



East Midlands  
*In Bloom*

Part of  
**RHS BRITAIN  
IN BLOOM**



**RHS BRITAIN  
IN BLOOM**



# 2011

## **EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM**

### **GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES & PARTICIPANTS**

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The following pages tell you all about the competitive "In Bloom" Campaign and the non-competitive "It's Your Neighbourhood" campaign.

If you are in the East Midlands Region, i.e. Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire or Rutland, you are eligible to participate in either of the above campaigns with us.

More information and all entry forms and guidelines mentioned here can be downloaded from our website: [www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk)

You can contact Irene Bates, East Midlands in Bloom Secretary or any of our dedicated team of volunteer judges for advice and/or an advisory visit.

Irene Bates: Tel. 01332 679598; Email: [info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk](mailto:info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk)

Or write to:

Irene Bates, East Midlands in Bloom Secretary, 64 Chaddesden Park Road, Derby DE21 6HD

There is also a Neighbourhoods DVD available, price £5, produced by Nottingham in Bloom. Please contact us if you would like a copy.

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The Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom campaign is one of the largest horticultural campaigns in Europe, involving over a thousand communities across the United Kingdom each year.

Participating communities create lasting improvements to the local environment for the benefit of those that live, work and visit there – today and in the future. The campaign runs year-round, and communities can be involved for as long as they like. Communities first participate in their region/nation "in Bloom" and from there they can be nominated to participate in the UK Finals.

"East Midlands in Bloom" is one of 18 regions/nations that are part of the national RHS "Britain in Bloom" campaign. Participating communities are asked to focus their initiatives around RHS Britain in Bloom's three core pillars of:

- Horticultural Achievement
- Environmental Responsibility
- Community Participation.

Participants are encouraged to promote these aspects throughout the year, culminating in the judging in mid July and continuing beyond.

RHS Britain in Bloom is the only campaign which takes such an integrated approach to community improvement, and employs horticulture as its foundation. This means "In Bloom" communities tackle everything from litter, graffiti and anti-social behaviour through to conservation, sustainability and improving horticultural standards – not to mention the positive impact on sense of place, and community spirit and pride.

Everyone can enter this campaign! RHS Britain in Bloom is an inclusive campaign and any community – no matter how small or large – can get involved.

To take part in Britain in Bloom you need to enter your whole community, not just part of it, and you enter into the category which corresponds to your size based on your electoral roll. The only exception to having to enter the whole community is the Urban Communities category.\*

For example, you could enter Nottingham in the appropriate category (Large City) and/or you could enter Hyson Green (Nottingham) as an Urban Community.

\* For smaller community groups there is the **It's Your Neighbourhood** campaign (page 17).

The RHS offers:

- Special access to expert RHS advisors' individual advice
- Access to a vast array of information and helpful tools on the RHS website:
  - The Plant Selector (helping you choose appropriate plants for your area)
  - The Plant Finder (everything you need to know about a plant including how to care for it and where to buy it)
  - Month by Month guide to what to do in the garden
  - Guide to organic and sustainable gardening
  - Guide to composting
  - Guide to wildlife gardening.

In addition "in Bloom" groups have access to valuable support from their region/nation organisers.

Full details of the campaign and case studies from previous participants are available on the website on [www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom](http://www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom) If you would like to receive additional information in the post or via e-mail please email [britaininbloom@rhs.org.uk](mailto:britaininbloom@rhs.org.uk)

The benefits of the campaign are:

- Cleaner and greener surroundings
- Creating a sense of community through improvement of public spaces and positive interaction between community members
- An increase in civic pride and sense of community empowerment by engaging people in the improvement of their own community
- Safer environments for the enjoyment of locals
- Long term improvement for the environment by addressing issues such as sustainability, resource management, conservation, litter, graffiti etc.
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- Positive effect on the local economy such as increased commercial enterprise and tourism
- Regeneration of run down and/or disadvantaged areas.

## EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM – a quick guide to the competition

Welcome to your region! As soon as you have decided to enter the "In Bloom" Competition, or even if you have not quite decided for the year (closing date is 30<sup>th</sup> April) please bear these points in mind:

- Keep records of everything you do which may include photographs, flyers or press cuttings about any seasonal planting, fund raising events, litter picks, press or publicity articles that feature anything promoting your Bloom entry. This can be used as evidence in your diary/portfolio (page 14) of your year round activities to be shown to the judges when they visit you in July.
- Complete and return the Entry Form before the closing date.
- Check the population of your entry from your electoral roll and see which category you fit into from the table on page 4. This will show you how long you have to show the judges around your entry.
- To do this you need to plan a route around your entry that comfortably fits within your allocated time which corresponds to your category. The judges will only mark what you show them, so try to avoid taking them past any 'grot spots'. Also try to show them examples that fit within each of the 3 RHS core pillars as mentioned on page 2.
- Try and get children involved from a local school or youth group by promoting the children's painting/digital photography competition (page 13) and/or nominate a school into the East Midlands in Bloom Best School Garden Special Award (page 12).
- If you are still undecided whether to enter, remember you can contact us for an advisory visit, and your first time entry is free so you have nothing to lose, in fact everyone wins just by entering!
- Don't expect to win a gold medal award at your first attempt, it is much better to be realistic and 'test the water' the first year and then take the judges' advice for improvement for future years. Gold awards are the pinnacle of achievement and may take years of careful diligence to be reached.
- If you still feel daunted, then read about 'It's your Neighbourhood' which is non-competitive and you are assessed only on what you yourselves have planned to achieve and how far you have come to achieving it that year. There are five levels that you can aim for, progressing upwards every year from 'Establishing' through to certificate of 'Distinction'.

