



trellis
SUPPORTING HEALTH
THROUGH HORTICULTURE

Press Release: 25 November 2019

New Book Guides Gardeners Through Plastics Maze

Plastic-free Gardening by Fiona Thackeray

Tackling the use of plastics in gardens is a thorny issue but now a new book plots a path through the confusion, highlighting progress, revealing where problems lie and giving gardeners guidance and a wealth of practical ideas on how to reduce reliance on un-recyclable materials.

'Plastic-free Gardening' is the first ever guide of its kind, showing gardeners a way to cut back on plastics.

Written by Fiona Thackeray, Head of Operations with Trellis, Scotland's therapeutic gardening charity, it includes tips and techniques on how to reduce or eradicate plastics as well as giving lists of stockists and suppliers for containers and equipment made from alternative materials.

It also provides up-to-date information on which plastics can and can't be recycled and how the gardening industry and local authorities, which handle kerb-side collections are responding to the challenge.

It's a timely message for anyone who has ditched supermarket shopping bags and faithfully recycles drinks bottles and milk cartons, but who has been overwhelmed by the tide of containers, plant labels, tools and compost sacks that seem to be an inevitable part of gardening.

"These are changing times and progress is being made towards replacing and recycling the plastics involved in gardening, but there is no one, clear answer to the problem," says Fiona.

Plastics have invaded every corner of the garden, and it's not just pots - from the linings of foil seed packets to outdoor clothing, packaging for plant foods and fertilisers and in crop-protection materials such as fleece, cloches and polytunnels - plastics proliferate.

So in order to find out what can be done to meet the problem head-on, Fiona talked with scientists and leading experts in the field about what's being done to solve the issue and what new materials are coming on stream that will replace the plastics used in gardening.

“In writing the book I didn’t want to make gardeners feel guilty about their choices, but instead give them the best information possible on how they could find alternative ways of avoiding or reducing plastics,” says Fiona.

Her own commitment to reducing plastics was given added impetus in 2014 when, on a beach in São Paulo State in Brazil, she found a loggerhead turtle being pecked by vultures and dying of plastics ingestion.

Since then she has done all she can to reduce the amount of plastics in her own life.

“Some of these are small steps, like replacing plastic plant pots and the disposable cups we use at Trellis events to ones without a plastic lining, but we shouldn’t underestimate the power that lies in lots of people making one, small change.”

Fiona’s tips for reducing plastics in the garden:

- Switch to pots made from cornstarch, rice husks, bamboo, seaweed or some of the alternative materials that are now becoming available.
- When replacing garden tools choose those with wooden handles.
- Consider changing what you grow for plants and crops that don’t need protection from fleece or other plastic products.
- Opt for wooden garden furniture and storage and not synthetic alternatives.
- Make your own fertiliser from seaweed, comfrey or nettles.

ENDS

Plastic-free Gardening is published on 3 December by Trellis Books, £11.99

For more information, review copies and interviews contact:

Agnes Stevenson

agnes.c.stevenson@gmail.com

07766 742412

Editors’ notes:

Fiona Thackeray is the Head of Operations at Trellis, the therapeutic gardening charity for Scotland. She has worked in therapeutic gardening for 25 years, in the UK and overseas. In 2019 she received the Dr Andrew Duncan Medal for distinguished service to horticulture. She also writes novels and short fiction, for which she has won awards.

Find out more at www.fionathackeray.wordpress.com

Trellis supports therapeutic gardening groups, promotes gardening for wellbeing and helps people set up and develop programmes to share the powerful health benefits of gardening in hospitals, care homes, schools, prisons, hospices and community plots.