

CSGGA Newsletter

July 2023



RHS Affiliated Membership Number: 10570237

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Gardening Without Plastic – Sally Nex

Sally gave us a very detailed and interesting talk explaining how she is replacing plastic in the garden.

In summary here are some of her tips:

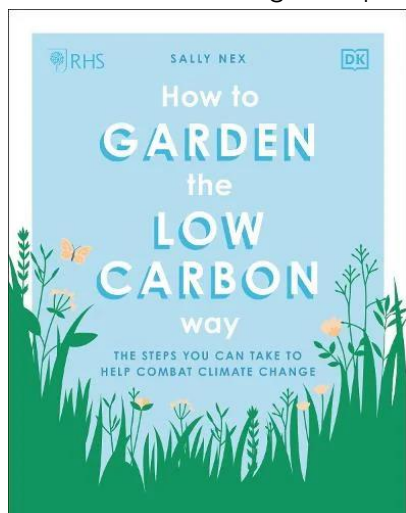
Keep using your existing plastic pots but only until they start degrading. Then take them to a garden centre that properly recycles the pots but remember that eventually it will become unrecyclable and end up in landfill. So recycling is not the answer. Stop using plastic.

What can you do?

- Buy or make wooden seed trays or create modules from newspaper folded round a pot making tool. Use loo rolls or make up soil blocks - see www.soilblockers.co.uk Plants grown in biodegradable pots are much stronger and healthier.
- When growing on you can use clay pots but try to buy second hand from reclamation yards. Try biodegradable pots. Coir is not such a good option as it has to be flown miles and it has to be washed with a lot of water before use.
- Make square pots out of cardboard you already have and stick together with paper masking tape. Buy old hessian sacks instead of gro-bags and fill with compost.
- Use biodegradable catering spoons for plant labels inside and slate outside. Write on the latter with a Tippex pen (a compromise but it lasts more than 4 years!) and sandpaper off.
- Use Jute or Hemp twine or New Zealand Flax if you have that growing in your garden.
- Make your own compost or go to a garden centre that fills a bag for you to use again (Chenies does this).
- Fertiliser - make a comfrey feed <https://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to-grow-plants/how-to-make-a-comfrey-feed/>
- Suppress weeds with a covering of cardboard and then mulch on top. Repeat the process year after year and weeds will eventually die out altogether. Alternatively try natural felt from <https://www.chimneysheep.co.uk/product-category/natural-gardening-products/>
- Try to buy plants bare rooted without plastic pots. Try googling "bare rooted perennials without plastic uk" and see what comes up.



This was our first attempt offering a hybrid style meeting of a Zoom talk on the screen in the hall with members also having the option to log on and watch from home. A small gathering of members came to the hall but unfortunately, despite testing the equipment beforehand, there were gremlins working against us. Zoom had a problem which delayed our start and we are sorry that some of you may have had problems logging onto the meeting. To add to that, part way through the presentation the power failed on the laptop we were using. Our apologies to everyone in the hall who did not have the experience we wanted! A big thanks to Raj Patel for his help with taming the technology when it went pear shaped.



It's well worth watching Sally's talk from start to finish to get the benefit of all her advice. Click on this link [Sally Nex – Gardening Without Plastic](#) and use the passcode !7\$#\$bDE

Eleanor O'Connor

Note: Briony highly recommends Sally's book "[How to Garden the Low Carbon Way](#)" available from Waterstones and all good bookshops! See also the Did You Know article below and the Green Gardening Tip.

Big Butterfly Count

Surely one of the joys of summer is watching butterflies flit between flowers collecting nectar. If you want a gentle activity for yourself or your children or grandchildren to engage with nature why not take part in the Big Butterfly Count which runs from 14 July to 6 August and is a chance for everyone to help scientists understand how climate change is affecting butterflies.

To join in, all you need to do is spend 15 minutes in any sunny spot and record the number and type of butterflies you see.

It is open to anyone, of any age, in any part of the UK - towns, cities or the countryside, you can even do it while enjoying a walk. Then record your findings on a special app or the Butterfly Conservation website. See the link for more details.

<https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>



Coronation Gardens – Why not get involved?

