

**The Blooming Milford** group is entering into the 'grow your own' spirit by creating a free communal herb garden which can be used by any villagers.

Blooming Milford, which is comprised of volunteers, grows culinary herbs with information labels on each plant, explaining what they are and how to use them. First planted last year on the east bank of the River Derwent, the project was so successful that the group has responded to calls from villagers to extend the herb garden to the west side of the village.

“We have had a tremendous reaction from local residents, with the herb garden just one of our successful initiatives,” comments Jeff Gouldthorpe, a member of Blooming Milford. “For example, every spring thousands of daffodils come into bloom across the village and we have also held the Milford Open Gardens event for the past two years running. We never set out to win any awards in Britain in Bloom; we are simply a group of people with an interest in gardening who wanted to get Milford Blooming.”

To make the herb garden easier to maintain, Blooming Milford use self watering containers supplied by Derbyshire horticultural company Amberol. This reduces the need for daily watering and ensures that the plants grow in optimum conditions. “As a group of volunteers with limited time to devote to the project, products like Amberol’s self watering containers really lighten our workload,” adds Jeff.

Amberol’s marketing manager John Williamson has considerable experience working with councils and organisations across the UK and is impressed by Blooming Milford’s achievements. “We supply Britain in Bloom groups of all sizes and Milford’s community herb garden is a great example of what the competition can do for a community, both aesthetically and in terms of bringing people together with a common goal.”

The self watering containers have a built in water reservoir with a series of capillaries to 'suck' up the water which is dispersed via an expander pad. Because the water is stored under the soil, it doesn't evaporate whatever the weather conditions. The

containers come in a range of shapes and sizes including hanging baskets, barrier baskets, tiered planters and half barrels. For more information about Amberol's self watering products visit [www.amberol.co.uk](http://www.amberol.co.uk).