

# The Shape of British Gardening 2021



# Contents

*Introduction - 3*

*Section 1: A nation of gardeners - 5*

*Section 2: Why we garden - 9*

*Section 3: What's in our garden - 11*

*Section 4: Gardening and the environment - 15*

*Section 5: Gardening advice and inspiration - 19*

*Section 6: Gardening and the pandemic - 21*

*Summary - 23*



# Introduction

In recent years, the face of British gardening has changed. And, in 2020, the arrival of the pandemic meant more people had the time to become green thumbbed than ever before. No longer just the pursuit of an older generation, a younger more urban audience are now discovering the benefits that come from having your own green space to nurture and grow. And much more than just being seen as a means to an end, people are finding joy in the process of gardening too, with many seeing positive effects on both their mental and physical health.

As concern around climate change increases, gardeners are exploring ways to play their part in protecting the environment whether it's through growing their own produce, encouraging biodiversity or being more mindful around pest management and recycling.

In collaboration with Fly Research, Common Sense Gardening has gathered the thoughts and opinions of over 2,000 Brits - digging into their attitudes and behaviours in the garden today and uncovering the trends that will shape gardening in the years ahead. Welcome to The Shape of British Gardening report 2021.



The Common Sense Gardening group are part of the Crop Protection Association with the specific aim of providing information, resources and advice to retailers, media and other stakeholders who sell, write and communicate about maintaining a healthy home garden by tackling weeds, pests and diseases.

FlyResearch is a 21st century, full-service agency, specialising in qualitative & quantitative research. They are fully MRS and ESOMAR compliant and combine the latest research techniques with proven methodologies to deliver successful research analytics.

# 1. A Nation of Gardeners

## Our green space is growing

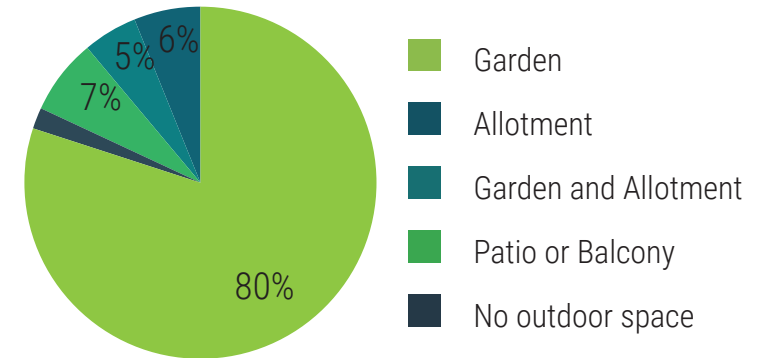
Over 93% of us now have access to an outdoor space in the form of a garden, patio, balcony or allotment.

Whilst suburban and rural gardeners are still popular – nearly a third (28%) of British gardeners now live in urban areas. A rising desire for home-grown produce and a societal push to make our cities greener has meant urban dwellers are more interested in planting and pruning than ever before.

Although 55 and over is still the most popular age for people to pick up their spades and forks, nearly a quarter of British gardeners (24%) are now aged between 18 and 34, demonstrating there is also a growing appetite for gardening in younger audiences.

*“I got an allotment this year and it’s become my baby. It’s so nice having my own patch of green in the city and spending a couple of hours there after work is the perfect way to unwind” - Kate, 20, Bath*

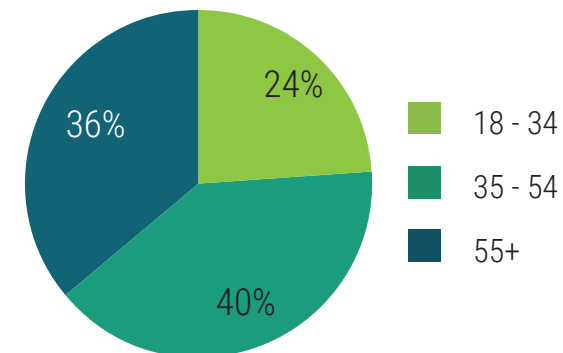
What outdoor space do Brits have access to?



Where do British gardeners live?



How old are they?



