

Knoll Gardens Environmental Statement



Our Approach to Environmental Matters

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We understand and believe that gardens and the built environment constitute an increasingly significant part of the earth's remaining green space; and that with suitable design, plant choice and ongoing care these spaces can offer much to ourselves, to wildlife and to the wider environment.

We strive to put this most important belief into practice through our garden, our charity and our nursery.

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Our Garden

Since 1994 the gardens have been undergoing a gradual change of emphasis from formal show garden to the respected naturalistic garden that it is today. Often subtle, sometimes dramatic, these changes reflect the environmentally sensitive naturalistic ethos and approach to garden making and after care.

Our Charity

Created in 2008, the Knoll Gardens Foundation (Reg Charity 1159390), is tasked with achieving a better understanding of the relationship between Knoll's naturalistic style, the gardens wildlife and the wider environment. The charity organises ongoing surveys of the gardens wildlife, maintains an active volunteer scheme, and works as appropriate with other conservation organisations such as Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT), Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) and the Bournemouth Natural Science Society (BNSS).



Our Nursery

As a modern specialist nursery concentrating on the UK market, we offer a wide range of grasses and perennials generally suitable for the UK climate.

Creating diversity of garden habitat and longer term communities of garden plants by using thoughtfully chosen permanent planting is a key part of the naturalistic approach and we aim to offer a range of plants, together with experience based advice, to help our customers achieve this.



On the Nursery

Plants

We grow by far the majority of our own plants; producing them either from seed or from divided mother stock. Not only is this important to keep our plants true to name, it helps us control our environmental impact in terms of carbon footprint and biosecurity. We do also buy a number of plants, including young starter or liner plants, from other well respected UK based nurseries in order to bulk stock or to obtain new lines, but have not bought plants from outside of the UK for some years.



Some of our propagation has now moved to open ground which will help further reduce our consumption of plastic pots.

In our growing fields, plants are grown with minimal protection as we aim to produce good quality healthy plants which will perform long term for our customers.

We do not grow for an instant effect, preferring to concentrate on supplying plants that will grow successfully when planted in their new homes.



All green material from the nursery, including plant trimmings and unwanted plants, is recycled onsite for use as a bulky soil improver either within the gardens or by a local farmer.

Compost



We have grown in peat free composts for over twenty years. Our current peat free mix is supplied by Melcourt and is based on their Sylvamix which contains no pesticides but does contain a balanced long term slow release fertiliser to ensure good growth for the young plants while in pots.

On occasion some young plants from outside sources may have an element of peat in their rootball. Our regular young plant suppliers grow in peat free mixes, but it is still possible that an element of peat may be present in a few of our plants.

Spent compost obtained from repotting or propagation is reused within the garden.

Compost, and the pot topping bark, now comes in large maxi bales which has allowed us to significantly reduce our use of plastic, by more than 50%, in this area. The bark is FSC certified and Soil Association approved.



Pots

New pots (Soparco injection moulded), are made from 80–100% recycled material and are fully NIR detectable and recyclable. We are actively looking for biodegradable pots but currently there are no commercially viable options available.

New pots
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material



▶ Rather than buying new pots we are reusing as many pots as possible in the belief that while recycling is good, reuse is even better.

Wherever practical existing older style pots, including black, continue to be reused until they are no longer fit for purpose.

Weed and Pests

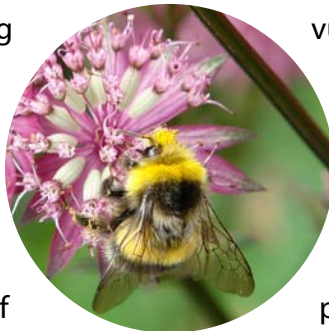
We use a specially formulated potting bark as a topping for all of our plants, which significantly reduces the ability of weeds to germinate as well as helping to reduce the frequency of irrigation.

Regular cleaning and maintenance of all growing areas significantly reduces the ability of weeds and pests to gain a foothold.

Weeding, pruning, potting and general care of plants is by hand.

Traditional pesticides are no longer used on the nursery though minimal use of bioprotectors that are derived from naturally occurring substances are used where appropriate.