## ABOUT EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM

East Midlands in Bloom is one of 18 regions/nations that comprise 'Britain in Bloom' and covers Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland. It has been running for over 30 years. The campaign focuses on the three RHS core pillars of excellence which are:

- Horticultural Achievement
- Environmental Responsibility
- Community Participation

It has a dedicated team of experienced committee members and judges most of whom are horticulturally qualified and members of the RHS who give their time voluntarily for advice to entrants and judging. East Midlands in Bloom have two main events of the year which include a Workshop/Seminar during February to which anyone who is interested is eligible to attend. The second event is the Presentation of Awards held in September to which representatives of all entries are invited to receive their awards. There is a yearly newsletter posted in December/January. Any interested party can request a free advisory visit for their community from one of our Bloom Team.

A number of regional winners will be invited to represent East Midlands in Bloom in the UK National Finals. They will compete against the winners from 17 other regions / nations, including Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man.

***To enter the campaign simply complete and return an entry form before the end of April and you will be contacted by a judge, usually during mid May, to confirm a judging date in July. You will be expected to provide a judging route to show the best aspects of your entry within your allocated time and also show a diary of events which should include evidence of all year round planting, community events such as litter-picking, fundraising etc., and any other activities that have been organised to improve your community. Entry into the Children's Painting/Digital Photography competition is also to be recommended (see page 13).***

If you are a small group just taking the first steps to improving your local area please do take the time to read about the non-competitive 'It's Your Neighbourhood' campaign (page 17). To be added to our mailing list or to obtain any other information, please contact EMiB Secretary Irene Bates, or e-mail: [info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk](mailto:info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk). Downloads of entry forms and additional information can be found on our website: [www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk)

## CATEGORIES AND TIMES ALLOWED FOR JUDGING:

CODE	CATEGORY	POPULATION from electoral roll*	JUDGING TIME (route). Additional time is available, see below**
Aa	Small Village	300 and under	1 hour
Ab	Village	301-1,000	1hr 15 minutes
Ac	Large Village	1,001-2,500	1 hr 30 minutes
Ba	Small Town	2,501-6,000	2 hours
Bb	Town	6,001-12,000	2 hours
Bc	Large Town	12,001-35,000	2 hrs 30 minutes
Ca	Small City	35,001-100,000	3 hours
Cb	City	100,001-200,000	3 hrs 30 minutes
Cc	Large City	200,001 and over	4 hours
Da	Urban Community	2,501 and over	2 hours
Ea	Coastal Resorts	Up to 12,000	2 hrs 30 minutes
Eb	Coastal Resorts	12,001 and over	3 hours
N	It's Your Neighbourhood	Variable	30 – 90 minutes approximately

\*Population figures for categories A-E must be taken from your **Electoral Roll** (verified by your local records office) and **must** be included on your completed entry form. Population banding alone (from column above) is **not** acceptable. A map must also be supplied showing the boundaries of your entry and the route the judges will take on your judging tour. This can be sent at a later date once you have decided your judging route.

\*\* **The additional time allowed** is 15 minutes for press opportunities, plus 15 minutes for you to give the judges an overview of the year-round involvement of your bloom activities, as well as an opportunity for judges to meet some key people from your entry. You can show the judges any other materials, e.g. display boards with newspaper cuttings or a short video. You can also highlight certain aspects in your portfolio/diary (pages 14-17). Please have a portfolio ready that the judges can take away with them as an aide memoir on the day. You have the option of posting it to the judges a fortnight before your judging visit. Do not give them your original copy, as we cannot guarantee its return. If you wish your portfolio to be returned, please make this clear to the judges and let them know whether you are happy to collect it at the Presentation of Awards or whether you require it returning earlier.

**MARKING CRITERIA** (Use in conjunction with the guidelines on pages 5-10).

The points obtainable under each section are shown.)

**Please note:** The same marking system is used across **all** categories, from **Small Village to Large City**, excepting 'It's Your Neighbourhood' (pages 17-19). The marking sheet is as follows:

<b>SECTION A: Horticultural Achievement</b> (50% of maximum score – total 100 points) Assessing year-round horticultural achievement including conservation and natural areas.		Maximum points obtainable
<b>A1:</b> Impact	<i>design, colours, appropriate choice of plants, special features, presentation, innovation</i>	20
<b>A2:</b> Horticultural Practice	<i>cultivation and maintenance, quality of plants, sustainability, new planting</i>	20
<b>A3:</b> Residential and Community Gardening	<i>residential, communal areas, allotments, public buildings (grounds of churches, schools etc.), car parks</i>	20
<b>A4:</b> Business areas and premises	<i>retail and shopping areas, leisure sites, transport terminals, car parks, farms, rural businesses, pubs</i>	20
<b>A5:</b> Green Spaces	<i>verges, parks and open public spaces</i>	20
<b>SECTION B: Environmental Responsibility</b> (25% of maximum score - total 50 points) Assessing year-round activities improving environmental responsibility.		
<b>B1:</b> Conservation and biodiversity	<i>wildlife areas, natural habitat</i>	10
<b>B2:</b> Resource management	<i>recycling, minimising demand placed on natural resources and any harmful impact on the environment</i>	10
<b>B3:</b> Local heritage	<i>management and development of local heritage and/or identity, inclusive of natural heritage</i>	10
<b>B4:</b> Local environmental quality	<i>management of vacant premises and plots, litter, graffiti, fly-posting, dog fouling etc.</i>	10
<b>B5:</b> Pride of place	<i>management of street furniture, signage, art in the landscape and hard landscaping</i>	10