## And more Brits than ever are getting their fingers green

Our research shows that Brits haven't just got access to outdoor space - most of us are actively gardening in it too.

69% of people have some form of plants in their outdoor space and 87% of people surveyed engaged in some form of gardening throughout the year.

What's more 40% of us are tending to our plants or flower beds at least once a month. This shows that Brits aren't just the passive owners of outdoor space they are the keepers and creators of gardens.



69%

*Of Brits have some form of plants in their outdoor space*



87%

*Of people surveyed engaged in some sort of gardening throughout the year*



40%

*Of Brits tend to plants or flower beds monthly*




# 2. Why We Garden

## *Gardening is seen as a hobby not a hassle*

When asked why they garden, 85% of all respondents who do at least some gardening activity do so because it is good for their physical or mental well-being. 45% of Brits stated they felt gardening was good for their mental health and over half said it was a source of relaxation. Only 7% of people said they garden purely for maintenance purposes without stating another positive reason

This shows that those engaged in gardening activity aren't viewing it in the same way as other household jobs - they don't see it as a chore. Instead they view gardening as a source of enjoyment and well-being. In an increasingly digital age, Brits are appreciating the benefits of spending time outdoors away from screens and are getting much more out of weeding their flowerbeds than washing the dishes.

 **85%** *Of all respondents state reasons for gardening relating to enhanced mental and physical well-being*

 **7%** *Of people said they garden purely for maintenance purposes*

## Why do Brits garden?



Respondents selected from the list and could chose one or more reason for gardening

# 3. What's in our gardens

## Gardens in Bloom

With so many of us taking an active interest in picking up our shovels and spades, it's no surprise that flower pots and flower beds were amongst the most popular thing to be found in British gardens - but our aptitude for growing doesn't stop there.

Nearly 50% of Brits are now using their green space to grow their own produce, demonstrating the 'grow your own' trend has no signs of slowing. At the time this report was produced one in five local authorities have allotment waiting lists of more than 1,000 people, and two-thirds have waiting lists of between 100 and 400, according to the Association for Public Service Excellence

Over 65% of people also had some form of outdoor furniture, indicating the importance of outdoor space in creating what is known as "the fifth room". This is particularly true in a year when the pandemic has resulted in Brits spending more time in their homes than ever before and gardens are being used for a number of different purposes including a children's play area, dining room and even a home office.



