

## **Plastics in the horticulture sector:**

### **Lesson 3: Waste management**

#### **Waste scenarios extension activity**

##### Scenario 1

You run a medium sized landscaping company, you win the contract to design construct and maintain the landscaping around a new supermarket. This includes installing plastic spiral tree guards. After 5 years the trees have outgrown the guards and they are starting to break apart. What do you do?

##### Scenario 2

You are a sole trader running your own landscaping business. Your customer asks you to purchase and plant some plants in a new border you have dug. You purchase the plants from the local garden centre and plant them in the garden. You ask the customer if they can make use of the pots and they say no. How would you deal with the pots?

##### Scenario 3

You are site manager for a large nursery producing garden plants to sell to the public. Your company has an annual turnover of £3 million and every year you handle about 70 tonnes of packaging including plant pots and pallet wrap. You notice your company is not registered as a packaging producer, your line manager says this is not necessary as you are not manufacturing the packaging. Are they right? What should you do?

##### Scenario 4

A local farmer has diversified into growing soft fruit. They use plastic mulch in a couple of their fields. At the end of the season they pull up the mulch and you notice that they are having a bonfire and burning this waste. What do you do? What should have happened here?

## Suggested responses

### Scenario 1

You are responsible for making sure the tree guards don't cause an environmental problem and are properly disposed of. You can either store them temporarily following the waste storage guidance and arrange for it to be collected within 12 months by a registered waste transporter, making sure to get a waste transfer note, or move it yourself to a permitted disposal site. If moving the waste yourself you need to register the business as a waste carrier with the EA. You could think about how you could have done things differently to reduce / reuse plastic following the waste hierarchy. For instance, did you need to use individual tree guards in the first place? Could the tree guards be made from an alternative material? Could the tree guards be re-used?

### Scenario 2

It is your responsibility to dispose of the pots, you could see if the garden centre offers a take back scheme e.g., offering free used plant pots to customers. Consider whether you could re-use the pots for another purpose within your business. Otherwise, you could take them to a registered waste disposal centre preferably one where they can be recycled. Your business should be registered as a waste carrier to do this. In the future you could try sourcing bare root plants. Consider selecting plants in pots that can be readily recycled e.g. Taupe pots. (these are free from black carbon pigment which can prevent traditional black plant pots being recycled as they can't be detected by the sorting machines).

### Scenario 3

Your line manager is wrong, if you handle the packaging (which includes plant pots and wrap) you are responsible for a share of the recycling costs. You should inform your line manager that the business should register as a packaging producer by 7 April, meet their recovery and recycling obligation, obtain evidence of compliance, (PRN PERN) submit a certificate of compliance. Always check the latest guidance on gov.uk

### Scenario 4

The farmer is breaking the law as it is illegal to burn agricultural plastics, which are classified as a controlled waste, this includes non-biodegradable mulch film. There is a risk of harm to the environment and human health from burning plastic. You should report this as a waste crime. You can report it anonymously to [Crimestoppers](#) or call

0800 555 111. The farmer should have removed the mulch film, being careful not to leave any in the field. Then followed the waste duty of care regulations to store and move the waste off the farm.