<b>SECTION C: Community Participation</b> (25% of maximum score - total 50 points) <i>Assessing year-round community participation.</i>		
<b>C1:</b> Development and continuity	<i>development and sustainability of the local bloom initiative and evidence of on-going projects</i>	10
<b>C2:</b> Communication and education	<i>community awareness and understanding, engagement with schools and young people and/or other community groups, press coverage, publicity materials</i>	10
<b>C3:</b> Community participation	<i>community involvement is representative of the community's size and diversity</i>	10
<b>C4:</b> Year-round involvement	<i>schedules of events and supporting evidence of year-round activity (primary evidence to be presented in 15 minute presentation)</i>	10
<b>C5:</b> Funding and Support	<i>initiatives to secure on-going support for the local bloom campaign including local business support</i>	10
<b>Maximum TOTAL POINTS obtainable</b>		<b>200</b>

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES** (To be used in conjunction with the marking sheet above).

Please remember that your entire tour route is subject to judging. That means what the judges see on the way from one feature stop to another, as well as what they see at all the stops and as they further explore sites on foot during the tour are ALL subject to judging. Furthermore, the judges will expect that your campaign has considered your entire community not just the high street or the village square and that you, at the very least, have plans to address "problem" areas (i.e. vacant premises/plots, eyesores etc.). Finally, please also bear in mind that judges will be looking for your campaign activities to benefit your community not just for today but for the longer term.

## **SECTION A Horticultural Achievement (max.100 points; 50% of total)**

In this section the judges will be looking for your year-round achievements in horticulture (including conservation and natural areas) focusing on 5 key factors:

- A1. Impact
- A2. Horticultural practice
- A3. Residential and community gardening
- A4. Business areas and premises
- A5. Green spaces

Each of these key factors will make up 10% of your overall score and be worth a maximum of 20 points.

**The judges will take account of:**

<b>SECTION A: HORTICULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT – 100 points; 50%</b>	
<b>A1. IMPACT – 20 points; 10%</b> <i>Impact will be evaluated across the entry, in each area and as a whole</i>	
<b>Colours &amp; Design</b>	Is there a scheme or theme overall and/or in key locations? Are the colours/design suited for the location?
<b>Appropriate choice of plants</b>	Are there of too many/too few plants to enhance the area? Are the plants appropriate in terms of flowering period and habit? Is there Sufficient variation, appropriate herbaceous plants? Are there appropriate varieties of both newly planted and recently (up to 5 years) planted areas (including mixes of trees, shrubs and herbaceous planting). Planting could be for foliage effect, bark effect etc. or for a specific purpose (i.e. conservation) or to provide flowering or other effects for a defined period.
<b>Special features</b>	Sometimes provided as a focal point, and may include structures or an intensive area of bedding.
<b>Presentation</b>	Are areas well presented and maintained?
<b>Innovation</b>	Are new and creative ideas evident in the design, colours, themes, plant selection etc.?

<b>A2. HORTICULTURAL PRACTICE – 20 points; 10%</b>	
<i>Horticultural practice in all areas on the tour route will be assessed</i>	
<b>Cultivation and Maintenance</b>	Watering, dead-heading and weeding are important. Appropriate feeding may be necessary. May include irrigation considerations and thinning, trimming or pruning as appropriate.
<b>Quality of plants</b>	Good quality plants, obviously flourishing. No obvious signs of pests, diseases or deficiencies. Appropriate size for planting situation, appropriate soil type etc.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Sustainability is about ensuring ecological functions, processes, biodiversity and productivity can be maintained and only using resources at a rate at which they can be replenished naturally. You should therefore take into consideration the balance of permanent/sustainable planting vs. seasonal/bedding plants and the timing of displays.
<b>New planting</b>	How much new planting has been undertaken on an annual basis? Is there a longer-term plan for the whole area or district etc.?
<b>A3. RESIDENTIAL AND COMMUNITY GARDENING – 20 points; 10%</b>	
<b>Areas that may be included</b>	Residential - Primarily front gardens/gardens in public view Communal areas - Shared residential & communal spaces Allotments Public Buildings (grounds of) - includes schools, town halls, libraries, community centres, churches etc. Car parks
<b>What is assessed</b>	<i>This section relates to only the areas as described above but they will also be evaluated with consideration for the criteria outlined in sections A1 and A2.</i> Are these areas in keeping with the overall efforts of the campaign? Do they show support for the campaign's goals of improvement/enhancement? Has the campaign engaged other community groups in improving their own areas and/or included these areas in their own initiatives?
<b>A4. BUSINESS AREAS AND PREMISES – 20 points; 10%</b>	
<b>Areas that may be included</b>	Retail and shopping areas, leisure sites, transport terminals (i.e. bus stop, station), fee-paying car parks, farms, rural businesses, pubs, post offices, tourist areas/attractions and other business premises (i.e. estate agents, law offices) etc.
<b>What is assessed</b>	<i>This section relates to only the areas as described above but they will also be evaluated with consideration for the criteria outlined in sections A1 and A2.</i> Are these areas actively involved in the initiatives of the local bloom campaign? Are their efforts in keeping with the overall efforts of the campaign? Do they show support for the campaign's goals of improvement/enhancement? Support can include: sponsoring displays/planters, actively engaging in horticultural efforts on their own premises, funding bloom initiatives, volunteering/participating in local bloom activities etc.
<b>A5. GREEN SPACES – 20 points; 10%</b>	
<b>Areas that may be included</b>	Verges, parks and open public spaces including woodlands arboretums, bulb & tree planting initiatives, copse, shelterbelts
<b>What is assessed</b>	<i>This section relates to only the areas as described above but they will also be evaluated with consideration for the criteria outlined in sections A1 and A2.</i> Are these areas actively involved in the initiatives of the local bloom campaign? Are their efforts in keeping with the overall efforts of the campaign? Do they show support for the campaign's goals of improvement/enhancement?