65%

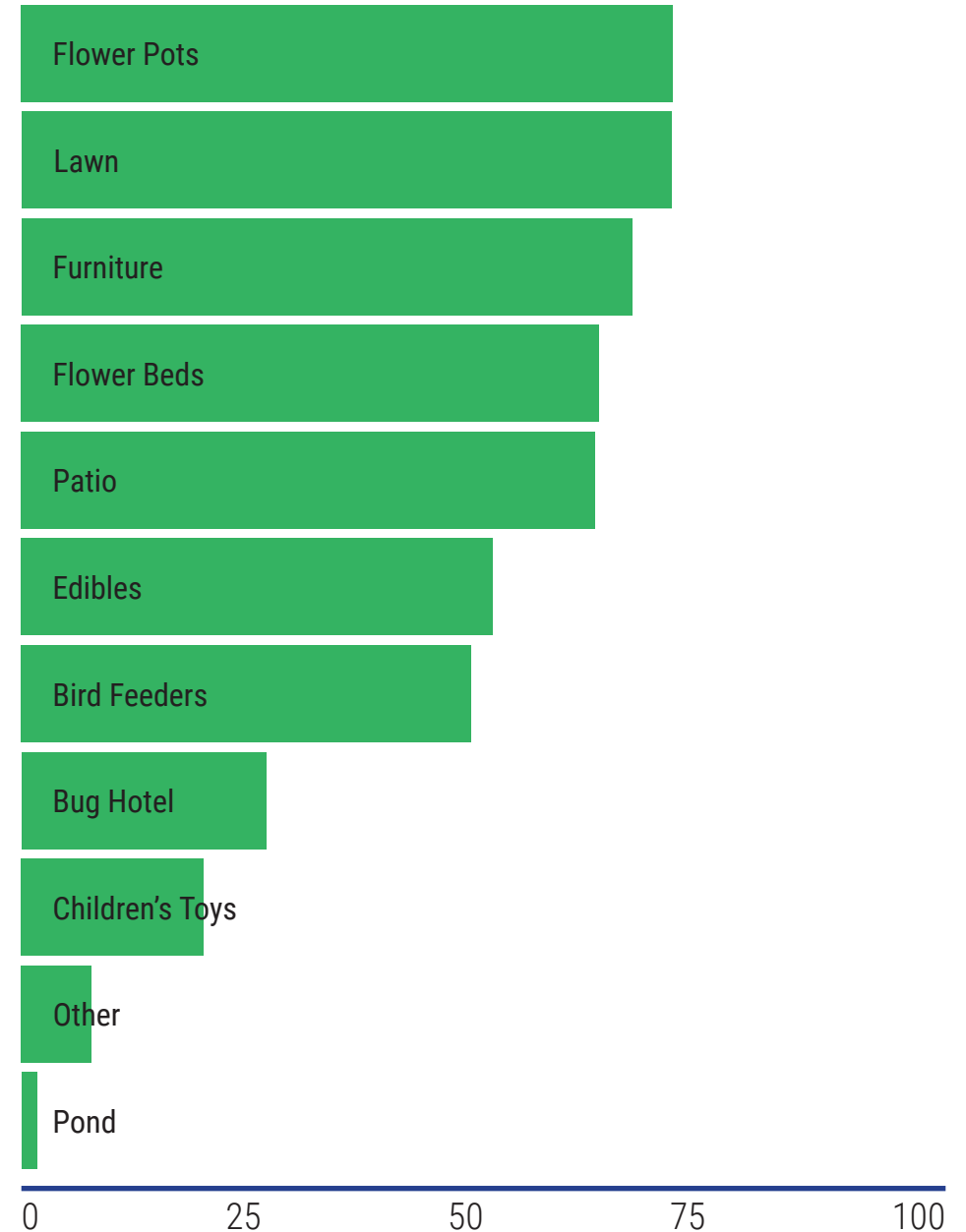
Have outside furniture in their "5th room"



49%

Grow their own edibles

## What do Brits have in their garden?



Respondents selected from the list and could chose one or more reason for gardening

## Encouraging Biodiversity

It's also clear that Brits are prioritising biodiversity in their gardens. 75% of people said it was important to them to attract wildlife into their outside space and 72% stated they have something in their garden which promotes biodiversity, including herb or veg gardens, bird feeders, bug hotels or ponds. Over half of people (50.6%) will consider a plant's ability to attract wildlife before purchasing and 51% are considering more biodiversity friendly solutions, such as lavender planting, for pest control.



