



## RHS Sustainable Gardening Award – Criteria, 2024

Gardens are an increasingly important part of the natural environment. Gardening for the environment can all help tackle both the causes and effects of climate change. By making community gardens as green as possible, groups can reduce their own carbon footprint and provide vital habitats for wildlife.

This award recognises the commitment of a group to sustainable environmental practices in horticulture and supporting wildlife through gardening.

### Assessment Key

Each entry assessed on its own merits, with no medal levels awarded. The scores are to help each Region/Nation select a winner for each category, and to help the RHS select an overall winner from across the UK. The scores are not be shared with groups.

Please score against each aspect, with a mark out of 5, using the following key.	
• 0	Criteria not met;
• 2	Criteria somewhat met, but with significant scope for improvement;
• 3	Criteria well met, but with some scope for improvement;
• 4	Criteria very well met, with only small scope for improvement;
• 5	Criteria fully met.
Please note any examples given are for illustration only, and groups might meet the criteria in many other ways.	

### Sustainable Gardening Criteria and Score Card

<b>Section A: Gardening for the Environment – 40% of marks, out of 20</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating and maintaining gardens using long-term planting, such as trees and perennial plants, where appropriate. Considering the sustainable sourcing of plants, such as growing from seed or sourcing from local nurseries with good sustainability credentials. Planting that is suited to position, soil, climate, etc.</li> </ul>	/5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selecting an abundant and diverse range of plant-species to attract a wide range of biodiversity, e.g. choosing a range of shapes, colours, varieties, sizes and fragrances that flower and fruit throughout the year.</li> </ul>	/5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying appropriate garden design strategies to benefit the environment, such as building rain-gardens, or laying permeable paving to reduce the risk of flooding, planting a hedge instead of a fence to improve air quality, or using green walls or roofs, etc.</li> </ul>	/5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working to protect nature through all activities, rather than just in a specific project or area.</li> </ul>	/5
<b><u>Section Total</u></b>	<b><u>    /20</u></b>



<b>Section B: Demonstrating Best Practice – 30% of marks, out of 15</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrating best sustainable practices, such as repurposing and reusing resources, limiting or avoiding use of virgin plastic, reducing use of portable water and collecting rain water for irrigation, using appropriate homemade or locally sourced composts and mulching materials, eliminating the use of peat, hedge trimming outside of bird nesting season, etc.</li> </ul>	/5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being sensitive to the environment, prioritising the least impactful measures when dealing with any ‘pest’, ‘disease’ or ‘weed’ control and avoiding weed killers and other pesticides wherever possible.</li> </ul>	/5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring and evaluating progress in improving the environment, supporting nature and biodiversity or tackling climate change issues, e.g. through a specific species survey or audit.</li> </ul>	/5
<b><u>Section Total</u></b>	<b><u>/15</u></b>
<b>Section C: Championing Sustainability – 30% of marks, out of 15</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Championing gardening for the environment and raising awareness of the group’s actions, e.g. through talks and events, signage and interpretation, etc.</li> </ul>	/5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling the wider community to be participate in managing or caring for the local environment, e.g. through environmental action days.</li> </ul>	/5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating learning opportunities for the wider community, e.g. engaging with schools, holding open days, talks, guided walks, sharing skills and knowledge, etc.</li> </ul>	/5
<b><u>Section Total</u></b>	<b><u>/15</u></b>
<b><u>Overall Total</u></b>	<b><u>/50</u></b>

<b>Assessor’s Report</b>	<b>Between 150 – 600 words</b>



<b>Visual Evidence</b>
Please submit this entry, along with up to 4 labelled images, or a link to a video of up to 2 minutes. Please see RHS guidance around photos and permissions. If including a video link, please add here: