



GiGL Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC
the capital's environmental records centre

(<https://www.gigl.org.uk/>)



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The newsletter of Greenspace Information of Greater London CIC

Blooming London

By Chloe Smith (<https://www.gigl.org.uk/author/chloe-smith/>) | July 2011 | 0

(<https://www.gigl.org.uk/blooming-london/#respond>)

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London is arguably one of the world's most verdant big cities. A significant part of our green space is managed by ordinary Londoners – the humble gardeners.

Gardens cover nearly a quarter of London, yet we know little about what's in them or how this is changing. Over the period of a year GiGL worked in partnership with London Wildlife Trust and the Greater London Authority to fully document London's garden cover for the first time.

The results of the garden survey show that London's gardens contribute considerably to our green reputation. Around 57%, or 22000 ha, of our total 37900 ha of garden land is vegetated.

This is good news for people and wildlife. Garden vegetation can provide shelter, food and nesting habitat which brings people

closer to nature on their doorstep. Trees and shrubs can help to cool air temperature. Lawns and herbaceous borders let rain water soak away in residential areas.

However, these roles may be being compromised by another trend. Our study confirms fears that garden hard surfacing is increasing at the expense of vegetated cover.

The loss is equivalent to paving or decking two and a half Hyde Parks a year. Front gardens tend to be most hard surfaced, but the trend for increased hard surface is significant in back gardens too.

The loss of garden vegetation is alarming. But within the problem lies the solution. Our figures demonstrate people's management decisions have significant cumulative effects at city scale. Londoners' have the power to affect their city's environment by managing their gardens in a different way. A positive trend for greener garden maintenance could halt the move to hard surfacing and protect our gardens as a haven for wildlife and people for the future.

To read our published research summary see www.gigl.org.uk (<https://www.gigl.org.uk>) and for information about press release and wildlife gardening see www.wildlondon.org.uk (<http://www.wildlondon.org.uk>).

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