**75%**

*Feel it is important to them to attract wildlife*



**50%**

*Consider a plants ability to attract wildlife when buying*



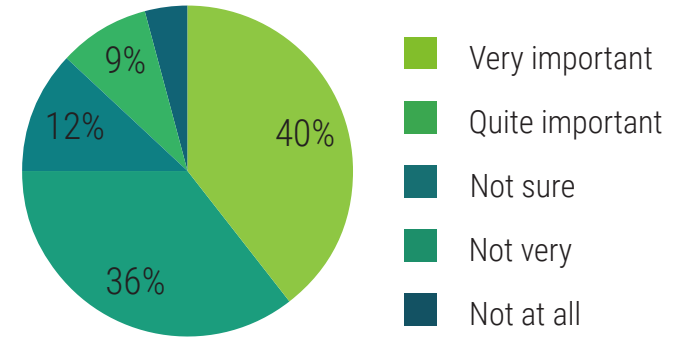
**72%**

*Promote biodiversity beyond just growing ornamentals\**

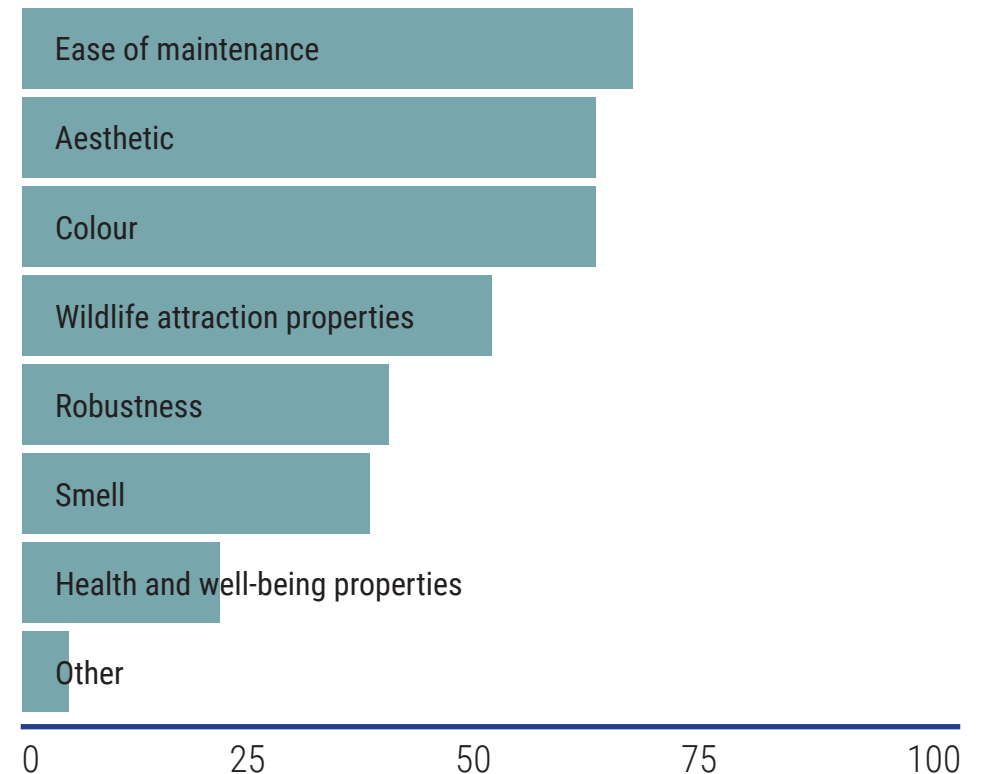
*\*72% of households actively enhance the biodiversity of their outside space beyond just lawn/ornamentals with the addition of bird feeders, ponds and / or edibles)*



## How important is attracting wildlife to Brits?



## What do they consider when buying plants for their gardens?



*Respondents selected from the list and could chose one or more reason for gardening*



# 4. Gardening and the environment

## Sustainability in spades

When it comes to looking out for the environment, gardeners aren't only thinking about biodiversity. Although only a third of people (34%) have noticed the effects of climate change in their green space, 77% of people say they consider sustainability when gardening, demonstrating that Brits understand the role that being more eco-conscious in their own environments can play in helping the planet more widely.



