

CLIMATE  
ACTION  FIFE



# Climate Friendly Gardens

Supporting gardeners to **grow sustainably** and **reduce carbon**.

**Ten things** you can do to make your garden more sustainable and ready for a changing climate.

Join us at: [climateactionfife.org.uk](https://climateactionfife.org.uk)



- **Fife** is already experiencing hotter, dryer summers and warmer wetter winters than 20 years ago.
- Ways to save water in our gardens **will become more important**.
- **Increased severity and frequency** of extreme weather events will impact our gardens.
- The types and varieties of food crops we grow in our gardens **will have to change**.
- There are over **150,000 gardens in Fife** – we can all make a difference.

**Climate Action Fife** recommends **10 ways** you can make your garden more climate friendly and ready to face Fife's changing climate.

## Plant a tree

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- Planting a tree will cut your garden's carbon footprint by absorbing carbon from the atmosphere and locking it away for decades - the best action to take in your garden to fight climate change.
- Trees will provide shade and reduce water loss from summer heat and help reduce flooding.
- Trees provide an important habitat for wildlife and boost biodiversity.
- Fruit or nut trees provide a free source of food for you and for wildlife.
- Buy locally grown trees that suit Fife's climate to keep your carbon footprint low.

## 2

## Make your own compost

- Making your own compost at home cuts carbon emissions.
- Your kitchen and garden waste will not need to be transported to Council sites.
- You won't need to buy commercial compost, which is bagged in plastic and involves transport.
- Your own compost is free and reduces the need for commercial fertilisers.
- No valuable organic matter leaves your garden and your own compost will boost soil fertility and health.
- Adding organic matter to your soil and pots will improve resilience to drought.



## Avoid peat based composts

## 3



- UK gardeners use 35 million bags of compost each year and around 90% contains peat.
- Carbon stored in peat is released when dug up and exposed to air.
- Peatlands store up to 10 times as much carbon per hectare than any other ecosystems.
- Natural peatland habitats and wildlife are under threat. In Fife species such as the large heath butterfly only live in our peatlands.
- Buy peat-free compost or make your own compost.
- Buy plants grown in peat-free compost.
- Ask for peat-free plants and peat-free compost in local garden centres to encourage more places to stock peat-free products.

## Saving water in your garden

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- Every litre of mains water you use adds to your carbon footprint.
- Collect and store rainwater in butts or tanks and water early or late in the day around plant roots.
- Switch from a hose pipe to a watering can.
- Plant drought resistant species.
- Divert excess rainwater into a bog garden or pond.
- Manage your pond to minimise disturbance which can release methane.
- Plant ground cover and use mulches to keep moisture in the soil and to reduce run-off.
- Avoid paving over front gardens and driveways, which can lead to flooding.

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## Plant perennials

- Perennial plants will grow for many years and won't need replacing.
- Reducing the number of annuals you plant reduces pots, compost, transport and water.
- Trees and shrubs absorb more carbon than annuals.
- Perennial plants provide valuable habitats for wildlife.
- Hedges and shrubs provide shelter and reduce wind speeds.
- Perennial food crops can supplement or replace annual crops.



## Reduce, reuse and recycle in your garden

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- Avoid single use plastics.
- Reduce the use of plastics by buying bare root plants.
- Reuse pots as many times as you can before recycling them.
- Reuse other containers for growing plants.
- Maintain tools and repair them rather than buying new ones.
- If you are replacing power tools consider electric or human powered options instead of petrol.
- Save seeds from flowers and vegetable crops.
- Propagate new plants from cuttings.

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## Grow your own fruit, vegetables and cut flowers

- Growing food at home and eating seasonal produce cuts down on food miles.
- Home grown food means no packaging.
- Tree crops such as apples, pears and plums will all grow well in Fife and provide free fruit for many years.
- Grow cut flowers at home or buy locally grown flowers – they have no packaging and no carbon footprint from transport.
- Home-grown fruit, vegetables and flowers need less heating, watering and refrigeration than commercial crops.



## Boost biodiversity

8



- Nature and biodiversity are vulnerable to climate change. Creating new habitats and protecting those we have can help resilience.
- Avoid pesticides and herbicides which reduce biodiversity.
- Use natural methods of pest control.
- Plant fruit and berry bearing trees and shrubs.
- Create a pond or bog garden.
- Allow part of your lawn to grow long.
- Plant for pollinators - provide nectar sources and leave plants like nettles and dandelions that act as caterpillar food plants.

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## Keep your soil healthy

- Soils act as a carbon sink (over 80% of the carbon in your garden is in the soil) - keep carbon locked up in the soil by adopting no-dig cultivation.
- Boost fertility with organic manures, home compost, seaweed or other mulches.
- Improve soil structure with organic matter.
- Look after the soil's bacteria, fungi and animals by minimising disruption and applying organic matter.
- Mulch with organic matter to lock in moisture and to deter weeds.
- Grow green manures and groundcover plants to protect the soil surface and reduce flooding.
- Reduce soil compaction and avoid trampling the soil.





- Avoid concrete slabs and swap for other materials.
- Try bark chippings instead of gravel for paths.
- Choose local stone for patios and walls.
- Lift some slabs and replace with grass or flowering plants.
- Buy tools, garden furniture and equipment that avoid plastics and that will last for many years.
- Use untreated wood to build raised beds and planters for food growing.
- Avoid artificial grass - real grass absorbs carbon, reduces surface water run-off and is a valuable habitat.





**Climate Action Fife** is a Fife-wide partnership project, bringing together individuals, communities, local government and businesses to tackle the climate emergency and make Fife a greener and fairer place to live.

The project is funded by **The National Lottery Community Fund's Climate Action Fund**, which enables people and communities to take the lead in tackling the climate emergency.



For more information about making your garden climate-friendly contact:

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Photography by Gillian Fyfe.