



POTS AND PLANTS WARNING!!

Summer is approaching along with the usual crime trends that accompany it. At this time of year, there is normally a sizeable increase in the theft of large pot plants and hanging baskets from private houses throughout Essex.

Where the thieves have been seen in the past, it is reported that they simply pull up outside the house, often, in a Transit style vehicle, two men walk into the garden then lift the pot into the vehicle and drive off. It's all over in a few seconds. The thieves seem to be targeting large pot plants (some of the ones stolen are valued at over £200 each), garden ornaments and mature hanging baskets. Almost without exception the thefts have occurred from FRONT gardens.

There are very few ways by which you can secure a large terracotta pot to the floor and, if you chain hanging baskets to their brackets, past offences, have shown that the thieves may simply pull the brackets from the wall causing more damage.

The best advice we can give is not to display such items where passing thieves will be able to see them from the highway. If you have valuable pots and hanging baskets display them in the BACK garden, at least over the spring / summer period.

The thieves know that there is big money to be made in stolen pot plants, hanging baskets, garden furniture, lawnmowers and other gardening equipment at this time of the year. We appreciate these items are difficult to secure but, at the very least, don't make it easy for them.

And, whilst taking about the vulnerability of our front gardens, here are some more thoughts from me:-

“Personally speaking, as I travel around Brentwood, Epping Forest and Harlow districts, during the spring and summer months, I often notice **bicycles, children’s scooters and ride-on toys**, left insecure and strewn around front gardens, or lying

against fences, walls and hedges, often on the public side of garden boundaries (footpaths etc).,

As both a parent and grandparent, I know how expensive some of these items are to buy, which is why I recommend that we all remember to take appropriate steps to ensure that these items don't become easy pickings for thieves!"

My final thought, is that it is far easier to take precautions against theft, than to comfort and pacify a distraught child, who has lost his or her, favourite possession!

Let's hope that we are going to enjoy a sunny stress free: 'Spring and Summer, this year!'

Colin

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