Floral displays are an important element of the East Midlands in Bloom Campaign, but **must be proportionate** to the areas of sustainable planting and permanent landscaping within the entry. Floral displays may be present in a number of locations but typically, displays will be located in:

- ❖ Publicly owned areas, including parks, publicly owned buildings, roadside areas and roundabouts.
- ❖ Housing and residential areas, residential homes, schools, allotments etc.
- ❖ Shopping areas, business areas and premises, commercial premises, public houses, hotels, garages, and transport terminals such as bus and train stations.

East Midlands in Bloom has environmental responsibility at its core and the judges will wish to see permanent/sustainable planting initiatives as well. Landscaped areas with permanent plantings could include any of the areas outlined above as well as:

- ❖ Woodlands, copse, shelterbelts, verges, parks, public open spaces
- ❖ Business parks, industrial estates
- ❖ Screen planting, near factories/industrial areas, eyesores, vacant premises/plots etc.
- ❖ Amenity planting near residential areas, car parks, shopping areas

## **SECTION B Environmental Responsibility (max. 50 points; 25% of total)**

*In this section the judges will be looking for your year-round achievements in 5 key areas:*

- B1. Conservation and biodiversity
- B2. Resource management
- B3. Local heritage
- B4. Local environmental quality
- B5. Pride of place

Each of these key areas will make up 5% of your overall score and be worth a maximum of 10 points.

Please bear in mind that judges will be considering environmental responsibility across all areas of your local campaign so, for example, if you have a fabulous floral display they will also want to know if you have achieved this effect with consideration for the environment. Although this section does outline the key areas of environmental responsibility please bear this important core pillar in mind across all of your Bloom activities and initiatives.

**The judges will take account of:**

<b>SECTION B: ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY – 50 points; 25%</b>	
<b>B1. CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>Areas that may be included</b>	Wildlife areas and natural habitats
<b>What is assessed</b>	Is the local bloom campaign involved in: Efforts being made to preserve and maintain these areas? Activities to educate the community and encourage them to visit these areas? Activities or plans to re-introduce or restore these areas where they have disappeared or been damaged?
<b>B2. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>Areas that may be included</b>	Recycling; minimising demand placed on natural resources; minimising or where possible eliminating any harmful impact on the environment
<b>What is assessed</b>	What activities has the local bloom campaign been involved with or initiated to make strides in these areas? Has the bloom campaign shown due consideration to resource management in their own activities? For example, has the local bloom campaign recycled its container compost? Does the cemetery have a compost heap and waste separation area? Etc.
<b>B3. LOCAL HERITAGE – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>Areas that may be included</b>	Management and development of local heritage and/or identity such as natural heritage, community landmarks/icons, other heritage sites etc.
<b>What is assessed</b>	What activities has the local bloom campaign been involved with or initiated to ensure these areas are appropriately managed and developed? Has the campaign taken these areas into account in their own activities/initiatives?

<b>B4. LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>Areas/activities that may be included</b>	Vacant premises and plots, litter, graffiti, fly-posting, dog fouling, water features/courses, litter picks etc.
<b>What is assessed</b>	Has the local bloom campaign considered these areas/activities and actively included them in their initiatives? Are the efforts in these areas/activities in keeping with the overall efforts of the campaign? Do they show support for the campaign’s goals of improvement/enhancement?
<b>B5. PRIDE OF PLACE – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>Areas that may be included</b>	Management of street furniture, signage, art in the landscape, fences, way-marking, interpretation, hard landscaping etc.
<b>What is assessed</b>	Have these been considered in the initiatives of the local bloom campaign? Are the initiatives in these areas in keeping with the overall efforts of the campaign? Do they show support for campaign’s goals of improvement/enhancement?

The East Midlands in Bloom campaign encourages environmentally responsible activities/projects which are designed to improve the areas where we live, work and spend our leisure time. Looking after our environment has become a very important community concern and we are all being encouraged to recycle and use environmentally responsible products and practices wherever and whenever possible. It is the expectation that participants in East Midlands in Bloom will strive to provide a co-ordinated approach so that all environmental issues are resolved in harmony with each other.