**77%**

*Of people consider sustainability when gardening*



**60%**

*Of people weeding by hand*

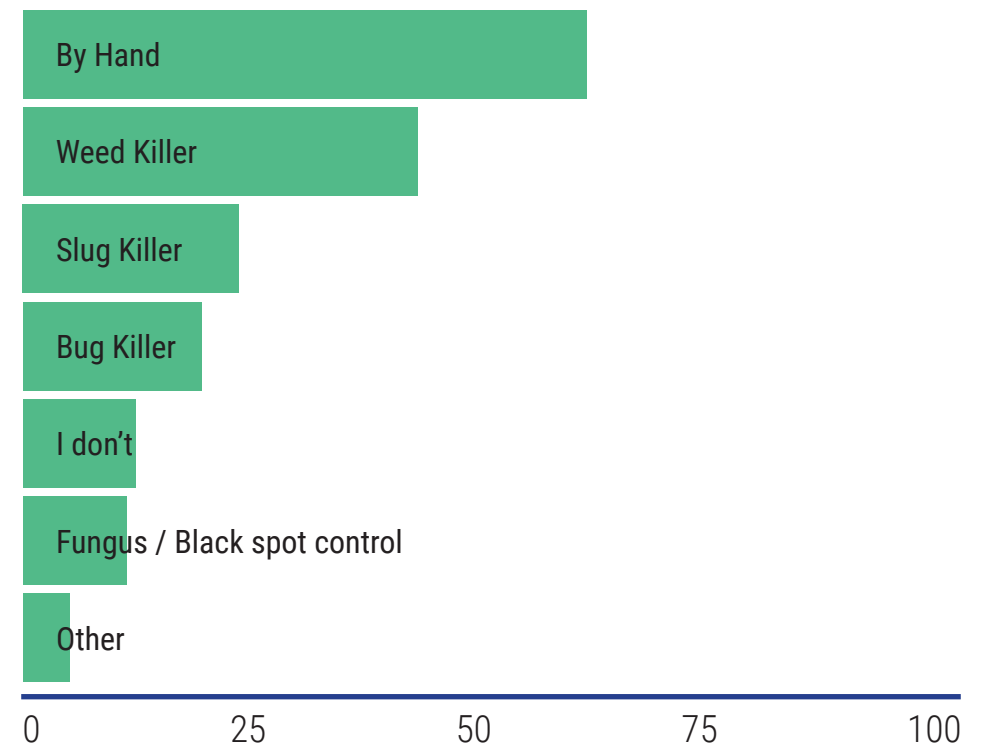
## Mindful pest management

When it comes to keeping their gardens tidy, Brits are still keen to ward away pests and weeds. **60% of all gardeners consider it important to control weeds and garden pests** and this goes up to over **70% of those growing edibles consider it important to control garden pests & fungus**.

However they aren't reaching for the chemicals straight away with nearly **60% of people weeding by hand**.

Whilst it's clear that gardeners feel they need to use pesticides on occasion, particularly for those who are growing produce, research shows Brits are being mindful of their use and will only use them as a last resort.

## How do Brits control weeds, pests, bugs, and plant disease?



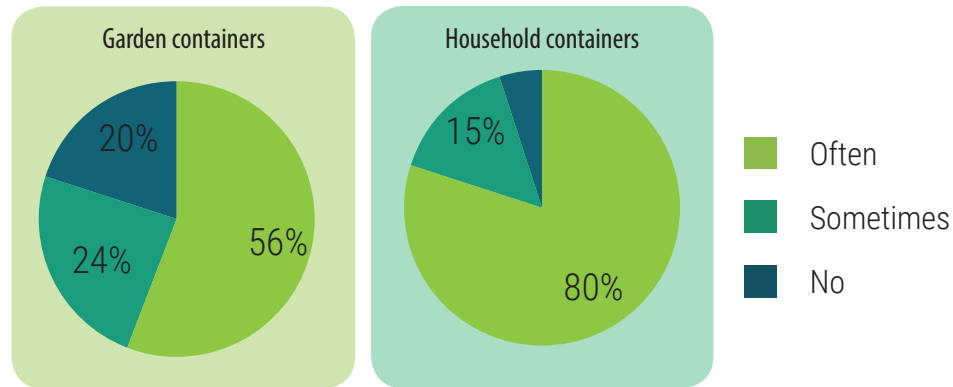
*Respondents selected from the list and could chose one or more reason for gardening*

## Disposal and Recycling

When it comes to disposal of unused product, gardeners aren't doing too badly with **74% of people getting rid of unused product in the right way** - a better performance than when disposing of other household products such as batteries where only **64% of people get it right**.

But when it comes to recycling, there still appears to be confusion over what to do. Fewer respondents recycle Garden Product packaging than recycle household cleaning products. Only 76% of people say they recycle their garden containers in comparison to 95% of people who recycle plastic household detergent and cleaning product containers.

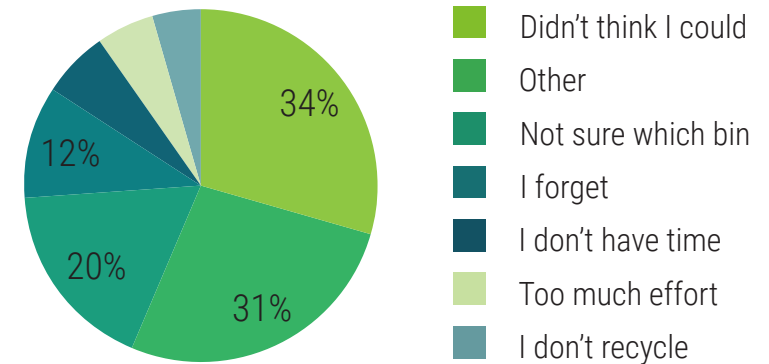
### Do Brits recycle?



