



MINIMISING THE USE OF PEAT

The decline in lowland peat bogs has been well publicised, with 94% having been lost over the last century, these are now amongst the UK's most rare habitats. Peat is industrially mined from these important wildlife areas, causing irreversible damage. This is the chief reason GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL wishes to phase out the use of peat.

Peat has increasingly been used by the horticultural industry over the last 5 decades for use as soil improver and growing medium, this has obviously contributed to the habitat's decline. Peat is a finite resource and Guildford Borough Council's decision to minimise using peat reflects a growing concern at the general threat posed by its extraction from important Sites of Specific Scientific Interest. The problem is not just a UK one and cannot simply be ignored by importing peat from other sources.

Current peat use

Many local authorities have historically used peat for:

- mulching beds and borders
- soil amelioration when planting
- propagation and potting compost

However, since 1997 GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL has not purchased any peat-based products for any of the above purposes. For the first two tasks, leaf mulch and Guildford Borough Council's in-house compost are used. For propagation and potting on, coir based products are successfully used. When ordering the seasonal bedding, hanging baskets and troughs, a peat free mix is specified in the contract. Guildford Borough Council only needs to purchase shrubs and trees from external sources. It is this source that still contains some peat-based products. Approximately 80% of all purchased plant material is peat free, with the exception of ericaceous plants. We seek suppliers who can supply peat free plants wherever possible.

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARKS & LEISURE SERVICES

CHEMICAL MINIMISATION POLICY

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL's policy of minimisation is that the Parks & Leisure Division should:

- use recommended application rates of any chemical or pesticide: herbicides, fungicides or cleaning agents
- reduce the number of applications
- minimise the risks to those staff working with chemicals

These aims are intended to protect the environment, and the health of the public and staff.

Objectives for minimisation:

- Focus on integrated pest management
- Procure more disease resistant and tolerant plants
- Increase the use of weed suppressants such as in-house prepared mulches
- Ongoing staff training will raise awareness to ensure careful considered stewardship of any chemical requirements
- Reduce dependence on chemicals. Further explore and trial non-chemical alternatives
- Display educational material to inform the public on 'organic' management methods and expectations
- Chemicals will be examined to ensure they are appropriate for the task, the relevant safety data sheet obtained and monitored
- Always use reputable, licensed suppliers

There is always a balance to be achieved between public expectations of standards within parks and gardens, and appropriate chemical usage. These expectations need to be balanced against available resources, both staff time and financial.

It is envisaged that a comprehensive approach to these chemical reduction aims and objectives will lead to a healthier, improved and safer environment for all.

Procedure for chemical use:

The manager responsible for the site/activity selects chemicals by:

1. Identifying the weed or pest
2. Identifying the chemical best suited to deal with these issues in the safest way
3. Can it be safely prepared and applied with the available equipment and resources?
4. Identifying the product which incorporates the required ingredients
5. Choosing the product that poses the least risk to human health, the environment and other creatures that may be sensitive to herbicides/pesticides
6. Recording findings and revise assessment when required
7. Track changes in the law relating to the use of chemicals

All chemicals are covered by COSHH data sheets held in the offices. All related risk assessments are generated from the COSHH information and usage information completed

by managers using a computerised system called SEVRON This system uses the manufacturer's COSHH data and our usage information to create COSHH risk assessments, which are stored on the system and held as hard copies in the office. Any new chemical is added to the system and old ones are reviewed and updated annually. **Refer to appendix 14**

The COSHH data sheets identify:

1. Hazards presented by the chemical
2. Who could be harmed and how
3. Actions to prevent or achieve adequate control of exposure and to comply with COSHH requirements.

Chemicals are stored in a separate chemical store located in the nursery compound area, away from the main offices. Washing of knapsacks can be carried out on site under license, and no-mix sprays system of calibration and measuring techniques when using knapsacks allows for accurate quantities to be applied.

95% of weeding in Castle Grounds Gardens and Stoke Park Gardens is carried out by hand. Only the paths and hard surfaces are sprayed very occasionally if need arises.

Since the supply of seasonal bedding went out to contract, the Stoke Park nursery and glasshouses are used to grow the baskets and troughs on.

We currently use Metaldehyde based slug pellets. This chemical expires in 2020 and we will look too use Nematodes for future control.

No herbicide or pesticide is applied within the shrubs and copeses of Castle Grounds/Castle Cliffe Gardens.

Weed and Feed is applied to Ornamental Lawns at Castle grounds, Allen House and Stoke Park Gardens. Elliots (2,4-D, Dicamba, Iron Sulphate, Mecoprop-P) weed and feed is applied.

Sports pitches

Bowling Greens are sprayed annually with a systemic product to give protection against diseases.

Sports pitches (the area encompassing the football pitches and cricket outfield) receive weed and feed containing)Depitox (2,4-D) Prompt (Dicamba, Mecaprop – P) Praxys (Clopyralid, Florasulam, Fluroxypyr) each year.

Shrub beds are largely hand weeded with some spot treatments with Nomix Dual (Glyphosate and Sulfosulfuron).

Nomix dual is also applied annually to the hard surfaces and around obstacles throughout the borough. It is also injected to treat Japanese Knotweed.

Policy Review

VERSION NUMBER	ISSUE DATE	REVIEW DATE	AMMENDMENTS REQUIRED YES/NO (if 'YES' record below)	AMMENDMENTS MADE BY	NEW VERSION CREATED
1	Oct 2019	Oct 2020	Yes	Adie Byatt	14 Nov 2019