The judges will be looking for local bloom groups to either initiate or actively engage with programmes/activities (as appropriate) which are working towards providing environmental enhancements and which might include:

- ❖ Establishing nature conservation and wildlife areas
- ❖ Cleaning up polluted sites and appropriate treatment/screening of derelict property or other eyesores
- ❖ Active policies to reduce the demand placed on natural resources - e.g. source of water used for plants, use of peat, use of hardwood timber etc
- ❖ Maintaining and preserving natural habitat.
- ❖ Minimal use of pesticides and nitrate fertilisers and reducing or eliminating harmful effects on the environment
- ❖ Interventions, management and development of local heritage (including natural heritage)

## **SECTION C Community Participation (max. 50 points; 25% of total)**

*In this section the judges will be looking for your year-round achievements in 5 key areas:*

- C1. Development and continuity
- C2. Communication and education
- C3. Community involvement
- C4. Year-round involvement
- C5. Funding and support

Each of these key areas will make up 5% of your overall score and be worth a maximum of 10 points.

Community participation is crucial to the success and continuity of East Midlands in Bloom campaigns and judges will consider community participation in all appropriate areas of the local campaign’s initiatives. For example they will consider whether the local campaign has engaged the community in responsible resource management or educated them about this important issue or whether they have tried to educate and engage the community with regards to local heritage sites. Although this section does outline the key areas of community participation, please bear this important core pillar in mind across all of your Bloom activities and initiatives.

**The judges will take account of:**

<b>SECTION C: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION – 50 points; 25%</b>	
<b>C1. DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUITY – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>Areas/activities which may be included</b>	Development and sustainability of the local bloom initiative and evidence of on-going projects

<b>What is assessed</b>	Has the local bloom campaign: Considered how to maintain and/or improve upon current achievements in the future? Are the initiatives/works of the campaign sustainable for the longer term? Have any plans been developed to ensure on-going benefits to the community of the local bloom campaign? Are there plans in place for on-going projects? Has the bloom campaign established a structure and support network to ensure its own existence and/or development in the future?
<b>C2. COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>Areas/activities which may be included</b>	Publicity materials; press coverage; signage/interpretation; displays; engaging with schools, young people and/or other community groups; community awareness and understanding; educational and awareness campaigns on key issues
<b>What is assessed</b>	Judges will expect to see evidence of public awareness campaigns and educational programmes generated and/or actively supported by the local bloom campaign. In this section they will particularly be looking for activities and initiatives to inform, educate and engage children and young people. The Judges will also want to see if the local bloom campaign has engaged with their local media (newspapers, magazines, radio, TV as applicable)?
<b>C3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>What is assessed</b>	Has the local bloom campaign made every effort to include and secure community involvement which is representative of the community's size and diversity? Have they engaged the community across all ages, ethnicities, races, cultures, religions, abilities (i.e. special needs and the disabled) and incorporated community reparation volunteers? (Reminder: community participation should be representative of your community. For example: If you have a young and ethnically diverse community the judges will expect to see them engaged with your Bloom initiatives.) Has the bloom campaign supported and encouraged any Neighbourhood Awards groups in their area or helped support the start up of new Neighbourhood Awards groups?
<b>C4. YEAR-ROUND INVOLVEMENT – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>Areas that may be included</b>	Entries will be expected to show evidence of a year-round programme of activity through photographs, sample promotional materials, press clippings, calendar of events etc. Some examples of "out of season" activities would be litter picks, leaf clearing, fundraising events, repairing/preparing of landscape areas and street furniture, educational activities, etc.
<b>What is assessed</b>	Judges will be evaluating whether the local bloom campaign has been active and has engaged the community throughout the year. The judges will evaluate this based primarily on the content of the 15 minute presentation however, they will also take into account other supporting evidence (see above) which can be displayed/distributed on the day and/or included in the portfolio. (See presentation and portfolio guidelines for additional details.)
<b>C5.- FUNDING AND SUPPORT – 10 points; 5%</b>	
<b>Areas that may be included</b>	Both efforts made to secure support and amount of support actually secured for the local bloom campaign. "Support" can mean not just funds but also the active engagement of the local government, commercial and corporate sectors, local businesses/offices and the general public in the campaign (i.e. maintenance support from council services, shopkeeper cleaning up & greening up their own storefront, local business sending staff out to volunteer on a Bloom project etc. qualify as active engagement).
<b>What is assessed</b>	Has the local bloom campaign made efforts to engage and secure support from local government, the commercial/corporate sector and local businesses? Have there been activities to raise support and/or funds from the general public? Has sufficient support been secured to ensure the campaign is able to deliver its objectives? Is there a plan of action to secure sufficient continuing support for the development and on-going projects of the campaign?

East Midlands in Bloom is a proactive campaign of communities creating long-term improvements to their local environment. As such it is expected that a diverse range of community members will be involved in the campaign and that there will be broad based public awareness and support. Focusing on community participation may require some local authorities and public bodies involved to in driving local bloom initiatives to take on the role of enabler or advisor to generate that participation.

