

RECYCLING FOR ORGANIC FOOD-GROWING

Recycling can often be limited in a domestic context by the space available. Gardening and allotmenting can provide many opportunities for extensive recycling and re-using a wide range of resources, from materials which will form permanent features [such as renovated buildings], through items which will be useful for several years [such as repaired tools], to matter which can be continuously collected and consumed [such as compostables].

The most important criteria used for assessing all these resources is their suitability and safety for inclusion in food-growing systems. The defining characteristic of organic gardening and horticulture is an understanding of the many, diverse cycles involved in plant growth and the ability to harness them to improve the growing system. Remember that plants provide most of us with the only means of accessing and storing the abundant, renewable energy of the sun, the ultimate sustainable power sources.

WHAT TO USE 1. Organic matter [rottable] short-term break-down [6 months -1 year]

- ˘ Manures Compostables Kitchen Waste Crop Residues/ Haulm
- ˘ Loam [Turf/ Weed Roots/Twigs/ Small Branches]
- ˘ Leaves - Deciduous, Shed Annually Or Evergreen/ Coniferous
- ˘ Nettles/ Comfrey/ Bracken
- ˘ Annual Green Manures Perennial Green Manures Nitrogen Fixers
- ˘ Carbon Sources Newspaper/ Cardboard Sawdust/ Woodchip/ Shreddings
- ˘ Lime e.g. Plaster
- ˘ Carpets/ Underlay Clothing Hair
- ˘ Urine Faeces Humanure Menses Nailclippings Etc.

2. Consumables items which will last for a few years.

Second-hand and repaired tools and equipment Scaffolding planks Wooden gutters

3. Permanent and Semi-permanent materials which will endure indefinitely.

Bricks Stone Concrete slabs Glass panes in frames [reinforced] glass fibre

Sources of materials.

1. On-site cycles - Loam Compost Leafmould Liquid feeds Mulches Livestock Wildlife

2. Locally available [up to 1 km] Domestic/ skips / building sites / industrial / shops/ retail / institutional / municipal maintenance

3. Transport to site [5-10 km] Landfill intercept / dumpsites / council special collections/ secondhand / existing recycling projects /

4. Imports Seaweed Abattoir wastes

Contaminants: avoid / remove / dispose / replace

1. Minor problems [inert] . Minimise or use responsibly. Substitute superior materials as and when possible. E.g Glass Metals

- s Plastics - deteriorate on exposure to ultra-violet light. Brittle and fracture.
- s Sheeting / sacks 2-4 years, pots & containers 4-8 yrs,
- s Paint [esp.>25 years old - lead]
- s Composite wood / woodchip release formaldehyde gas and leachate
- s Painted wood [deteriorating / fragmenting]
- s Tyres [roof-] Slates

2. Major. Avoid completely

- r Chemicals old [and new] horticultural preparations
- r Some previously obligatory now illegal e.g. organophosphates
- r Carcinogens / Mutagens / Synthetics / man-made fibres
- r Asbestos: flaky blue, insulating.
- r Most dangerous when small particles airborne [dry and fragmented]
- r Sources of heavy metals: lead from traffic pollution
- r Mercury from broken thermometers / calomel [clubroot treatment]
- r Cadmium in bright red and yellow dyes [in carpets] and inks [colour print]

A SCAVENGER'S GUIDE TO RECYCLODYNAMIC GARDENING

Use/ function If you remember everything that might have some use in your garden, you can easily source many of the materials you will need.

Suitable materials

Fertilisers

- q Nitrogen Urea/ Urine/ Feathers / Nettles / Manures / Spent Hops
- q Potassium Woodash [Especially Small Wood / Branches up to 1" Dia.
- q Phosphate Bonemeal / Basic Slag / Bracken
- q Calcium Chalk / Limestone / Gypsum Plaster / Calcified Seaweed
- q Magnesium Dolomite / Magnesian Limestone
- q Trace Elements Seaweed
- q Compost Balance of green + brown materials
- q Carbon Paper / Cardboard / Sawdust / Woodchip
- q Balanced C:N Manures / Vegetable Wastes
- q Heap Structures Pallets / Marine Plyboard
- q Covers Carpets / Underlay / Plastic Sheeting
- q Leafmould Deciduous Trees
- q Loam Turf / Perennial Weeds
- q Mulches Raw / Uncomposted Matter
- q Bed Edging Scaffolding Planks / Wooden Guttering / Roof Joists
- q Drainage Broken Glass / Pottery / Stones
- q Water Containers Baths / Domestic Water Tanks / Industrial Drums
- q Watering Drainage Pipes
- q Irrigation Thin Piping / Pub Tubing
- q Liquid Containers Carboys / Bottles / Water Tanks
- q Slug Pubs Beer Leftovers / Slops / Sediment
- q Slug Traps Floorboards / Planks
- q Pots Yoghurt Pots / Laminated Drink Containers
- q Seedtrays Food Containers
- q Labels Plastic Sheeting / Wood Laths
- q Building Materials Bricks / Cement / Plaster
- q Roofing Felt Genuine Linoleum
- q Supports Canes / Smallwood
- q Windbreaks Netting
- q Shading Net Curtain / Blinds / Whitewash
- q Thermal Mass Radiators
- q Seating Chairs / Cushions
- q Comfort Towels / Blankets
- q Heating Agas / Rayburns
- q Adornments Windmills / Windchimes / Bells