



*c*ROCUS

Sustainability Report — 2025 —

Edition 4

www.crocus.co.uk

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Introduction to Crocus

At Crocus we believe gardening sustains us, and that we have a responsibility to give back to the earth we love. That is why we have put together this Sustainability Report, our fourth so far. Every report is an opportunity to review what went well and where we'd still like to make changes. We don't pretend to be perfect but every year we make progress and we are delighted to share with you the changes that happened in 2024 and our goals for 2025. Last year we were particularly proud of expanding our peat free propagation unit, maintaining our Plant Healthy accreditation (still the only online gardening brand to do so) and reviewing our product packaging switching to more paper formats.

We hope you enjoy reading this report and finding out a little bit more about the Crocus nursery.

The CROCUS Team

Our nursery's impact

crocus

Our nursery's impact



Last year our nursery team grew

1.22M plants.

A **22%** increase
from the year before.

Our goal for 2025 is to grow 1.5
million plants from our nursery.

We grow
100% peat free.

For all plants we grow ourselves we only
pot into a peat free mix that we have
developed specially in-house.



We're **triallying new
cutting methods**
to increase UK stock.

15% of our own grown stock was
taken from cuttings, we are aiming
to increase this to 30% in 2025.

Growing 1.22 million peat free plants

Our Crocus nursery is located in Sunningdale, where we grow and care for over 7,000 different plant varieties. Our aim is that everything we grow on the nursery should be good enough to appear in one of our Gold Medal gardens at Chelsea. That way we can feel sure that when you open the box - you are greeting the star of your show! But quality must not mean compromise. We want you to know that we have done everything we can to grow your plant in a sustainable way.



At the heart of our ability to grow sustainably is our Propagation Unit. This is where we grow our plants from plugs, cuttings, and seeds. Since the summer of 2023 every plant cultivated in our Propagation Unit is potted using a peat free growing medium. This peat free mix has been developed by our team and trialled extensively throughout different growing seasons.

Every year we increase the capacity of our

homegrown stock as it allows us to ensure plants are grown peat free and increase UK supply to our customers. We're pleased to say that in 2024 we were able to increase output by 22%, growing a whopping 1.22 million plants from our Sunningdale nursery. Among our 9cm top sellers, varieties such as Hydrangea 'Annabelle', Verbena bonariensis, Salvia 'Caradonna', and Oenothera 'Whirling Butterflies' are now

produced entirely using peat free methods.

Trialling new cutting methods

Our Propagation Team are always looking for ways to expand our range of UK grown and peat free plants. In 2024 the team reviewed and improved the way we take cuttings of our nursery stock. Taking cuttings, rather than using plugs from suppliers, means we are reducing the distance

each plant has travelled. In 2024 we were able to produce 191,204 peat free plants from cuttings and our goal for 2025 will be to improve on this further.

In 2024 75% of our plants were peat free

An exciting trial in 2025 involves weaning tissue culture (TC) material. These are plants, such as Heucheras and Geums, which are notoriously difficult to grow peat free as they require highly specific environmental conditions to establish successfully and very few UK growers have been successful. It is one of the many ways our Propagation Team are challenging themselves to improve on what has been done before.

Removing peat from our supply chain

Over the years we have done a lot of work to create our own peat free mix and work with UK peat free plug suppliers. Unfortunately some plugs sourced from our European suppliers do



contain a small amount of peat. Whilst this is always kept to an absolute minimum, we are actively seeking alternative suppliers who can provide fully peat free options to align with our peat free goals. Expanding our ability to take cuttings means we are less reliant on plugs from suppliers and a step closer to eliminating all traces of peat in our supply chain.

Whilst we are extremely proud of our Propagation Unit, there are ranges of plants and times

when we can't grow all plants ourselves. This is where we work with some excellent plant suppliers. Our policy is to always favour a peat free supplier where possible and reasonable to do so. As a result, we estimate that in 2024 approximately 75% of all the plants on our website were peat free. Our goal for 2025 is that we will improve this to 80%. Ultimately, our aim is to be peat free for 'garden ready' plants by 2026, in line with the UK government's agenda.