East Midlands in Bloom’s positioning as a community improvement and environmentally responsible campaign means that the judges will want to see how finalists intend to continue to develop their programme. Judges will also be very interested to see that young people and schools have been involved and that care has been taken to make effective use of the educational opportunities which exist. Furthermore, East Midlands in Bloom is not just about spring and summer floral displays; it is about a year-round programme of activity to improve, enhance and maintain the environment around us and keep the community actively engaged in keeping things at their best.

*The judges will be looking for campaigns which:*

- ❖ Evidence thoughtful planning of how to maintain the improvements they make and how to develop in the future.
- ❖ Have an effective communication and education programme evidenced by the level of awareness and understanding in the community as well as by physical evidence such as informative signs and displays, press clippings, publicity materials etc.
- ❖ Evidence a broad base of community involvement across all ages, ethnic and/or religious backgrounds, and socio-economic groups with a particular effort to engage young people/schools/colleges as appropriate to their community.
- ❖ Have a year-round programme of activity to keep their community engaged and at its best throughout the year (not just spring/summer displays and activities).
- ❖ Have secured funding/sponsorship and/or support for their activities and the support of government, commercial, corporate, business sectors for their campaign.

**Please note that this information and entry forms can be downloaded from our website:**

[www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk)

## **EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM DISCRETIONARY AWARDS**

The following Discretionary Awards are awarded to the “In Bloom” entry by the judges where they feel it is merited each year. No application form is necessary.

<p><b>East Midlands Award for Horticultural Excellence within Parks.</b> <i>Given for: Planting and maintenance of beds within public parks.</i></p>
<p><b>Countryside Companions Award for Best Wildflower and Conservation Area.</b> <i>Given for: Efforts made to provide a wildflower and conservation area and effectiveness of the area. Appropriate management of these areas.</i></p>
<p><b>East Midlands in Bloom Award for the Most Improved Entrant</b></p>
<p><b>East Midlands in Bloom Award for the Least Littered Environment</b> <i>Given for: Upkeep and cleanliness of areas, general tidiness, lack of litter, graffiti and vandalism.</i></p>
<p><b>The East Midlands in Bloom Committee Award</b></p>
<p><b>Barcham Trees Award for Best New Permanent Landscape</b></p>

## EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM SPECIAL AWARDS

Below are four additional Special Awards that "In Bloom" entrants can register for.

Name of Award	Closing Date for forms
<b>A The Frank Constable Award</b> <i>for Best Residential Garden (page 11)</i>	30 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>B East Midlands in Bloom Award</b> <i>for Best Hotel/Pub Garden or Display (page 12)</i>	30 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>C East Midlands in Bloom Award</b> <i>for Best Retail/Commercial Premises (page 12)</i>	30 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>East Midlands in Bloom Award for best School Garden</b> ( <i>page 12</i> )	27 <sup>th</sup> May

If you intend to enter categories A, B or C but do not know who your nominations are likely to be before the closing date (perhaps you run your own local competition), please still let us know which categories you *intend* to enter by 30th April. You can let us have the full details later, as soon as you know them, preferably by 30th June. This ensures judges allocate adequate time for your 'In Bloom' entry when they make the judging arrangements.

The Best School Garden Special Award requires submission of a separate entry form (see page 12) and "In Bloom" entrants and their selected school must also read the accompanying [information pack](#) that has been specially written for them. All forms and information can be found on our website.

### A: The Frank Constable Award for Best Residential Garden

*This award was introduced in 2001 and is sponsored by our President, Frank Constable. To qualify for this award the nomination **must** be made by an "In Bloom" entry.*

#### Details of the award

- ❖ **Name of Award:** The Frank Constable Award for Best Residential Garden
- ❖ **Form of Award:** An engraved trophy together with a certificate to be presented annually by the President and retained by the recipient.
- ❖ **Judging:** The EMIB entrant will nominate one 'best garden' from their community to be inspected by the EMIB judges during their judging tour in July. Judges will award marks out of 20, for consideration by the judges' panel, using additional photographic evidence to determine the overall winner. Previous winners cannot re-enter for this award.

#### Rules:

- ❖ Judges should be shown the 'In Bloom' entry's single nominated 'best garden' on the annual judging tour.
- ❖ Please use the Special Awards form available from our website and make sure you register your intention to enter before the closing date even if you do not know who your nomination will be at this date.
- ❖ Side and rear gardens may be entered if they are clearly visible to the public.
- ❖ Please ensure the owners of the garden are aware that their garden will be visited on the pre-arranged date, so that judges can have access.
- ❖ If the garden nominated is off the normal judging route, it will be possible to make arrangements with the judges for this to be inspected separately at the beginning, middle or end of the judging tour. Please make the judges aware of your intention before the start of the tour.
- ❖ Please supply the judges with (a) photograph/s, clearly named (that can be taken away) of the nominated garden for use in the final judging process.
- ❖ A maximum of 15 minutes is allowed in addition to that of your 'In Bloom' judging time.
- ❖ If the entire 15 minutes is not used, the remainder *cannot* be added on to your 'In Bloom' judging time.
- ❖ East Midlands in Bloom reserve the right to use photographs of the entry for publication purposes.

#### Marking criteria

- ❖ **Visibility.** The garden should be visible to the public and make a positive contribution to the street scene. Account will be taken of the degree of pleasure given by the garden to the wider community.
- ❖ **Design.** Includes how creatively the available space has been used and the combination of plant form, texture and colour. Displays will be assessed to see if the layout and plants chosen are sufficiently varied to offer interest and colour throughout the year. Account will be taken of the effort and imagination used to overcome site constraints and obstacles.
- ❖ **Maintenance Standards.** Looks for overall impact, standards of grassed areas, edging, dead heading etc.