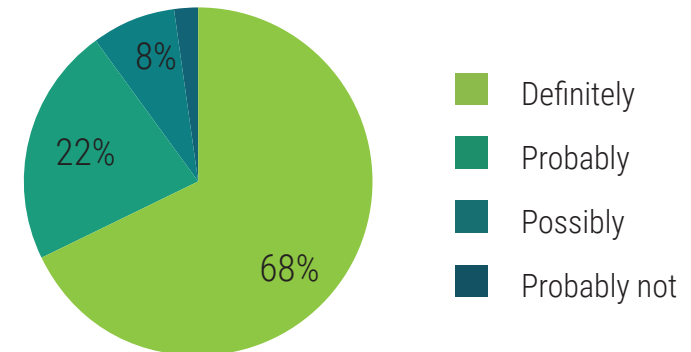
*"I find recycling garden products a bit of a nightmare. I never know what you can and can't recycle let alone which bin to put it in so I often just end up chucking it away even though I know I probably shouldn't"* Harjot, 41, Essex

50% of people who didn't currently recycle their garden products said a lack of knowledge was the reason, stating either they didn't know how to recycle or that they weren't sure what bin garden products should go into. What's more, 97% of people said they would recycle if they were clear on how to. This demonstrates a real opportunity for manufacturers and regulators to facilitate better labelling guidance and consistent recycling advice across all garden products.

