

Nightingale Gardeners Environment Statement/Policy

The aim of this statement/policy is to communicate the commitment of the Nightingale Gardeners Group to sustainable and environmentally beneficial activities within the garden.

It is the aim of the Group to ensure that:

- We **promote biodiversity** by planting a wide range of plants, including native species, that will flower and fruit across the seasons. We especially favour plants that will support pollinators of all kinds.
- The City Council tree team have ownership and responsibility for the **mature trees** in the garden and volunteers seek advice from them about their tree care.
- We care for the **nature pond** to encourage a diversity of **only native** plants and animals. We have signage to make it clear that people **must not introduce plants or animals** (including tadpoles) from other ponds and gardens to prevent the spread of diseases. When we clear the pond, plants or mud are left for 12 days at the sides so any animals can re-enter the pond.
- We enable **wildlife habitats** by both making them and also allowing parts of the garden to be wilder than in a traditional garden.
- We use **scythes** in preference to strimmers. We use a petrol mower but as little as possible.
- **Dogs are kept on leads** in the garden to discourage injury to wildlife.
- During **bird-nesting season** (around late February to August), we avoid working on hedges and places that might have nests.
- We generate as little **landfill waste** as possible. We compost materials on site or through household hot bins. We recycle materials through household blue bins. We upcycle materials into things that are useful. We enable people to share and swap useable items and also donate to local charity shops.
- We use **Ecover washing up liquid** so we can dispose of washing-up waste in the garden.
- We use new materials wisely. In our **procurement**, we favour re-used or recycled materials, support local businesses and only use and buy FSC wood.
- We **harvest rainwater** for use in the garden but we also recognise that the mature trees also need rainwater, so we try not to reduce their access to it. We can make **raingardens** to control excess rainwater.
- We use the **mains water supply** frugally and try to educate volunteers and visitors about the best ways to water plants.
- We favour **drought-tolerant plants** as much as possible to minimise the amount of watering required.
- Where possible, we use **sustainable transport** to bring materials and people to the garden; for example, using cycle trailers. We have places for secure cycle parking.
- We will follow City Council policy on **not using herbicides** in parks.
- We use only **organic slug pellets** and very frugally. We use **no other pesticides** in the garden. We try to source plants and bulbs that have been grown without pesticides.
- We make our own **garden compost** and leaf-mould for mulching. We also use green-waste soil conditioner.
- We use twiggy material for **slow-rot bins, dead hedges** or other habitats where possible, and then ask the Council to remove any excess with their green waste.
- We use only **peat-free compost** for garden activities.
- For outdoor **cooking**, we try to use waste wood or wood pellets. We don't make fires frequently or burn waste on site so we don't disturb neighbours.

Nightingale Gardeners Environment Statement/Policy

- We try to keep **noise levels** in the garden low so we don't disturb neighbours.
- We only use **artificial light** when volunteers are working in the garden or for very infrequent evening activities. We can use overnight light for moth traps for education.
- We play a role in **education and learning** about sustainable gardening by the use of signs in the garden and leading on informal learning opportunities. We also work with local groups and schools to invite them into the garden to use it for both learning and leisure.

Complaints procedure

Nightingale Gardeners Group is volunteer-run, and we are bound to make mistakes. If anyone has a suggestion, worry or complaint about the Group, its members or our activities we really want to know. Contact the Secretary via the website contact details. The Group will take it seriously, aim to deal with it promptly and also with confidentiality. Where necessary, they will ask Cambridge City Council staff for advice.