*[ADDRESS]*

*[ADDRESS]*

*[ADDRESS]*

To the Councillor for[*YOUR LOCAL WARD/AREA*]

[COUNCILLOR’S CONTACT]

[COUNCILLORS ADDRESS]

*[DATE]*

Dear [*NAME*]

**Cutting Plastic Waste – Recyclable Plant Pots**

I write today as a local resident [*and LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER*] to highlight an issue that you may not be aware of but requires your urgent attention. There is a valuable resource - recyclable plant pots - that could be available now via kerbside recycling collections that is currently going to landfill or incineration.

I, like many householders, wish to ’do the right thing’ but I am having to put valuable recyclable materials, like recyclable plant pots, in the bin. If the council changed its advice to local householders, then this valuable material could be collected. Of course, it would also improve the council’s recycling rates.

If we are one of the few Local Authorities that actively includes plastic plant pots in our kerbside collections, then I applaud the proactive approach of our council, however, if we are not then I would welcome further conversation on this matter.

A third of the UK population regularly garden and buy plants. That’s 27 million people - no wonder we are known as a nation of gardeners! It also means 500 million plant pots a year in circulation… That’s a lot of valuable resource currently going to waste. Us gardeners are an environmentally-conscious bunch and look for our politicians to take the lead in their policymaking. We like to play our part and aim to recycle wherever we can – and expect others to as well!

I work in the horticultural industry, and I’m proud of the fact that the sector has come together over the past 18 months to move from growing and selling plants in non-detectable (and therefore non-recyclable at kerbside) black plastic pots to a kerbside recyclable non-black pot made of valuable, desirable and detectable polypropylene. This year the majority of UK grown plants sold to gardeners in our area will be in plant pots made of the new recyclable plastic.

Plant pots are made with virtually 100% of recycled polypropylene. A true example of a circular loop in recycling – a win-win situation for UK environmental efforts.

Some interesting facts that are not well known: -

1. Other Local Authorities collect plant pots already. Statistics released in December 2019 by the charity RECOUP (Recycling of Used Plastics) state that 10% of all Local Authorities already say ‘yes’ to non-black plant pots in their kerbside collections.
2. The pots are made of polypropylene - a material that reprocessors & manufacturers want.
3. The pots have been tested by RECOUP as sortable and detectable at materials reprocessing facilities.
4. WRAP’s (Waste & Resources Action Programme) most recently published guidelines state that plant pots should be collected by authorities.
5. Based on investigation by horticultural experts there is very little, if any, contamination from the pots of the growing media that the plants are grown in. Environmentally conscious gardeners will plant the growing media with the plant and will rinse & recycle the pots if instructed to do so by their Local Authority.

As plants are ‘clean air machines’ and contribute hugely to mitigating carbon emissions and climate change, no-one wants to put people off buying plants because they come in non-recyclable packaging.

I urge you to speak to your councillor colleague with responsibility for recycling and waste to make the case for non-black plastic recyclable plant pots to be collected from household kerbside collections. This valuable material should be going back into the system to be re-made into new products. It's a real opportunity for our council to show all its keen gardeners and local horticultural businesses that they recognise the importance of this issue.

The Horticultural Trades Association has been supporting its members in making the change to recyclable plastic pots – they have further technical information available at <https://hta.org.uk/assurance-compliance/plastic-pot-initiative.html>

Thank you for your attention,

Yours sincerely,

[*YOUR NAME*]