



East Suffolk Greenprint Forum

Visit to Howard Nurseries 18 September 2015

Howard Nurseries were awarded the Gold Carbon Charter in 2012 and were reaccredited in Summer 2014. The Gold Charter is only awarded to companies that are deemed to be exemplifying best practice in terms of internal carbon management, demonstrating significant reductions in carbon emissions (13% in his case) and championing the environmental agenda in their community. It is one of Archant's Green 100 companies and is a Greenest County Award holder.

We were greeted by a volunteer and treated to a tour of the whole facility seeing the life cycle of the perennial plants, from them being propagated in greenhouses, potted in the potting shed, right through to them being packed and dispatched to a customer. We also gained an introduction to the features that have won them their environmental awards while making good business sense.

These were:

- LED lighting installed all across the site.
- In 2011 40 solar panels were installed generating approx. 10,000KWh a year with about half being used on site and half exported to the grid. The system will take 6 and half years to pay for themselves.
- The Nursery is now 100% self sustainable in water. In the greenhouses there are automated mist settings, along with a 50% shade / 50% thermal screen. Outside plants sit on gravel beds which are underplayed with plastic. All water is captured and runs into the onsite water recycling system with two reservoirs, a gravel and Norfolk Reed filter system, an oxygenator and a chemical cleaner which water is passed through before going back for reuse.
- Fish are stocked in the reservoirs adding nutrients to the water as well as providing an additional income stream.
- All paper is shredded for reuse as part of packaging materials
- Plastic plant pots are sent for recycling – reuse would either mean washing (environmental costs) or sticking in machines and associated wastage.
- Heeled cuttings are placed in modular trays over Autumn, Winter and early Spring. A light layer of horticultural sand is used over the surface to reduce need for weed control.
- All plant waste is composted on site – although they do buy in compost (some peat free and some peat based)

Their future plans include:

Beekeeping

Wildlife signage

As an aside:

Interestingly they propagate 99% of all their own products enabling them to have complete control over propagation material – this and their tight controls ensure that only plants true to type are produced.

They have three plants that were found/bred at Wortham

Dahlia 'David Howard'

Campanula p. 'Wortham Belle'

Hemerocallis 'Cathy's Sunset'

They are happy to host a visit in late spring if the Forum has sufficient interest – at least 10.
If you are interested contact Deborah.wargate@eastsoffolk.gov.uk