

Pesticide Policy

We want to do the right thing. When it comes to chemicals in the garden that means two things. One, having the right product and the right advice to solve our customer's problems and two, reducing our impact on the environment by helping our customers make eco-friendly choices.

By introducing a traffic light system for pesticides we are able to tell every shopper how 'good' or potentially harmful a product is thought to be.

As we constantly learn about protecting wildlife and the environment we make sure that all of our staff are educated so they can share the knowledge with our customers.

We keep watch. Our team are always aware of recent articles regarding invasive diseases such as the recent one to hit ash trees and similarly articles about advances in horticulture regarding the many challenges that growing plants can pose. These are not always positive advances – sometimes the 'advance' is the discovery that a product or technique has been discovered to do more harm than good. Recent news stories about neonicotinoid based products are a good example of this.

Our thoughts on Neonicotinoids. This group of chemicals may be having an impact on the populations of honeybees across the world. They are commonly used in systemic pesticides which are well known and heavily marketed. As long as we continue to stock these products on our shelves we will have customers who believe that these are the best products for their problem arriving through our doors. Once we have them in store we have an opportunity to discuss alternative control methods and more environmentally sensitive ways of solving their gardening challenge. If we stop offering this large group of products on our shelves we will lose the opportunity to educate this customer group who will seek their chosen product at other, less wildlife aware stockists.

Three of these neonicotinoid chemicals (imidacloprid, thiamethoxam and clothianidin) are currently being reviewed by the **European Food Standards Authority** (EFSA) which highlights the degree of possible risk they pose to pollinating insects.

As our work with **Dorset and Somerset Wildlife Trusts** will attest, The Gardens Group has a fantastic regard for the natural environment. This has led us to the decision to stop selling any products that contain these three chemicals until the outcome of the review is known.

How we can help

As well as supporting customers with advice within the garden centre, our team of speakers give talks to gardening clubs and societies across a large area. Among the *** titles are many topical opportunities to share our knowledge, including *Pest & Disease Control, Organic Gardening, Pest & Disease Control for Organic Gardeners, Wildlife Friendly Gardening* and *Gardening For Climate Change*.