

Briar Rigg House Environmental Policy

Here at Briar Rigg House, environmental concerns lie at the heart of what we do and have a huge influence on the way we do everything. We run a small Bed and Breakfast and we also grow and sell flowers, fruit and vegetables to a variety of local customers and our guests.

Our aim is to give our customers a high-quality experience whilst not compromising on conservation and environmental issues. Here the two work together hand in hand. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate our current activities and actions and set out our future targets.

1. We are passionate about growing our own flowers, fruit and vegetables

- For our own use and consumption by our Bed and Breakfast guests.
- We also sell our produce through boxes to local people and supply other local businesses – this has all grown via word of mouth.
- As well as all manner of fruit and vegetables, we also grow all our own flowers which again fill this house for our guests' but also go in our boxes.
- Virtually all our produce is grown from seed here
- We make all our own compost and as far as possible, everything is organic
- We aim to use natural methods where possible, so we utilise companion planting, crop rotation, use natural birdscarers etc.

2. Commitment to conservation

a) Inside

- The bed linen and towels are made from high quality natural organic materials
- We have a towels and bed linen policy whereby guests let us know if they want their linen changed after 4 nights'
- We have seasonal flowers from the garden throughout the year
- We use as much fruit from the garden as possible to serve to our guests
- We recycle as much as possible (paper, tins, glass, cardboard) and this even extends to using recycled jam jars for our jams and chutneys

- Regular customers also return all empty glass jars and bottles to be reused
- We do not use individually wrapped portions
- We try to reduce food waste by cooking guests' breakfast to order
- We only use environmentally-friendly washing detergents across the board
- We don't use paper napkins but linen ones
- The paints we use are low in V.O.C.s (volatile organic compounds)
- We provide a Green Information Folder for our guests

b) Outside

- We have birdfeeders, and a hedgehog hut
- We make all our own compost (6 separate heaps) and have a wormery too
- Ashes from the wood-burning stove are added to our compost
- Kindling comes from the garden and we also pick and dry lavender to burn in the wood-burning stove to give a wonderful fragrance
- We collect rainwater in water butts to water the greenhouse and garden
- For seeds and young plants, we make plant pots out of newspaper as opposed to buying them
- We positively encourage biodiversity in the garden by having a range of spaces for different functions – eg a pond, woodland area, lawns, herbaceous borders and a large area devoted to fruit and vegetables including fruit trees, 6 raised beds, a fruit cage and vegetable patch. Specifically we grow many plants deliberately to attract bees.
- We encourage our guests to leave their cars here and walk directly from the house as encouraged by Nurture Lakeland who have supplied us with great promotional materials
- We have both Walking and Cycling Welcome accreditation from Visit Britain
- We are members of the RHS

3. Suppliers

We are committed to buying as local as possible and where we can't, we buy fair-trade

- Our bacon and eggs for breakfasts come from local suppliers
- We make our own bread/muffins/rolls from locally-milled flour from Little Salkeld
- Our bathroom products come from a high quality local supplier and (apart from a tiny gift to our guests) all come in plastic bottle dispensers to reduce packaging
- We use all natural cleaning products ie no phosphates
- The labels for our jams, chutneys, cordials are all printed on recycled paper and were printed locally
- The brown paper bags we use for our vegetables are all recycled and were supplied locally
- We belong to Nurture Lakeland
- All our marketing is on-line via our website so we do not print any brochures

4. Saving Energy

We are committed to saving energy at all times

- We don't have a tumble drier – fairly rare for a Bed and Breakfast – and dry outside when we can and line-dry inside in wetter/colder conditions
- We turn off our Aga for between 6 and 7 months of the year
- We only turn on the dishwasher when it is full
- We have panels behind radiators to conserve heat
- Guests have a shower available to them rather than a bath to reduce water use
- We have 2 wood-burning stoves and burn kindling from the garden and either wood from the garden or local sustainable sources
- We use energy-saving light-bulbs
- The light sensors we have outside only come on in the dark
- We have a medium-sized television which is energy efficient
- The roof is insulated
- All curtains are interlined – ie. double-lined to keep the heat in
- The walls of the house are very thick

- There is no heating in the greenhouse and we use cold frames in there to start seeds off
- We have rugs on wooden floors to keep the heat in
- We consistently monitor use of electricity and gas and look for ways to reduce our use
- We rarely take one-night stays to cut down on energy use

5. Looking Forward – targets

- Reducing our energy bills
- Investigate green energy suppliers
- To gain green accreditation

March 2011