### You told us you don't always recycle garden containers. Why not?



### Would Brits dispose of garden containers correctly if they were clear on how to?



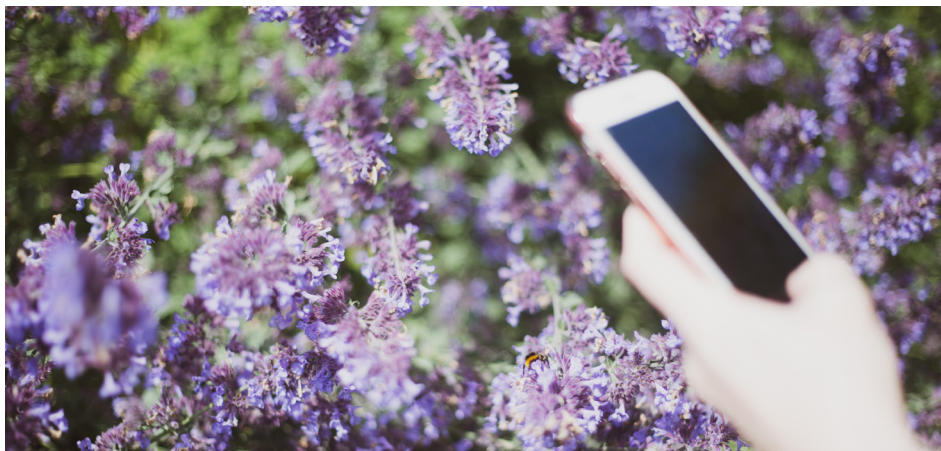
# 5. Gardening Advice and Inspiration

## Getting in the know

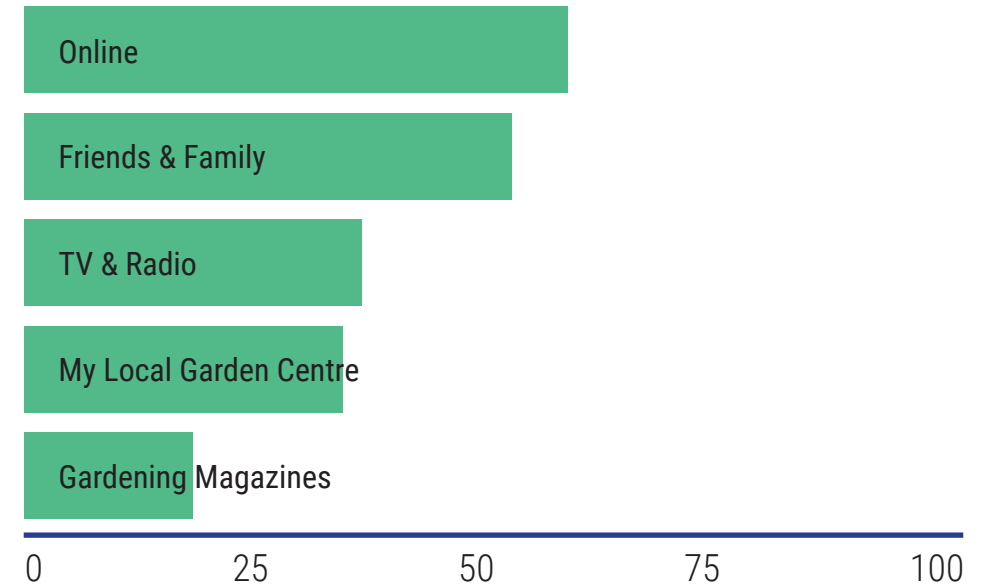
For gardening advice, friends and family and online channels are the top two most common places Brits will turn to.

This is consistent across all age groups, however for those over 55+ online is the go to source - showing that it's not just the younger generation who are depending on their devices for gardening know-how.

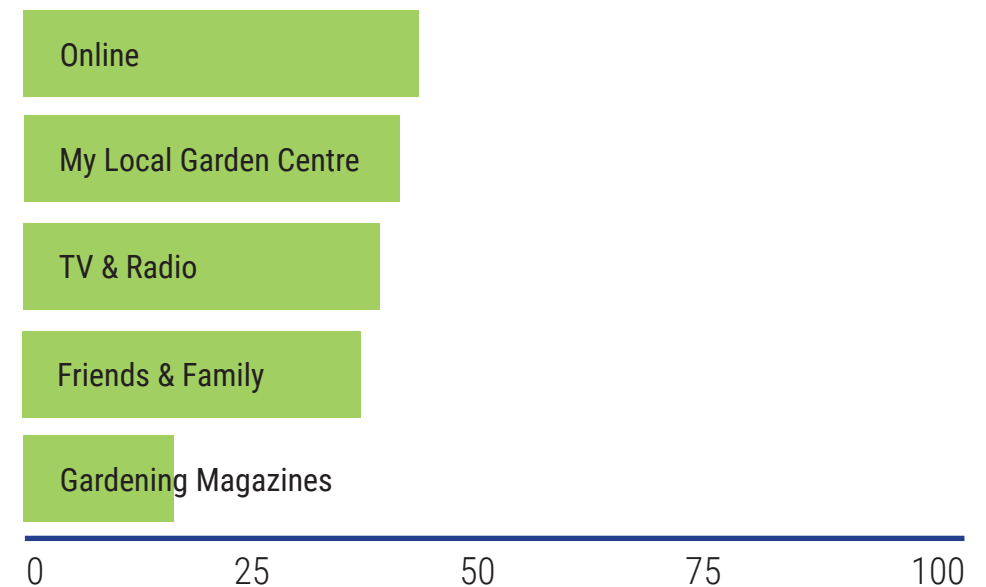
Whilst garden centres are becoming less valuable when it comes to tips and tricks, they are still a source of inspiration. When looking to spark the imagination, Garden Centres rank second behind the on-line channel as the most popular place for gardeners to look for green space ideas



Top 5 places Brits look for gardening advice:



Top 5 places Brits look for gardening inspiration:



Respondents selected from the list and could chose one or more reason for gardening

# 6. Gardening and the pandemic

## Lockdown bloomers

Whilst there were many new trends and behaviours as a result of the pandemic, the growing appetite for gardening looks like it's here to stay. 56% of people said they gardened more during lockdown and out of those that have been getting their fingers green more often 68% of them said they think their gardening habits will continue as we move out of lockdown and 22% of people said they definitely would. With more time to explore new hobbies, a whole new audience has discovered the joy of growing and as the world speeds up again, these budding gardeners are eager to still make time for their green spaces in their routines.



