

SUSTAINABLE GARDENING DURING A HOSE PIPE BAN



A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THRIVING THROUGH DROUGHT AND RESTRICTIONS

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As the Doncaster Green Party, we believe in empowering communities to protect nature while nurturing their own green spaces. This guide offers simple, sustainable gardening practices to help you thrive during a hosepipe ban, without harming the planet. From using greywater to choosing drought-resistant plants, these tips reflect our commitment to climate resilience, biodiversity, and local action. Together, we can grow gardens that are not only beautiful, but part of the solution.

UNDERSTANDING THE HOSE PIPE BAN

Hose pipe bans are introduced during periods of drought to reduce water usage. Under a ban, you can't use a hose pipe to water gardens, clean vehicles, or fill paddling pools. But that doesn't mean your garden must suffer, just adapt.

1

COLLECT AND REUSE WATER WISELY

Install water butts under downpipes to collect rainwater from roofs and sheds. Link multiple butts together for extra capacity.

2

CHOOSE DROUGHT-RESISTANT PLANTS

Select plants that naturally require less water such as lavender, sedum, rosemary, and native species adapted to your local climate.

3

WATER SMARTLY

Use a watering can or drip irrigation from a water butt. Water early morning or late evening, focusing on the base of plants.

COLLECT AND REUSE WATER WISELY



INSTALL WATER BUTTS

- Place water butts under downpipes to collect rainwater from roofs and sheds
- multiple butts together for extra capacity

GREYWATER IS GOLD

Reuse water from:

- Washing up (use eco-friendly soap)
- Baths and showers (bucket it)
- Rinsing vegetables (catch it in a bowl)

Avoid greywater with bleach or harsh detergents.

WASHING MACHINE TIP

Only use rinse cycle water from eco detergents on ornamentals not edibles.

CHOOSE DROUGHT-RESISTANT PLANTS & MULCHING

GREAT CHOICES FOR DROUGHT-RESISTANT PLANTS

- Lavender
- Sedum
- Rosemary
- Echinacea
- Thyme
- Verbena
- Ornamental grasses

Native Plants Rule - They're better adapted to your local climate and need less watering.



MULCH, MULCH, MULCH

Mulching is a game changer:

- Retains moisture
- Reduces weed growth
- Improves soil structure

Try:

- Bark chips
- Straw
- Grass clippings (dry first)
- Homemade compost

Apply 5–10cm around plants, but keep away from stems.

WATER SMARTLY & IMPROVE SOIL



WATER SMARTLY

Even during a ban, you can:

- Use a watering can
- Use drip irrigation from a water butt (check local rules)

Top watering tips:

- Water early morning or late evening
- Water base of plants, not foliage
- Prioritise young plants and edibles
- Use 'companion pots' (plants sharing pots to reduce evaporation)

IMPROVE SOIL FOR WATER RETENTION

Healthy soil holds more water. Add:

- Organic matter: compost, leaf mould, well-rotted manure
- Biochar or coir to increase sponge-like capacity
- Clay breakers (for clay soil) or vermiculite (for sandy soils)



REPURPOSE ITEMS & REWILD YOUR GARDEN

REPURPOSE EVERYDAY ITEMS

Get creative with reuse:

- Save rinse water in old milk cartons
- Use a jug to water pots
- Reuse pet drinking water
- Cut bottom off bottles to create deep root watering spikes

