CHEMICALS (GLYPHOSATE), LEAFBLOWERS, STRIMMERS AND THE IMPACT ON WILDLIFE

Compiled by Fran Swanson 2025

GLYPHOSATE

The UK is rapidly losing much of its wildlife at an astonishing rate but we can all do our bit to address the decline we are witnessing, simple things like:

- Using alternative methods to chemicals such as Glyphosate to combat weeds, aphids, slugs & snails.
- Try using wildlife & pet friendly alternatives on what you may consider is a 'pest' in your garden.

What Is Glyphosate? And Why We Should Not Use It

- Impact on Wildlife: Glyphosate can indirectly harm wildlife by reducing habitat and food sources. Eliminating weeds with glyphosate can remove essential forage and shelter for insects, birds, and other animals that contribute to a healthy ecosystem.
- Promotion of Biodiversity: Embracing a glyphosate-free approach in your garden encourages biodiversity by allowing a diverse range of plants to thrive. By nurturing a variety of plant species, you create a more resilient ecosystem that supports pollinators, beneficial insects, and other wildlife.
- Alternative Weed Management Methods: There are numerous effective alternatives to glyphosate for weed control in gardens, including manual weeding, mulching, hoeing, and using organic herbicides. Choosing non-chemical methods reduces reliance on synthetic pesticides and promotes a more sustainable approach to gardening.
- Risk of Runoff: Glyphosate can leach into groundwater or be carried by runoff into nearby water bodies, potentially contaminating aquatic ecosystems. Using glyphosate in your garden increases the risk of water pollution, which can harm aquatic plants, animals, and microorganisms.

- Health Concerns: While regulatory agencies have deemed glyphosate safe for use when applied according to label instructions, some studies suggest potential health risks associated with long-term exposure. Choosing alternatives to glyphosate can help minimize potential health concerns for yourself, your family, and your pets.

Ultimately, the decision not to use glyphosate reflects a commitment to environmental stewardship, biodiversity conservation, and the promotion of healthier weed management practices for both humans and nature.

Campaigners demand action to break UK's 'addiction' to controversial herbicide | Herbicides | The Guardian

Glyphosate is a full spectrum herbicide, which means it kills all weeds – both grasses and broad leaf varieties.

Thousands of tonnes of glyphosate are now applied every year to UK farmland as well as to municipal green spaces and domestic gardens. But the herbicide's safety record has become deeply contested and – with its licence up for renewal in December – there are calls for it to be banned or severely restricted.

"The UK's glyphosate addiction has spiralled out of control," said Nick Mole of Pesticide Action Network UK, a campaign group which carried out the analysis. "We know that glyphosate has links to a range of cancers and other life-threatening diseases. And that it damages the environment, polluting our waters and harming wildlife.

"The government urgently needs to commit to phase out – and ultimately ban – glyphosate and support farmers and local councils to adopt safe and sustainable alternatives."

STRIMMERS

When using a strimmer, consider the impact on the environment this might have. Whichever strimmer you use, it has to be fuelled by petrol or electricity.

Perhaps try using a scythe or sickle, yes they may be 'old fashioned' tools but they do the job quietly and efficiently, with no pollution and only the energy from your body, which will help keep you fitter. We use them in the Fal Woodland and it really does feel good to know we are not destroying wildlife or habitat.

'If Nature Thrives – We All Thrive'

LEAFBLOWERS

Did you know that the gust of air from a leaf blower can reach a speed of 180-200mph?

Leaf blowers are demonstrably bad for the environment, contributing to air and noise pollution, harming local ecosystems, and posing health risks to both operators and nearby residents.

Their convenience comes at a significant cost to our planet and well-being, prompting a growing movement towards more sustainable alternatives.

4. Can leaf blowers spread diseases?

Yes. The force of the air can aerosolize dust, pollen, mould spores, and even animal faeces, potentially spreading allergens and pathogens that can cause respiratory illnesses and other health problems. This is a particular concern in areas with dry conditions or where there is a high concentration of allergens.

What are some alternatives to using leaf blowers?

Several effective and environmentally friendly alternatives exist:

- Rakes: A simple and effective way to gather leaves without producing noise or air pollution.
- Brooms: Suitable for sweeping smaller areas, such as sidewalks and patios.
- Leaf Composting: Leaves can be composted to create valuable soil amendment.

How can I minimize the environmental impact if I must use a leaf blower?

If you must use a leaf blower, consider these tips:

- Use an electric model powered by renewable energy.
- Operate the blower at the lowest possible speed.
- Use the blower for a short duration and only when necessary.
- Wear hearing protection and a dust mask.
- Avoid blowing leaves into streets or waterways.
- Consider using a rake or broom for smaller areas.

Prickles & Paws are a Hedgehog Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre based in Cubert, Newquay

They take in Hedgehogs who are sick or injured and baby hogs who have been found without their mother. Hedgehogs seen out in the daytime are usually suffering from illness, injury, disease, dehydration & other possible ailments and should be taken to Prickles & Paws for their assessment & care immediately.

Ring Prickles & Paws to let them know and they will advise you of what you should do - 07926 576164

Article by Prickles & Paws

Unfortunately, the onset of spring also tends to coincide with an increase in strimmer and chemical injuries.

How to prevent injuries and burns

The last few weeks we have seen a worrying increase in the number of hedgehogs being admitted with caustic burns, plus two severe strimmer injuries. At this time of year people commonly use weed killers, lawn feeds and fertiliser. To protect hedgehogs and other wildlife, please check the labels before use and ensure they are safe for wildlife - or alternatively take

appropriate precautions to stop animals coming into contact with it. Strimmer injuries are easily avoided by simply checking thick undergrowth and borders prior to using the tool.

And Finally: Horace's Hog Help Tip of the Month

"Chemical burns are no fun for me and my friends, so when it comes to purchasing weedkillers and pesticides for your garden, please consider buying wildlife-safe products - and always check the labels."

Prickles & Paws Hedgehog Rescue

55 Chynowen Parc, Newquay TR8 5HD

07926 576164

Click the links below to find out more on how to look after Hedgehogs in your garden or visit their website: www.pricklesandpaws.org

- **Education —** Prickles & Paws Hedgehog Rescue
- **What to feed wild hedgehogs —** Prickles & Paws Hedgehog Rescue
- **Hedgehog homes —** Prickles & Paws Hedgehog Rescue Wildlife gardening - encourage hedgehogs and other wildlife into your garden — Prickles & Paws Hedgehog Rescue
- **When to Rescue —** Prickles & Paws Hedgehog Rescue

Sources:

What Is Glyphosate? And Why We Should Not Use It

read complete article here - https://blog.firsttunnels.co.uk/what-is-glyphosate/

by Elizabeth Waddington 14/06/2024

Use of Strimmer's by Fran Swanson 13/11/2025

Are Leaf Blowers Bad for the Environment? - The Institute for Environmental Research and Education - read complete article here - Are Leaf Blowers Bad for the Environment? - The Institute for Environmental Research and Education

Article by Prickles & Paws www.pricklesandpaws.org