

HOW TO BE A KINDER GARDENER

Tips on kinder gardening, focusing on: gardening with pollinators, composting, water and water saving techniques and kinder pest control.

KINDER COMPOSTING

Horsham District Council run a green waste garden compost collection scheme which is very popular with local residents. The district's green waste is collected and composted on mass and becomes garden compost and is also used as a mulch. While the scheme ensures that green waste does not go to landfill in the general waste stream **it is far better and kinder to the environment to home compost.**

Composting is easy and can be made in off the shelf bins – often plastic or in homemade recycled wooden bins. At its most simplistic green waste can be piled high in a corner and turned every few weeks to speed up decomposition.

Getting the mix right between nitrogen and carbon will make the best compost, so aim to mix between 25 and 50 percent soft green materials (e.g. grass clippings, annual weeds and vegetable kitchen waste with woody brown woody waste such as prunings, wood chips, paper, cardboard, straw and leaf mould. This mix will ensure that the bacteria and micro-organisms that produce the compost are able to produce the best compost. Try not to have too much of any one waste stream, for example grass clippings, keep trying to mix materials to prevent the compost becoming a slimy mess.

Turning the pile every month improves air circulation and speeds up the process. The whole process may take between 6 and 24 months. The brown friable compost that is produced can be used as a soil improver and mulch and will enrich the fertility of your garden soil for free. [The RHS website](#) has useful info on composting.



FRIENDS OF HORSHAM PARK

KINDER POLLINATORS

Buy or better still grow plants that encourage pollinators, there is a large list and you don't need to compromise on flower power. Consider planting; allium, aster, basil, bee balm, buddleia, bergamot, borage, catmint, cosmos, delphinium, fennel, lavender, scabious, verbena, thyme, single but not pom pom dahlia. When planting roses select ones where the yellow centre is visible. These varieties are far more likely to contain large amounts of pollen and therefore better for pollinating insects.

For more information and downloadable lists about kinder pollinators, visit the [RHS website](#).

ABOUT US

The Friends of Horsham Park is a group of volunteers who work to protect, enhance and promote our beautiful park as a place of recreation and enjoyment for the long-term benefit of everyone in the local community. We have many ideas to improve the park, for everyone who enjoys it today, and for future generations. We work closely with Horsham District Council on their plans for the park's future and we're keen that the local community's views should be represented, so if you have ideas, or if you'd like to get involved with the Friends, please email friends@friendsofhorshampark.co.uk

KINDER PEST CONTROL

Using **natural predators and parasites** within the garden to manage pest levels provides nature with a helping hand, reducing pest pressures without reverting to the use of inorganic pesticides.

Glasshouse whitefly can be controlled by the small parasitic wasp, **Encarsia formosa**, while an infestation of aphid (greenfly) can be brought under control with the introduction of lacewing and ladybird larva or another parasitic wasp – **Aphidius colemani**. All are regularly introduced into glasshouses and are now commonly available to the kinder gardener. More info on the [Ladybird Plantcare website](#).

Two troublesome pests, **slugs and vine weevil** can also be controlled using biological controls. If you see the half-moon notching on foliage particularly on containerised evergreens it is likely the pot contains a large number of vine weevil larvae. **Drenching with parasitic nematodes** often called Nemsays L or H will usually gain good levels of control.

The slug which during wet summers can decimate your favourite herbaceous can be managed with bird and pet friendly nematodes, look out for **Nemaslug**, which can be applied as a spray or watered on using a can and will provide up to six weeks protection. While it is good to leave enough slugs as food for other wildlife, as kinder gardeners we still need to manage the little critters!

SB Plant Invigorator is a useful spray for the control of a wide range of pests and also seems to provide some control of powdery mildew which is so often a problem on roses from mid-summer onwards. SBPI is widely used within UK horticulture to control whitefly, aphid, mealybug and red spider mite and while 100% control is rarely achieved it reduces pest levels and can be used in combination with biological controls. While not certified organic it is a great product for the kinder gardener, available from the [Ladybird Plantcare website](#)

KINDER WATERING

Managing this most valuable resource is important and collecting rain water by **installing water butts** makes great sense.

Try to **water early in the morning** when plants will make best use of the water provided and apply via a watering can rather than a hose pipe which will use much greater volumes.

Kinder gardeners **do not water lawns** but instead irrigate the vegetable garden. If you have pots/containers, stand them in trays to better manage both rain and irrigation. Consider more **draught tolerant plantings** including growing succulents – geranium is a great choice as are many Mediterranean species such as cistus and lavender.

Mulching with garden compost, manures and even cardboard – Bob Flowerdew style – will retain moisture within the ground and manage water content.



HAPPY KINDER GARDENING!

We hope you find this advice useful. It is available to download from the www.friendsofhorshampark.co.uk (Nature and Conservation)

If you'd like to share your experience or tips on kinder gardening, please share on our socials: search Horsham Park on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, or email friends@friendsofhorshampark.co.uk