The WI, The Wildlife Trusts, Incredible Edible, and Garden Organic, have joined forces to create a lasting legacy and pay tribute to His Majesty, King Charles III's commitment to the natural world and the environment. Coronation Gardens for Food and Nature is a three-year programme that hopes to enthuse millions of people and communities across the United Kingdom to live sustainably and help wildlife recover by growing food and creating space for nature in gardens, on balconies, and in shared greenspaces. This will include providing advice and resources and encouraging people to pledge their gardens or greenspaces on a map.

This is a new initiative close to my heart and matches the Gardens Association's ambition to "Nurture Nature" in our village. I've personally signed up and will be adding Nurturing Nature in CSG as a community gardening initiative and I encourage you all to get involved.

<https://mycoronationgarden.org/get-involved>

Green Gardening Tip – Did you know?

- Chenies Garden Centre – now owned by Blue Diamond - can sell you a large bag which they will fill with compost and then you can bring it back whenever you need more. The compost will then cost £1 less each time. Brilliant idea to stop using all those plastic bags! They also recycle old compost bags.
- All Dobbies Garden Centres have plastic pot recycling bins across 69 of their garden centres. They take all sizes and colours of plant pots and trays according to their website and Elho will make them into new pots. The nearest Dobbies is in Beaconsfield on the A40 towards High Wycombe. Details can be found here <https://www.dobbies.com/pot-recycling> However, as noted above, if you propagate plants, continue to reuse your existing plastic pots until they start degrading.



Thursday, 10th August

Is Kitchen Gardening Really Worth It? - Hazel Roberts

By popular demand, following her talk last year about dealing with harvest gluts, Hazel Roberts is returning next month to explain how to rotate and plant our kitchen garden and allotments. Thankfully, we will be back to our tried and tested format, so there should be no technical hitches!

M's Action Diary for July

- Take cuttings of penstemon, lavender and salvias
- Cut back hardy geraniums, lupins, delphiniums, phlomis and alchemilla mollis
- Remove spent flowers from bedding plants such as pelargoniums.
- Prune wisteria by shortening long side shoots to 2 or 3 buds from old wood.
- Trim rock roses to remove spent flowers but do not cut into old wood
- Lavenders require trimming to maintain shape, Never prune back into old wood as lavenders will not produce new shoots from woody stems.
- Plant autumn flowers bulbs such as colchicums, sternbergias, hardy cyclamen and nerines.
- Remove spent flowers and black leaves from sisyrinchiums. Dig up and replant every three years.

Outing to Adwell Estate Garden and Waterperry Gardens

Friday 22nd September, 2023 – 10.00 – 16.30 approx

Adwell Estate Garden is normally open to the public only three times a year but we've got our own private visit at a time that is 'good for colour' including a tour with the head gardener. We then move on to Waterperry Gardens where we can have lunch and enjoy these beautifully landscaped ornamental gardens. £25.75 per member, £30.75 non-members and guests. Non RHS members will need to pay the Waterperry www.csgga.org

admission fee in addition of £10.50 or £9.00 depending on the numbers. Full booking details can be requested from Eleanor O'Connor on 01494 875646 or 07946 629076 or can be found [here](#) on the website

CSGGA Visits to 2 Gardens in Hampshire and Hampton Court Flower Show

Well done, Eleanor, for organising two great outings in June and July. The first to Mottisfont for the rose festival, sadly they were all but over because of the hot weather we enjoyed in early June. Then on to Little Court, a privately owned garden that opens for the NGS with wild flower meadow and "fabulous traditional borders and so much more!" photos from Mottisfont courtesy of Karen Hall.



In early July, our trip to Hampton Court Flower Show, was a highlight for many, and we enjoyed being inspired and indulging in some garden-related retail therapy. I felt there were fewer show gardens than I remembered but loved the allotment and starter gardens and came home with loads of ideas, including about a year's worth of material for my "Green Gardening Tip" for our monthly newsletter!

For more photos and comments about these outings and other items, please see our [Facebook](#) page and please share your gardening news, thoughts, questions or stories or post photos of your prize winning onions, dahlias or strawberries! We love seeing what you're all doing in your gardens.

Your CSGGA Committee

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New Committee members are always welcome. We are a friendly bunch! Please contact a committee member to find out more if you're interested in joining us.