Pest control such as for Vine Weevil and slugs is now largely through the use of nematodes. Ferric phosphate slug pellets may still be used in a few specific instances to combat a severe short term issue. Additionally grouping



vulnerable crops together helps maintain a tighter degree of control of such pests.

Weed control of non crop areas is now primarily by use of naturally derived contact sprays such as pelargonic acid, though gas powered heat technology that acts by burning existing weed growth is a viable option and one that is being explored.



Water



We use mains water as our limited space offers little opportunity to create a reservoir. Bore holes have been considered but currently offer unclear environmental and financial savings for our specific situation.

Our peat free compost can appear quite dry on the surface but in fact retains moisture within the rootball and so will re-wet fairly easily. This important characteristic allows us to grow using a wet/dry regime which can help to reduce the frequency of irrigation.

We are further minimising our use of water by grouping crops requiring similar growing conditions together. For example shade and drought tolerant carex and melica are grown in shady sections of the field and subsequently require minimal additional irrigation as a result.

Collection and reuse of irrigation water remains a longer term project.

The bark topping applied to all plants in pots acts to retain more moisture within the pots and so helps to reduce the frequency of irrigation. ▼



In General

We have now installed LED lights in the nursery buildings which has significantly reduced our energy consumption.

We have removed fan heaters and installed infrared heaters which are more efficient.



▲ We have moved to an electric powered nursery vehicle (a John Deere Gator).

We are looking at the use of solar panels to reduce our reliance on the national grid.



The pallets that our compost is delivered on are reused, such as for our plant centre benches.

We no longer offer carrier bags to customers for onsite sales.

We have reduced our commercial waste from weekly to fortnightly collections due to our reduction in plastic use.

Plant labels are not made from post consumer plastics but are 100% recyclable. We reduce label use for customer orders wherever practical to do so.

Mail Order

Virtually no plastic is used in our packing for mail order; we have always used the more traditional paper and cardboard boxes for sending out our plants.

Cardboard boxes for packing are made and supplied by a local firm and are from FSC Certified materials.



◀ Having used a plastic based brown tape for some years we are now able to use a paper based tape, and have also reduced our overall consumption of tape by more efficient taping of the boxes.

In the Garden

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Creating diversity of garden habitat and longer term communities of garden plants by using thoughtfully chosen permanent planting is a key part of the naturalistic ethos and offers a low resource, wildlife friendly approach to garden design and after care.

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We aim for **longer term satisfaction** rather than **instant effect**

All planted areas are surface mulched, which helps provide an informal aesthetic and a home for garden wildlife along with reducing the frequency of weeding and irrigation. Mulch materials include stable manure, chipped bark and gravel.

All green material, such as unwanted plants and plant trimmings that are not used as an in situ mulch, is recycled onsite in our compound area, for use as a mulch or a bulky soil improver either within the gardens or by a local farmer.

Wherever possible the previous seasons growth of established plantings of deciduous grasses and perennials, such as in the Decennium border, the Long walk and Mill End borders, are cut into smaller sections and left in situ as a surface mulch.

Spent compost obtained from repotting or propagation on the nursery is reused within the garden.



With the regular use of surface mulches most plants require very little additional food. However, given the gardens thin, nutrient poor sandy soil, some areas can benefit from a periodic application of an organic based fertiliser.

Control of weeds is largely by hand but where appropriate control of weed in areas such as some pathways and the car park is by use of naturally derived contact sprays such as pelargonic acid, though gas powered heat technology that acts by burning existing weed growth is a viable option.

Control of weeds is largely by hand



Powered garden equipment, such as mowers and hedgetrimmers, are currently petrol engined but we will gradually move to electric operated versions as existing equipment fails and requires replacement.

Minimising frequency of mowing is always under review and the total area requiring such regular treatment is being continually reduced.

As part of the naturalistic approach traditional insecticides have not been used within the garden for a number of years. For a similar reason bioinsecticides are also unnecessary within the garden though on occasion nematodes may be used in specific areas should a specific issue occur.



Most planting is relatively drought tolerant, but irrigation of the worst affected areas is used during dry periods as and when necessary. All such watering is carried out by hand using a number of hosepipes and sprinklers that are manually connected to a series of garden taps when watering is deemed necessary. A significant less frequent 'deep' watering is considerably more cost effective than a more frequent lighter watering.





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