



CASTLE | BRIMSMORE | POUNDBURY

Approach to garden chemicals

In line with our commitment to the environment

The founders of The Gardens Group Mike and Louise Burks are committed to gardening having a positive impact on the environment. This isn't something that has been newly arrived at, indeed Mike was brought up on an organic market garden that changed into a retail nursery and then garden centre.

They demonstrate their principles by encouraging gardeners to work with the environment and wildlife through their support of Dorset Wildlife Trust's Wildlife Gardening competition now in its 10th year. Mike and Louise's own garden has been awarded a plaque by DWT.

In addition to this The Gardens Group speaks regularly to some 125 garden clubs and other organisations on various gardening subjects including "Gardening for Wildlife", "Organic Pest Control", "Companion Planting", "Plants for Bees and Butterflies", "Gardening with Climate Change" all of which are very popular.

The Gardens Group works closely with many organisations such as schools, local communities who enter Britain in Bloom, Friends of railway stations and other community groups.

One of the team, Steve Fry, regularly carries out moth surveys and has done for many years sharing information via our website. He has also taken this out to schools.

We encourage wildlife in our centres and the bird populations are extensive and commented on by customers.

We have been concerned recently to read of the evidence that neo-nicotinoid chemicals that are potentially harmful to wildlife have been found in plants in the UK. As a result we are currently contacting all of our growers to determine the chemical controls that each is using. Early results are encouraging.

Our garden centres stock an extensive range of organic and biological controls but also chemical controls too. Not to do so may have the opposite effect to what is needed to improve the environment in that some gardeners may stop gardening altogether if they feel that they have no controls available to them. We strive instead to get a dialogue going with those gardeners rather than to ostracise them.

Gardening and gardeners should be all about improving the environment. It used to be that gardening for wildlife and believing in climate change were minority view points. The good news is that they are now mainstream and we are pleased to have been a part of that. There is, though, still much to do.