

## Climate Change Gardening

Newsletter #3 - August 2025



*Welcome to our latest newsletter!*

As we write, we are now enduring the fourth heatwave this year, with temperatures set to peak well above 30C across the country. As you are all too aware this is coupled with very little rain, especially in some areas including East Anglia, where we are based.

Within this newsletter, we report on how our charity continues to raise awareness of how gardeners can help to mitigate the impacts of climate change and increase biodiversity.

### **Our year so far**

So far, within Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex and beyond, we have given 17 talks and taken our stand to 9 events and spoken directly to over 1000 people. We have also extended our reach by giving online talks to community groups across the country. We have another 15 live events scheduled up to the end of the year, with several bookings already made for 2026. In addition, our website continues to attract over 2000 new visitors a year, and we have distributed several thousand of our leaflets.



We are engaging with a wide range of groups including gardening clubs, local climate action groups, library groups, U3A and community nature and wildlife organisations.

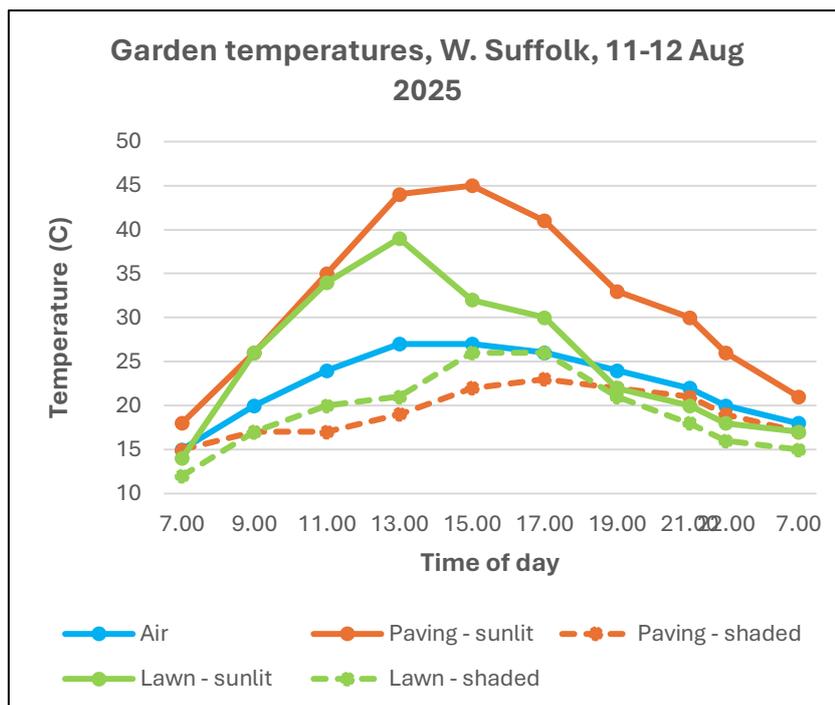
Other initiatives have included running a workshop for residents of the new housing development in Marleigh Park, Cambridge, supported by South Cambs. District Council. We developed practical solutions for creating greener, more wildlife-friendly spaces within the new housing development. We have also established a connection with some of the College gardeners from the University of Cambridge which we hope to develop further into the future.

In July, during another of the heatwaves, we attended the first Ely Cathedral Homes and Gardens Summer Event, a very lively and inspiring few days with some wonderful designer gardens and several plant nurseries, the latter tucked into the shade of the Cathedral walls. As well as our stand, Climate Change Gardening was also invited to present talks, alongside other speakers, all focused on gardening and wildlife.

Overall, our discussions with visitors to our stand demonstrate an ever-increasing concern about the climate emergency. There is a realisation that extreme weather such as the current heatwaves is not going to go away, and we not only have to adapt, but also to mitigate

### Heat wave after heat wave

The cycle of heat wave after heat wave this summer has moved the national narrative on from ‘Phew, what a scorcher!’, to a more serious look at the issue. There is a growing realisation that most homes, especially in urban areas, are at risk of overheating during heat waves. Heatwaves are not just about wilting plants and uncomfortably hot nights, but are actually a public health issue: [UEL study finds 80% of UK homes overheat in summer | University of East London](#)



At CCG, we have been measuring the temperature of different garden surfaces, during hot weather. Two key findings emerged from the work. This chart of one day’s records, shows that sunlit paved areas become up to 12C hotter than sunlit grass lawns. Secondly, shaded surfaces, irrespective of whether they are lawn or paving, can be as much as 20C cooler, than the equivalent unshaded surfaces.

So, the good news is that gardeners, through their choice of garden surfaces, trees, and use of shading structures such as pergolas, can have a major impact on temperatures around their homes. A recent visitor to our stand, explained how replacing the paved areas on the south-facing side of their home with planting, resulted in a very noticeable and welcome cooling effect indoors. See our website for more information on de-paving, how to create garden shade, and how it can help cool your home: [Creating cooling shade | Garden Climate Change](#)

## Water-butts: Half full or half empty?

A recurrent theme of the conversations with visitors to our stand this year, has been how many water-butts they have, but how little water they have had left. Gardeners are being forced into difficult decisions about which plants to water, and which to abandon. The table below shows why we're all running low on water this year – we've had six consecutive months of below-average rainfall.

