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Five innovative ways to garden sustainably this summer

As eco-awareness grows across the UK, gardeners increasingly seek ways to contribute to climate change mitigation, resource conservation, and community influence. They aim to make informed, eco-friendly choices that benefit both their gardens and the planet. British Garden Centres has some top tips on how to garden sustainably this summer with these five innovative methods. By implementing these techniques, you can make a positive impact on the planet right in your backyard.

Eggshells

Next time you make an omelette or fancy a fry up, think about your garden and don't throw the shells away. Eggshells, often discarded as waste, are valuable organic additives for the garden, providing high levels of calcium that benefit plants. They can be used as plant pots for germination, where seedlings grow in halved shells filled with seed compost. Once the seedlings are ready, the entire shell can be transplanted into the garden, enriching the soil as it decomposes. Additionally, crushed eggshells serve as an effective fertilizer, supplying calcium that moderates soil acidity and supports the growth of vegetables, flowers, and fruit trees.

Eggshells also offer organic pest control, deterring slugs, snails, and other pests when sprinkled around plants. They can be used to deter cabbage white butterflies and keep cats away from garden beds. In composting, eggshells contribute essential nutrients, enhancing the compost's quality. To avoid attracting animals, rinse the shells before adding them to the compost bin.

Coffee grounds

Did you know that your local British Garden Centres store recycles its coffee grounds in its restaurants and cafes, and offers them to you for the garden and a small donation to Greenfingers Charity?

Using coffee grounds in the garden can enhance soil structure, provide essential nutrients, and slightly acidify the soil, which is beneficial for acid-loving plants. They can be applied directly as mulch or mixed into the soil to improve texture and nutrient content. Coffee grounds are also an excellent green material for composting, adding nitrogen to balance carbon-rich materials. Additionally, they can deter pests like slugs and snails due to their abrasive texture and caffeine content. Ensure the grounds are mixed well into the soil or compost to prevent compaction and uneven nutrient distribution. Incorporating coffee grounds properly can boost your garden's health and productivity.



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Companion planting

Companion planting is a sustainable gardening technique that involves growing different plant species together to benefit each other mutually. This method enhances pest and disease resistance, promotes pollination, conserves space, increases productivity, and attracts beneficial insects, reducing the need for chemical pest control. Examples include the "three sisters" method, where beans, sweetcorn, and squash are planted together; beans fix nitrogen for the soil, sweetcorn provides support for beans, and squash retains soil moisture and suppresses weeds. Marigolds can repel pests when planted with vegetables, while onions protect carrots from root flies.

Various plant pairings further illustrate the benefits of companion planting. Clover enriches the soil with nitrogen and provides a habitat for pest-controlling spiders when planted with vegetables like cabbage and broccoli. Garlic planted with roses deters pests and attracts pollinators, while also enhancing fragrance. Basil improves tomato flavour and repels pests, while herbs like thyme, sage, and rosemary keep cabbage moths away from brassicas. Sweet peas protect courgettes from pests, and lavender paired with chilli deters harmful insects while attracting pollinators, contributing to a healthier and more productive garden.

Plant a dry garden

Planting a dry garden is a highly sustainable gardening approach that minimises water usage and reduces the need for weeding, mowing, and pesticides. To create a successful dry garden, start by assessing your garden setting. Watch the local rainfall patterns, determine your soil type, and evaluate how much sun your garden area receives.

Ideal plants for such gardens include lavender, sedum, thyme, rosemary, euphorbia, agapanthus, salvia, ornamental grasses, and erigeron. These plants thrive in well-drained soil and full sun, offering drought tolerance and adding a variety of textures, colours, and forms to your garden, making it a beautiful and eco-friendly.

These gardens thrive with minimal water, making them both practical and visually appealing while supporting environmental sustainability.

Smart gadgets

Incorporating smart gardening gadgets can also enhance the sustainable gardening experience, making it more efficient and rewarding. Soil moisture sensors are one of the most useful devices, as they measure the moisture levels in your garden beds or pots which helps prevent overwatering or underwatering by alerting you when your



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plants need water. Another essential gadget is the automated watering system, like smart irrigation controllers, which can be programmed to water your plants at specific times and adjust schedules based on local weather conditions, ensuring your garden receives consistent care even when you're away with no water wastage. Your local British Garden Centres team can advise you on the best gadgets for your outdoor space.

ENDS:

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Notes to Editors:

About the business:

British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group with 62 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by The Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire.

BGC was launched in 1987 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre funded by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018 it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now with 62 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham.

The group has a team of 2,700 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres and Woodthorpe Leisure Park and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

Social Media

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