden made up of a range of productive trees, soft fruit bushes and herbs.

For further information and how to get involved contact Simone Kay on simone@stainedglass.freeseve.co.uk

Kingston Community Compost Network (KCCN)

In Partnership with London CRN and Kingston Federation of Allotment Gardeners (K FAG), Kingston council has developed a community compost network. The network plays a key role in promoting and supporting the council in its aim of increasing home composting in the borough, reducing the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill.

www.kingston.gov.uk/compost



Partners

The Royal Borough of Kingston strongly believes in partnership working. This guide has been developed with the invaluable support of the following organisations and businesses:

Sustainable Gardening Group (SGG)

SGG is a group of local residents concerned about the environment and keen on gardening. They aim to help reduce Kingston's Ecological Footprint through sustainable gardening practices.

www.kingston.gov.uk/sustainable_gardening

Kingston Horticultural Society (KHS)

KHS supports and encourages sustainable gardening practices and is interested in spreading the content of this guide among its members and general public.

www.kingstonhs.co.uk

Quadron Services Ltd

Kingston Council's partner for grounds maintenance and open space management. They encourage and support the community in becoming involved in this task.

www.quadronservices.co.uk

Garden Care Supplies

Garden Care Contracting are professional landscape gardeners who work with Quadron Services Ltd as their approved landscape contractor, helping to improve parks and open spaces within the borough.

www.ourgarden.co.uk

Chessington Garden Centre

A family run business committed to the environment where you can find quality products and friendly expert advice. It holds the international standard in Environmental Management (ISO14001).

www.chessingtongardencentre.co.uk