

10 Minutes For The Planet

Love your garden without using pesticides ©

by Sarah Heath and Catherine Balter-Kendall

Stressed syllables are underlined and in **bold**.*

A Happy Garden

Hello! I'm Sarah Heath and you're listening to 10 Minutes for the Planet on EnglishWaves.

As spring evolves into summer, **green-fingered** members of the **community** are hard at work in gardens across the country as Mother Nature **bestows** rain and sunshine in equal measure to a point where plants – and **weeds** – seem to grow in front of your eyes. The **pleasure** of the **appearance** of new life is equalled by that of **toiling** in the fresh air with the **knowledge** that nature's gifts will soon be your reward, whether a beautifully flowering plant or freshly grown **vegetables**.

For the **environmentally aware**, there are lots of ways to **tend to** the garden which can achieve a glorious result with the added benefit of being kind to **nature**. The stresses of **pollution** and use of **chemicals** can be somewhat **counterbalanced** by a number of **eco-friendly** gardening methods and creative recycling.

Monsanto's **infamous** weedkiller, RoundUp, has **made headline news** for a number of years and many gardeners have since **taken heed of** the **message** that its active **ingredient**, glyphosate, can **cause harm to** flora and fauna which are not **deliberately targeted** but **fall victim** nevertheless. More **natural** alternatives are cheaper and largely made from items found at home.

But **prevention is better than cure**, so taking **measures** to stop the **dreaded** weeds growing in the first place can save time later on. Spreading mulch on **flower beds** can help **prevent** weeds **from** growing by blocking their **source** of light. Mulch is usually made from **shredded** leaves, **wood chippings**, old **newspaper**, **compost** or even **grass clippings** as it decomposes – a **win-win**!



green-fingered (adj.) good at growing plants
to bestow (vb.) to give
weed (n.) a wild plant growing where it is not wanted
to toil (vb.) to work
environmentally aware (exp.) understanding and caring about ecological issues
to tend to (phrasal vb.) to look after
counterbalanced (adj.) compensated for
eco-friendly (adj.) ecological
to make headline news (exp.) to be a top story in the news
to take heed of (exp.) to listen and pay attention to
to cause harm to (exp.) to damage
to target (vb.) to have as an objective
to fall victim to (exp.) to die
prevention is better than cure (exp.) it's better to prevent the problem in the first place
dreaded (adj.) regarded with fear or apprehension
to prevent sth. from doing sth. (exp.) to stop sby. from doing sth.
shredded (adj.) cut into rough pieces
wood chippings (n.) very small pieces of wood
compost (n.) decayed organic material used to fertilize plants.
grass clippings (n.) grass that has been cut
soil (n.) layer of earth in which plants grow
win-win (n.) a situation in which both sides gain sth.

Adding **edging** to **borders** with natural **materials** such as wood can prevent weeds from spreading to **unwanted** areas and planting **ground cover** which will take up space will also push unwanted plants out. **Mowing the lawn** earlier on in the spring can prevent the **onslaught** of weeds although keeping the grass a little bit on the long side will **ensure** weeds will **struggle to get through**. Some people employ the use of nature's four-footed **lawnmower** and keep **goats**!

But if weeds do, inevitably **poke** their heads **through**, vinegar is an efficient natural **weedkiller** as it contains acetic acid. A **horticultural** version has a higher 20% acetic acid content and is even more potent. Boiling water also **does the trick**. But don't be too severe on all weeds – many of them are **edible**! Dandelion leaves are great in a salad; Chickweed is full of **vitamins** and **minerals** and Red Clover flowers can be eaten as they are or used to make tea.

Growing your own food is a big **tick in the box** for the **environment** but for fruit and **vegetable gardeners**, **bugs** can be enemy number one! However, there are ways to remove pests from your **veggie patch** without the need for **noxious** substances. The Treehugger website suggests a home-made soap spray **insecticide** which is very effective at killing mites and aphids without being any danger to humans. Add **raw** garlic or chilli to the mix and it **repels** bugs from the **outset**.

A method called **companion planting** is a **tried-and-tested** way to repel pests and can also be mutually **beneficial**. French marigolds are known to **give off** a strong odour which is disliked by greenfly and blackfly thus **discouraging** them from invading tomato plants. Carrots and leeks make an efficient team: leeks **ward off** carrot fly and carrots, leek moth. And planting horseradish near potatoes will increase **disease** resistance.

Native wildflowers in areas of the garden will provide bees and butterflies with a source of pollen. Bees in particular love lavender and thyme.

For garden **features**, **sustainability** can be achieved either through the use of recycled materials like old bricks or clay pipes and avoiding the use of cement, whose **production accounts for** 5% of global carbon **emissions**. **Hedges** make homes for birds and insects where walls cannot and berry-producing plants such as hawthorn will **encourage** wildlife into the garden.

edging (n.) sth. forming an edge
borders (n.) forming an edge along sth.

unwanted (adj.) undesired
ground cover (n.) plants growing to protect from erosion and inhibit weeds

to mow the lawn (exp.) to cut an area of grassland

onslaught (n.) destructive attack
to ensure (vb.) to make sure that
to struggle (vb.) to make a great effort

to get through (phrasal vb.) to penetrate

lawnmower (n.) a machine that cuts the grass

goat (n.) an animal similar to a sheep that often lives in mountainous regions

to poke through (phrasal vb.) to penetrate and appear

weedkiller (n.) a product that kills weeds

to do the trick (exp.) to work, to be successful in doing sth.

edible (adj.) can be eaten

to tick the box (exp.) a positive thing sth. which contributes to the success

bug (n.) an insect

veggie patch (n.) an area where vegetables are grown

raw (adj.) not cooked

outset (n.) the beginning

companion planting (exp.) planting two types of plants together, which are mutually compatible, benefitting from each other's qualities

tried-and-tested (adj.) a method which has been proven to be effective

to give off (phrasal vb.) to emit

to ward off (phrasal vb.) to keep away or at a distance

To create a more economical use of water, buying a **rainwater butt** is a wise **investment** and one which can be connected to a watering system which will also save time. Making compost from green waste is another time and money **economy**. Compost can be made from leaves, grass cuttings, old newspapers and egg boxes, tea bags and vegetable peelings and even the contents of your Hoover bag!

As the saying goes, however, one man's weed is another man's flower, so being more **open-minded** over those **determined** weeds **poping up** in unwanted places, is a show of Nature's **strength** and therefore maybe to be more appreciated. For example, the Japanese love moss which is used for **landscaping** their gardens **whereas** in America, it is **wiped out** as an unwanted intruder.

Tune in next week for more stories on the environment, here on English Waves.

to account for (phrasal vb.) to make up, to represent

hedge (n.) bushes growing closely to form a boundary

rainwater butt (n.) large container for catching rainwater

as the saying goes (exp.) according to the proverb

open-minded (adj.) having a receptive attitude

to pop up (phrasal vb.) to appear

landscaping (n.) designing

to wipe out (phrasal vb.) to get rid of, to eradicate

***Tip!**

Tricky words to pronounce:

knowledge, message, encourage (the final syllable is pronounced "idge" like in the word "bridge")

nature, horticultural, feature (the "tur(e) is pronounced "tch" as in "Tchad) "pleasure" and "measure" rhyme, with a short "e" as in "plenty" or "met")

The following words have silent letters:

(k)nowledge, veg(e)tables, gard(e)ners c(h)emicals, delib(e)rately, so(u)rce,

In the word "**strength**" the "g" is pronounced like a "k" (strenkth)