Reducing waste & water

Reducing waste & water

CROCUS

Reducing waste & water impact



We are
100%
self sufficient for our
water needs.

On the nursery we only use
rainwater from our reservoir
to water our plants.

We recycled
80 tonnes
of green waste.

We collect nursery cuttings and
use this to create compost that
is used to pot up plants.



Our warehouses
are heated with
bio-mass boilers.

Any waste wood and cardboard
on the nursery is used for heating
or packaging of plants.



Over the past few years we've been taking a good look at every part of our nursery and warehouse to find ways to cut down on waste and use less water. As a large nursery, we know that even small tweaks can make a big difference and it's been so exciting to see the positive feedback rolling in from customers about the changes we've made so far.

100% self reliant for our water needs

We have a large reservoir on the nursery which can hold up to 7 million litres of rainwater. A network of pipes across our nursery collects run-off rainwater from our buildings and stores it in the reservoir. This means, all of our plants which are out on the nursery are watered with recycled rainwater. Once we have finished watering, the pipes collect this water again. In any normal 24 hour period we are able to recycle 80% of water used.

In 2024, we expanded our pipe network to include an additional section of the nursery previously used



for vehicle turnaround. This enhancement has significantly increased our capacity to collect and store rainwater.

We collect 7 million litres of rainwater in our reservoir

While the wet summer of 2024 meant water scarcity was less of a concern, the exceptionally dry conditions of 2025

have tested our reservoir system. So far, it is performing very well, helping to sustain our operations during this challenging season.

Recycling 80 tonnes of green waste

Due to our nursery team cutting back plants or potting them on, we often have lots of green waste material in the form of plants and soil. In 2021 we built three industrial sized

composting bays to collect our green waste and turn this into compost. Every year this is rotated, sieved and eventually turned into compost. In 2024 we used this compost for our Chelsea Show Garden designed by Tom Stuart-Smith and for various landscaping projects and topping up plants before we send them out for delivery.

90% of nursery waste is collected and recycled

We collect all waste wood and cardboard on the nursery and use this to heat our warehouses. Our biomass boilers take in waste materials which we use for heating in the winter.

Where we can't reduce or reuse our waste on

the nursery, we are working with recycling partners to ensure it is properly recycled. In 2023-24 we recycled 90% of the recyclable nursery waste we generated. This includes plastic pots, trays, crates, cardboard and plastic. Every year we try to better this by improving training for staff and managers on recycling.




Promoting plant health & biodiversity

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Promoting plant health & biodiversity

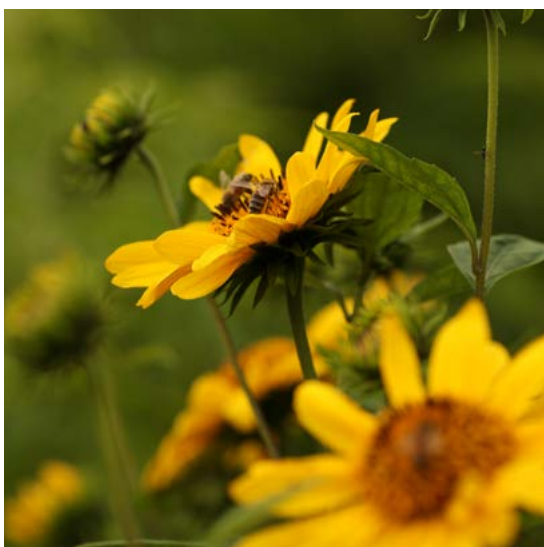


Crocus is the
first and **only** online
gardening brand
to achieve
 **Plant Healthy**

meaning your plants are cared
for to the highest standards.

We are **free** of **broad
spectrum pesticides**
on the nursery.

Instead biological solutions are
always our first approach.



Nº. 1 for
pollinator plants.

We offer our customers the
largest selection of pollinator
friendly plants online.



Promoting Plant Health & Biodiversity

With such a large site and number of different plant varieties, our nursery is always alive with pollinators. Our commitment to producing excellent plants for our customers means we take great care over the way we grow.

