



## Spring has sprung so what crime does it bring?

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Well, spring has sprung and the migration into the garden has commenced with all the extra jobs that it brings. Unfortunately, with the spring season also comes seasonal crimes too and we need give this a little consideration to prevent them and help others avoid becoming victims too.

**New tools and lawn mowers:** Be mindful of how you dispose of the packaging to your new purchases; don't advertise them to the thieves and burglars with your empty boxes on display outside for roadside collection. Fold boxes inside out or break them up and put them in bag for collection.

**Property marking:** It's a good deterrent if your property is visibly security marked with your house number and post-code or labelled if a forensic property marking system has been used.

You can also record the serial numbers of any property and register them on [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com) for free. If your property does get stolen when marked and or registered there is a greater chance of you getting it back. [Property marking also provides vital evidence for the police, so that they might charge a suspect caught in possession of your property]

**Working in the garden:** It's easy to become engrossed in what you're doing when working in the garden, so if the house is empty it would be wise to close and lock the door (don't forget the key though!). Put the tools away after you've used them as 'it adds insult to injury' if *your* tools are used to break into *your* house.

**Shed security:** Refit the padlock hasps and hinge plates using coach-bolts (where you can) as these are a much stronger fit than simple screws. Secure the door with a good quality close shackle padlock or (if the door is thick enough) a key operated Mortice lock. Protect windows with a wire mesh and fit a curtain or white wash the windows to prevent prying eyes seeing the contents. When buying a padlock look out for those that meet BS EN 12320.

**New plants:** Large, newly planted trees and shrubs that are vulnerable to theft can be anchored into the ground using ground anchoring pegs that are driven deep into the ground or you can plant the shrub through chicken wire, which is then covered up with soil. Cement, anchor, or bolt down vulnerable containers into the ground.

**Rogue Traders:** The rogue trader also takes advantage of the fine weather to con the unsuspecting. Although you may think they would never take you in they can be very convincing. They'll say things like: "I'm laying some gravel up the road and see you need some....." "I notice your trees or shrubs need pruning...".

Look after your vulnerable neighbours and, if appropriate, step in should the need arise. If you need help with the garden and don't know where to go speak to a neighbour or take a look at [www.buywithconfidence](http://www.buywithconfidence) where the traders have been checked by Trading Standards.