REWILD PARTS OF YOUR GARDEN

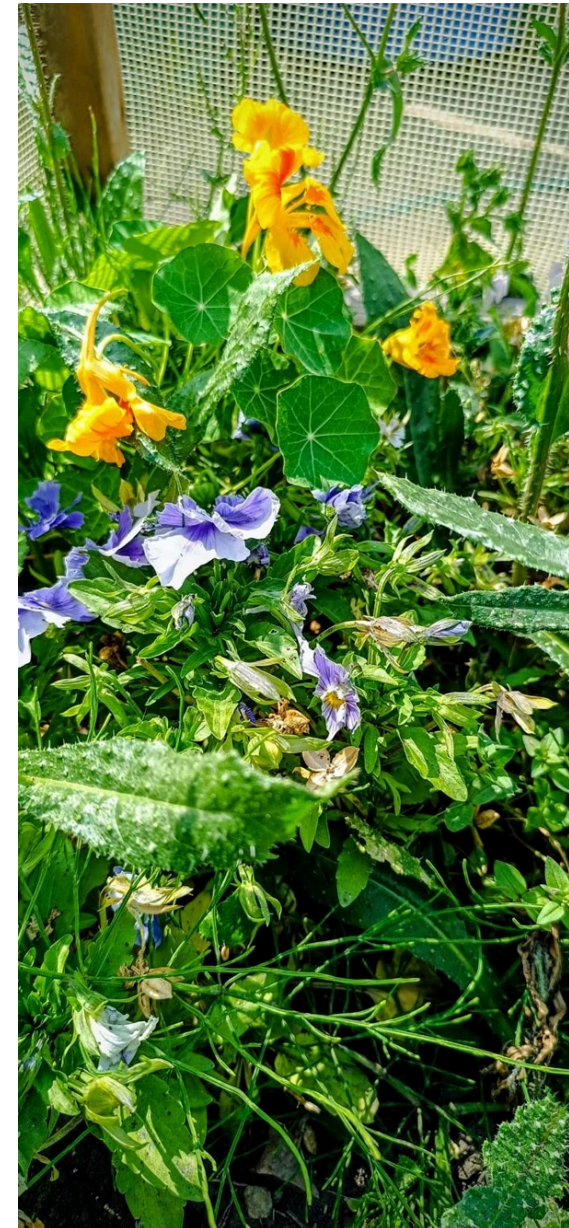
Let some areas grow wild:

- Reduces water demand
- Encourages biodiversity
- Creates pollinator havens

Use native wildflower mixes and minimal mowing.

RETHINK YOUR LAWN

Grass uses a lot of water.



LET IT GO BROWN

It will bounce back when rain returns

CONVERT PARTS INTO WILDFLOWER MEADOW

Beautiful, low-maintenance and wildlife-friendly

CREATE GRAVEL AND HERB BEDS

Drought-resistant and practical for cooking

PLANT GROUND COVER

Try creeping thyme or chamomile instead of grass

SUPPORT WILDLIFE & LONG-TERM HABITS

SUPPORT WILDLIFE

Dry spells are tough for wildlife too.

Provide:

- Shallow water dishes with pebbles
- Shade with plants or logs
- Leaf piles and undisturbed areas

MAKE IT A LONG-TERM HABIT

Sustainable gardening is a long-term mindset:

- Design gardens with water in mind
- Embrace natural rhythms
- Celebrate resilience over perfection

TOOLS THAT HELP

Tool	Use	Sustainable Tip
Watering can	Targeted watering	Use rinse water
Drip line from butt	Slow-release watering	Uses rainwater only
Mulch fork	Easy spreading	Mulch twice a year
Soil moisture meter	Avoid overwatering	Simple and cheap
Rain gauge	Measure rainfall	Adjust watering accordingly

CHECKLIST FOR SUSTAINABLE GARDENING DURING A HOSE PIPE BAN

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SET UP A WATER BUTT

Collect rainwater from roofs and sheds to use during dry periods

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SWITCH TO A WATERING CAN

Target water exactly where it's needed to reduce waste

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REUSE GREYWATER SAFELY

Collect water from washing up, baths and showers

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MULCH BEDS AND POTS

Retain moisture and improve soil structure

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WATER EARLY OR LATE

Reduce evaporation by avoiding midday heat

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CHOOSE DROUGHT-TOLERANT PLANTS

Select species that naturally need less water

☐

IMPROVE YOUR SOIL

Add organic matter to increase water retention

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RETHINK YOUR LAWN

Consider alternatives to water-hungry grass

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CREATE A WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY ZONE

Help local fauna survive drought conditions

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SHARE WATER-SAVING TIPS WITH NEIGHBOURS

Spread sustainable practices throughout your community



[photography by Piotr Szymoniak]