Maintaining our Plant Healthy accreditation

In 2023 we became the first online nursery to be

awarded Plant Healthy certification. No mean feat, this DEFRA-backed accreditation is only given to growers who have been rigorously assessed over many months by an independent team, and shown to maintain the highest standards of plant health and biosecurity.

Achieving Plant Healthy means that our customers can rest assured that we've done everything we can to keep their plants pest and disease free. This includes daily walk arounds by our team to inspect the

plants and using an ethos termed Integrated Pest Management or IPM. Which means, where possible, our first tools used to deal with any issues are always cultural or biological solutions.

*We're the only online
gardening brand
to be awarded
Plant Healthy*

By following these practices we have stopped the use of broad spectrum pesticides such as neonicotinoids that

can be harmful to non-target species. We believe that by managing our production holistically we are actively ensuring the long term sustainability of future production and the wider environment we operate.

As a nursery we are audited every year for Plant Healthy in the early

autumn, and we were pleased to successfully pass the 2024 audit. We remain fully committed to upholding these standards in 2025 and beyond.

Improving our UK plant supply

Where we can't grow plants ourselves in our

Propagation Unit we have an excellent number of nurseries we work with who start the plants off and which we then grow on at our nursery. To help reduce the number of miles travelled for each plant we will always choose a UK plant supplier where possible.

In 2024 we estimate that 75% of our plants were UK grown, with 25% coming from European suppliers. Our goal for 2025 is that 80% of plants will be UK grown, a target reflective of all plants including houseplants, bulbs and seeds.

Keeping up to date with our Crocus forest

In 2022 we planted 2,000 trees to help mitigate the impacts of ash die back. The forest is a mixture of UK trees local to the area including Oak, Hornbeam, Wild Service, and Wild Cherry. Now in its fourth year the forest is regularly checked by professionals and growing well.



Improving the way we package & deliver

CROCUS

Improving the way we package & deliver



We've reduced our plastic packaging by
15 tonnes
every year.

By switching to brown paper and paper tape for the packaging of our plants.

All of our wood products are
sustainably sourced.

This means that all of our wood products are responsibly sourced and come from sustainably managed forests.



By 2025 we will have
removed over 50%
of the **plastic packaging** from our
Crocus Collection Range

Instead we have switched to paper packaging alternatives similar to how we prepare our plants.



Reviewing how we pack and deliver

Whilst we've been working hard behind the scenes to grow our plants in more sustainable ways, we also know that how your plants arrive at your door matters just as much. That's why we're updating our packaging to be more eco-friendly. Whether it's the materials

we use or the way we pack your plants, we're making changes to reduce waste and improve recyclability so your plants arrive safely and sustainably.

How we're reducing our plant packaging

At Crocus, all of our plants are hand-picked, watered and double-checked before they leave us.

Large orders, or those that are local to our nursery, are delivered by our own team, and these are sent out with no packaging at all in our Crocus delivery vans.

For plant orders travelling further afield, we've designed our own cardboard boxes (made from sustainably sourced cardboard and 70%

recycled materials) that keep plants snug and safe. In 2024 we removed the use of recyclable bubble wrap and shrink wrap for the protection of our larger and more precious plants. This has helped reduce our plastic usage by 8 tonnes. Instead we use shredded old cardboard boxes to protect our plants. By replacing our recyclable plastic packaging with brown paper and paper tape we've cut our plastic down by 3.77 tonnes per year.

We've reduced our plastic packaging by 15 tonnes every year

We now only use plastic packaging where absolutely necessary and always for the protection of plants. When we do use plastic it is always made from recycled materials all of which can be recycled. The only plastic packaging which remains on our plants, aside from the pot itself, are the blister packs we use for the protection of our smaller plants. Whilst these are made from recycled plastic, and



can be recycled, we are committed to finding a plastic free option. Whilst we have not found one yet, in 2023 we cut the sizes of these containers by half. This has helped reduce our plastic use by 8 tonnes every year. We are continuing to look into alternative options to remove the blister packs

altogether and hope to have a new solution soon.

Cutting our recyclable plastic pots

Plastic pots are a big concern within the gardening industry, which is why we only pot into plastic pots which

are made from recycled materials and can be recycled by our customers at home. Happily most of our UK suppliers have moved to a similar policy and we estimate that in 2024 75% of our total plants came in recyclable pots.