## B: Best Pub/Hotel Garden or Display Special Award and C: Best Retail/Commercial Premises Special Award

*These were introduced in 2007 and they are an integral part of the Bloom campaign. Applicants are invited to submit their single best entry in any or all Special Awards, either as part of an "In Bloom" entry or independently if there is no other local "In Bloom" entry. To check if there is one, please contact the EMiB Secretary. The closing date is April 30<sup>th</sup>.*

### Rules:

- ❖ An "In Bloom" entrant is only allowed to nominate one in each category of Special Award.
- ❖ Please use the Special Awards form available from our website and make sure you register your intention to enter before the closing date even if you do not know who your nomination will be by this date.
- ❖ A maximum of 15 minutes each for categories A, B & C is allowed in addition to your normal "In Bloom" judging time, and may be judged before, during or after your 'In Bloom' judging tour. Judges must be informed of your intention before the start of the tour.
- ❖ If the entire 15 minutes is not used, the remainder **cannot** be added on to your 'In Bloom' judging time.
- ❖ The "In Bloom" entrant must ensure that the proprietor/owner etc. is made aware of the judging date and time of the Special Award nomination as soon as it is confirmed with their EMiB judges. Judges reserve the right to disallow an entry if the proprietor is not informed of their visit.
- ❖ The entry must be permanent and original.
- ❖ EMiB Judges reserve the right to disqualify entrants who submit outside of the criteria and their decision is final.
- ❖ East Midlands in Bloom reserve the right to use photographs of the entry for publication purposes.

### Best School Garden Special Award

*The Special Award for Best School Garden requires submission of a **separate** entry form and "In Bloom" entrants and their **single** selected school must also read the **accompanying guidelines** and **information pack** that has been specially written to help them. The later closing date for this award is May 27<sup>th</sup>. All forms are available to download from our website.*

The Best School Garden will be judged by different judge/s on a different date and/or time from that of the main "In Bloom" judging. The same school can also be entered as part of your main judging tour (this will be a short visit only), but please ensure the head teacher is made aware of the date and time you intend to visit the school well before the visit. Judges reserve the right to disallow an entry if the relevant contact person at the school is not informed of their visit beforehand.

**Thirty minutes** are allocated for the judging and all schools will receive a report and certificate following the Presentation of Awards in mid September. Results are confidential before that date. Representatives from the winning school will be invited to the Awards Presentation in September.

To further involve our younger Bloom enthusiasts please go to [page 13](#) for details of our East Midlands in Bloom Children's Painting Competition, and the Digital Photography Competition.

*To see details of the RHS Campaign for School Gardening please go to [page 19](#).*

## FOR YOUNGER 'BLOOMERS'

### The East Midlands in Bloom Children's Painting Competition and Digital Photography Competition

These competitions encourage young people to develop a caring attitude towards the environment by looking at their immediate surroundings, by recognising and recording plants, flowers, trees and shrubs: and by acknowledging the contribution an environment which is cared for, makes to the quality of life.

Children are asked to paint a picture which this year continues with the theme of "In Your Garden".

Entry forms and details can be obtained from our website: [www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk](http://www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk) or contact: **Valerie Farrow our Children's co-ordinator on: [valeriefarrow@phonecoop.coop](mailto:valeriefarrow@phonecoop.coop)**

First placed winners of each of the categories will be invited to the Presentation of Awards in September to receive their prize and certificate.

See also the East Midlands in Bloom Special Award for 'Best School Garden' (page 12).

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## POST JUDGING - CATEGORY AWARDS

One of the following five awards will be presented to each "in Bloom" entrant at the Presentation of Awards in September. No results will be released until then. All results will be available on our website following this date.

Award	Percentage%	Points	Grade
Gold	85 +	170 -200	Outstanding
Silver Gilt	75-84	150-169	Very Good
Silver	60-74	120-149	Good
Bronze	50-59	100-119	Average
Certificate of Achievement	0-49	0-99	Fair

The awards system ensures that all entrants receive a grading, allowing them to benchmark against others in their category. All categories will be marked against the strict judging criteria to determine an award level. Due to the high percentage of marks required to gain gold, very few are awarded. Britain in Bloom and the RHS use this method of marking for the national competition and their flower shows.

East Midlands in Bloom will invite representatives of all entries to attend the Presentation of Awards which will be held annually in September at a pre-agreed venue.

We are grateful to Oadby & Wigston who are hosting the Presentation of Awards this year at the Cedar Suite, Parklands Leisure Centre, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5JJ on September 14<sup>th</sup> 2011. Invitations will be sent to entrants in July/August.

It's Your Neighbourhood Awards will be held at various regional events which will be announced later in the year.