**56%**

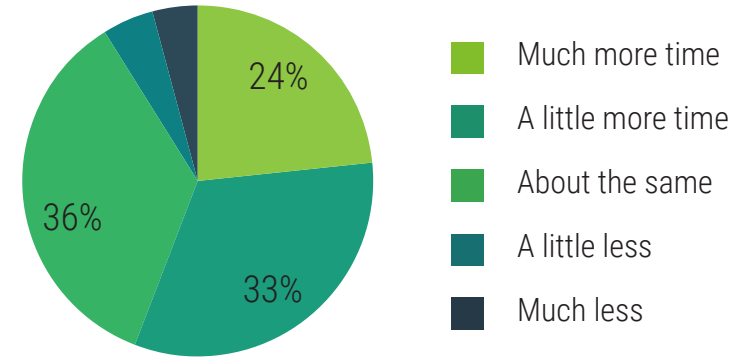
*Of people said they gardened more during lockdown*



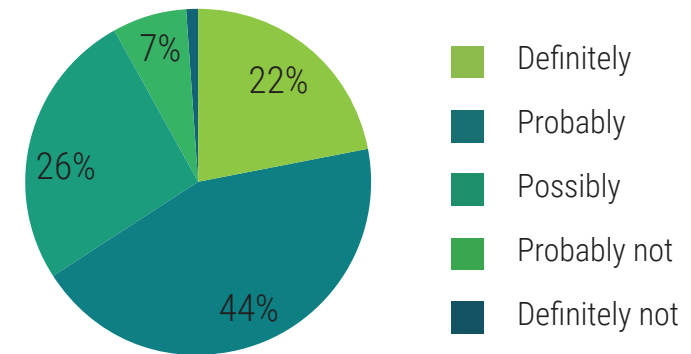
**68%**

*Of people who gardened more during lockdown said they were likely to continue to do so*

How much more or less time have Brits spent gardening during the pandemic?



Do those who garden more think they will continue after the pandemic?



# Summary

It's clear to see that gardening continues to be a loved and treasured pastime for Brits and with 2020 providing a backdrop which allowed a whole new audience to discover the benefits, there are more people finding joy in making things bloom than ever before. Much more than just being seen as a maintenance job, people are using gardening as a source of enjoyment and relaxation in itself with many noticing positive effects on their health and well-being as a result of picking up their forks and spades.

But it's not only for individual benefit that people are gardening. As Brits become more environmentally aware, people are finding ways they can play their part in helping the planet through getting outdoors with huge numbers of people growing their own produce or actively encouraging biodiversity in their outdoor space. Mindful pest management is also a growing trend, with many opting for more sustainable methods of pest control first and only using pesticides on occasions where it's absolutely necessary.

Gardeners generally demonstrate good habits and aspirations for correct product disposal, but there appears to be confusion over packaging recycling instructions. This presents an opportunity for manufacturers and regulators to do more to ensure consistent messaging in relation to recycling across all garden products.

When it comes to advice friends and family and online articles and social media are relied on most heavily and not just with a younger audience - demonstrating even the older generation are turning to their devices when they need help. Garden Centres are however still the place most turn to for inspiration.

Finally, as we start to regain some sense of normality from the Covid pandemic, it's exciting to see that those who discovered gardening whilst staying at home are keen to continue their horticultural habits - indicating that their new found love for growing is for life and not just for lockdown.



*Commissioned by Common Sense Gardening / [garden-care.org.uk](http://garden-care.org.uk)  
Design by: Adam Spratley / [adamspratley.co.uk](http://adamspratley.co.uk)  
Project management and report copy by: Charlotte Philpotts / [charlottephilpotts.com](http://charlottephilpotts.com)*

*Photo Credits:*

*Page 3 - "Rearing tomatoes for self support", Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash  
Page 5 - Photo by Jonathan Kemper on Unsplash  
Page 8 - Photo by Yuliia Lazarenko on Unsplash  
Page 8 - Photo by Leigh Skomal on Unsplash  
Page 8 - Photo by Zoe Schaeffer on Unsplash  
Page 8 - "Watering Can", Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash  
Page 11 - Photo by Adalia Botha on Unsplash  
Page 13 - Photo by Ameer Fairbank-Brown on Unsplash  
Page 19 - Photo by Chris Cooper on Unsplash*

*Survey was carried out with 2,196 people in January 2021*