	Monthly rainfall (mm) in CB9						
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
30-yr average:	56	45	40	38	48	52	54
2025:	64	31	9	25	21	15	40

The onset of this combination of more winter rain, less summer rain, and hotter weather, is not a surprise. It is now becoming the 'new normal', although of course not every year will be the same. So, how can we keep our gardens attractive and productive, without relying on precious and increasingly restricted mains water? For some gardeners, the answer has been to create a low maintenance dry garden, that requires little watering once established. For others, who prefer a more traditional mix of both ornamental and edible plants, then water, ideally rainwater, is still essential. Fortunately, whichever way you decide to go, we keep our website topped up with useful guidance on both dry planting, and on rainwater harvesting: [Rainwater harvesting and use | Garden Climate Change](#)

## Butterflies are back again!

Hasn't this been a great butterfly year! Especially coming after such a dismal 2024. We have been enjoying the sight of holly blues, small whites, peacocks, commas, gatekeepers and many others, busily feeding on our flowers, fluttering among the long grass on our no-mow lawns, or just basking on sun-lit foliage. As well as our resident butterfly species, the latest news is that the Southern Small White, a butterfly that has been spreading northwards across Europe for some years, has just arrived in the UK for the first time, being seen in Suffolk. This is yet another example of the steady pole-ward drift of more mobile animals, such as birds, butterflies and dragonflies, in response to a warming climate.



The usual way to attract butterflies is to plant flowers that offer plenty of nectar. Non-native species such as *Buddleia* or *Verbena bonariensis* are the obvious ones, although ivy flowers are equally important in late summer. However, it's not just the adult butterflies that need feeding. Even more importantly, their caterpillars need the right habitat and foodplants too. Typically, they prefer native plants, with no-mow lawns providing ideal food for many butterfly caterpillars, while others prefer nettles, vetch or holly. For more detailed information on how you can turn your garden into a butterfly hot spot, visit: [Plant choices | Garden Climate Change](#)

## Forthcoming Climate Change Gardening events

Our confirmed public events, up to the end of 2025, are listed below. However, we will also be involved in additional events over this period, so do please check our website for more up-to-date information. It would be great to meet you

- Sept 6 West Wickham Garden Fair (Village Hall, West Wickham, CB21 4SB). Stand at village fair. 10.30 – 12.30.
- Sept 6 Stansted Community Nature Fair (Quaker Meeting House, Stansted, CM24 8AE). Talk and stand, 13.00 – 16.00  
<https://sustainablestansted.org/events/>.
- Sept 11 Papworth Library (Papworth Everard, CB23 3UY). Talk about climate change gardening. 10.00 – 11.30.
- Sept 12 Ridgewell Garden Society. (Village Hall, Ridgewell, CO9 4SL) Talk to club on climate change gardening - all welcome. 19.00 – 21.00
- Sept 14 Helmingham Autumn Plant Fair (Helmingham Hall, Stowmarket, IP14 6EF). Stand at public plant fair, 10.00 – 16.00.  
[Autumn Plant Fair with Artisan Market | Suffolk | Helmingham Hall Gardens](#)
- Oct 7 Kedington Gardening Club (Kedington Royal British Legion Hall, CB9 7NR) Talk to club about climate change gardening. 19.30 – 21.00.
- Oct 12 Bury St Edmunds Literary Festival (Unitarian Meeting House, Churchgate St, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1RH). Stand, and conversation with authors about climate friendly gardening. 10.30 – 13.00. [www.burylitfest.co.uk](http://www.burylitfest.co.uk)
- Oct 20 West Bergholt Gardeners Association (Orpen Hall, West Bergholt, Colchester, CO6 3BW). Talk to association about climate change gardening. 19.30 – 21.00.
- Oct 28 Gressenhall Garden Club (The Reading Room, Gressenhall, Norfolk NR20 4DT). Talk to club about climate change gardening. 19.30 – 21.00.
- Nov 8 Community Networking Event (Kesgrave War Memorial Centre, Kesgrave, IP5 1JF). Stand, and talk about garden biodiversity.  
[Community Networking Event - Sustainable Suffolk](#)
- Nov 12 Community Networking Event (Bungay, Suffolk). Stand at event.  
[Community Networking Event - Sustainable Suffolk](#)

## **Other news**

For those of you keen to find out more about gardens and biodiversity, this conference at the University of Manchester, in January 2026, is well worth considering; [Wilding Gardens](#)

You can now have your say on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region. The consultation is available here: <https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/lhrs/consultation/> with a link to the survey at the bottom of the page. The consultation ends on Thursday 11 September.

## **Thinking about getting involved with Climate Change Gardening?**

Our Climate Change Gardening charity is growing fast, and we have a lot going on. If you are interested in becoming involved, then please let us know - see below.

## **More information / Contact us**

If you would like more information on any of the above topics, do visit our website [www.climatechangegardening.org](http://www.climatechangegardening.org). If you would like to contact us directly, please use the 'Contact' button on our website. We'd love to hear from you!

More news soon but in the meantime, enjoy the rest of the summer in your garden, and very best wishes from the Climate Change Gardening team!

## **August 2025**

Climate Change Gardening is a registered charity (no. 1208653). We are grateful for the generosity of South Cambridgeshire's Zero Carbon Communities fund, and 101Smart Ltd.

