

# INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABILITY

## KEY POINTS

Humanity is currently living unsustainably.

Global sustainability action attempts to harmonise economic, social and environmental goals.

Three tools for analysing and managing environmental sustainability:

- management hierarchy
- production and consumption
- sustainability accounting.

Human consumption is the driver of environmental impact through the use of the basic resources: water, energy, food and materials.

Sustainable gardening can be defined very simply as: gardening to maximise environmental benefit and human well-being.

This could involve completely different activities such as: encouraging native biodiversity; avoiding the use of synthetic chemicals; growing plants that will not escape into the natural environment; and buying environmentally friendly products. But there is much more to it, as we will see.

Sustainable horticulture is a small part of a global movement whose focus is sustainable living. Although this book will concentrate on

the management of urban landscapes, this will make little sense unless we know how this fits into the big sustainability picture. What exactly is sustainability? Why is it important? And how can we become more sustainable?

## Living unsustainably

Environmental problems such as climate change, freshwater depletion and species extinction are now global in scale. Nature is no longer keeping up with human consumption of the world's natural resources