The remaining amount are black plastic pots from our European suppliers. Whilst these are made from recyclable materials they can't currently be recycled by customers at

home. Fortunately, from 2026 the Government has announced that kerbside recycling will be accepting black pots from 2026 in England.

In the meantime, to help you with these black pots, we've created our own Crocus Pot Back scheme at our Dorney Court cafe and garden. Here you can return any black plastic pots from our suppliers and we will recycle them for you. Find out more and plan your

visit at www.crocus.co.uk/dorney-court

Whilst we only pot into recyclable pots, we are actively looking to reduce the amount of recycled plastic each pot uses. In 2024 we have changed our 2 and 3 litre pots to a much lighter pot which uses less plastic. So far this has helped us cut our recycled plastic pot use down by 35-40%. We hope to do the same to our 9cm range in the future.



How we're reducing our product packaging

Over the years our focus has been to improve our plant packaging to make it more sustainable, we are now taking this approach to our product range. Given the wide variety of products and the number of suppliers involved, this will be a gradual journey requiring close collaboration across our supply chain. Each product type presents its own challenges, but we're committed to working with our partners to find environmentally responsible solutions wherever possible.

As a first milestone, from October 2025, 50% of all new Crocus Collection stock will arrive in sustainable packaging. While some materials we would like to remove are still currently in use (mainly for protecting glass items) we are actively addressing these areas. Work is already underway to identify suitable alternatives, and we remain focused on reducing our environmental impact

without compromising product quality or safety.

From October 2025, 50% of all new Crocus Collection items will arrive in plastic free packaging

We've continued to make strong progress in reducing plastic packaging from our suppliers and are encouraged to see a growing shift across the industry towards more sustainable alternatives.

Sustainably sourcing our products

Any of our products containing wood have

been sustainably and responsibly sourced. At the same time we are committed to reducing the amount of plastic in the products we sell. With the exception of some small parts like rubber feet, we do not use plastic in our Crocus Collection range at all.

When expanding our product range, any item containing plastic will be designed to avoid single use and made to a quality standard that ensures it can be reused for many years without needing replacement. We will always select items made from recycled plastic over those which are not.



Championing employees

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Championing employees



We've raised
£18,374.99
for charity since 2021.

This year we supported
local business who provide
end-of-life care.

We run our own Crocus Apprenticeship Scheme.

We have created our own scheme to
help young people into horticulture.



We're from around the world.

We have many different
nationalities working at Crocus,
from Poland to India to Australia.

Crocus Apprenticeship Scheme

In 2021 we set up our own Crocus Apprenticeship Scheme where every year we take on apprentices to participate in a two year programme. The goal of the scheme is to encourage young professionals into horticulture and formalise a thorough training process. We were pleased to see Holly Fox successfully complete the scheme in 2024. Holly's experience covered not just growing plants on the nursery, but also working with the team to grow plants for top designers including Sarah Price's Chelsea Flower Show Garden.

Improving Diversity & Inclusion

We welcome colleagues from around the world employing people from no less than 18 countries. Our people strategy is to ensure our people practices are open and fair, and welcoming of people from all walks of life. In 2021 we appointed two Mental



Health First Aiders who will help champion wellbeing across all areas of the business. But particularly focused on recruitment, training and wellbeing activities.

Supporting charities

In 2024 we raised £1,628.08 through our staff product and plant sales. As a company we chose a local charity Thames Hospice which offers compassionate palliative and end-of-life care, as well as wellbeing and emotional support during these difficult times. Since 2021 we have raised £18,374.99 for charity through our staff product and plant sales.





Our promise

We started Crocus because we wanted to make access to the largest and most interesting selection of plants as easy as possible for people. We know that our sustainability goals will only help us to deliver this ambition, at a higher quality and lower cost to the planet.

We promise to push ourselves every year to continue to do better and do more. We will continue to keep our customers up to date on our progress, as well as releasing a report to the wider community every year.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read our report, if you have any further questions we're always happy to hear from you.

Please contact us via our website at **crocus.co.uk/contact/** and our team will be in touch.

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