**New Venue suggestions are always welcomed from our entrants! Please contact us.**

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## PREPARING YOUR DIARY/PORTFOLIO

During July each year the East Midlands in Bloom judges visit many places from large cities to small villages. The specified time spent by the judges at each location means they only see a small fraction of what has been achieved over the past 12 months or so. To pick up points therefore, your portfolio/diary needs to clearly illustrate what you have achieved during the rest of the year, throughout the other seasons, and across all sections. For example:

- ❖ Local competitions
- ❖ Involvement of the community
- ❖ Improvements made over the past year and encompassing as well the wider environmental approach of the competition
- ❖ Keep a photographic record of all the things that have been done during the year - even committee meetings
- ❖ Use selected press cuttings to show what publicity has been achieved.
- ❖ The judges will be impressed with before and after photographs of earlier plantings, projects and records of achievements in collecting litter, improving public places and waterways and generally cleaning up the environment.

Whilst the portfolio needs to embrace a wide range of subjects, it also needs to be kept simple and easy to read. It has often been said that the most effective reports are those which are restricted to one side of an A4 sheet. Remember - '*A Picture Paints A Thousand Words*' **but**, also remember to add that important caption!

**When it comes to completing that all important marking sheet, the portfolio is an essential aide memoir for every judge. In other words, after a long and tiring day of judging, (sometimes more than one entry per day) it helps to jog the judges' memory of what they have been told and seen earlier. Do not give the judges your only precious copy of your portfolio, as its return cannot be guaranteed.**

**If you would like your portfolio returned, please make sure the judges are made aware of this and let them know whether you need it before the Presentation of Awards when it will usually be available for collection.**

### The advice is:

- ❖ Start collecting materials as soon as you decide to enter the competition.
- ❖ Make it a pictorial record.
- ❖ Include a copy of the itinerary used on the day of judging.
- ❖ Be original
- ❖ Keep it simple and easy to read.

### Some Winning Tips

Co-operation between the local authority, public sector, private groups and individuals is of utmost importance in this competition. Judges will allocate marks for activity by each of these groups so it is important that they all contribute.

- ❖ Do take photographs as soon as you decide to enter.
- ❖ The judges are in a position to award marks for displays at other times of the year, i.e. spring bulbs and autumn colour so they need to see photographs of this display.
- ❖ Show your long term commitment by keeping a record of your achievements: litter picks, pond clearance and community involvement to show your efforts.
- ❖ It is not just flowers that the judges are looking at; the absence of litter, dog fouling and graffiti is a necessity.
- ❖ The condition of park benches, notice boards, fences etc., should be good. They should be well maintained and the areas around them weed free.
- ❖ Litter bins should be carefully sited, regularly emptied and kept clean.
- ❖ Why not get the local social services involved, brightening up old peoples homes, day centres and hospitals?
- ❖ Car parks, railway stations, bus stations and stops are important - the first port of call for visitors. Make them welcome!
- ❖ Why not run competitions or provide incentives for local businesses, hotels, shops and offices? As well as brightening up their premises, some may sponsor flower displays!

- ❖ Get the support of your local press - as well as publicising your efforts they can help maintain enthusiasm.
- ❖ Initiate new projects that brighten up your environment. How about planting a garden for the blind, encouraging wildlife to your community in your choice of plants, using wild flowers in your displays, starting a butterfly garden at your local school, planting a hedge maze? Originality could earn your marks from the judges as well as benefiting your community.
- ❖ Above all, this competition is not about how much money you spend! If you work together and enjoy yourselves your enthusiasm will shine through. The judges are looking for pride in your surroundings, cleanliness and team effort.

## Putting the finishing touches to your Judging Itinerary

You will be contacted by a judge (usually between the middle of May and June), and allocated a date and time for judging. Please **confirm in writing** to the judge concerned that this date and time is acceptable to you, and wherever possible, include a directional map. Do make sure that the judges (they are usually paired up, but occasionally there may be an additional trainee judge) know where they are to meet you. Please provide a mobile **contact** telephone number in case of any emergencies on the day.

- ❖ Make sure car parking facilities are available for your judges.
- ❖ Remember that the judges may not enter your Town/Village by the main route.
- ❖ Do offer the judges comfort facilities on their arrival (remember they may have just driven 70 or 80 miles).
- ❖ If the judges visit in the morning then a drink of tea or coffee would be most welcome.
- ❖ Be relaxed - this helps to relax everyone.
- ❖ Wet weather - have umbrellas available, if necessary; have an alternative route planned.
- ❖ Do plan the Itinerary - if for any reason you have to change the itinerary, do tell the judges.
- ❖ Take each section of the judging form and try to ensure the judges see at least one of the areas mentioned.
- ❖ Consider the use of a short video; say 5/6 minutes long at the start of the visit, whilst having coffee - show winter work or pre-visit activities.
- ❖ Don't turn your video into a full length feature film.
- ❖ Do check the route out on the day of judging and remove any litter left from the previous night, if possible.
- ❖ Do have a copy of the itinerary for the judges at the start - don't give it to them after the visit.
- ❖ If you can cover your route alone in 1 hour, it is very likely that on the day of judging it will take twice as long. Please make allowances for discussion with key people, and busy times of the day.
- ❖ Don't expect the judges to judge for more than the allocated time for your category. However, extra time can be allowed for any unforeseen circumstances or press activity - this will be at the judges' discretion.
- ❖ Do have transport arranged - do know who is going with who if more than one vehicle is going to be used.
- ❖ If you intend for the judges to meet with someone who is not a Committee Member e.g. a garden competition winner, or local schoolchildren, please make sure they know you are coming and how long you will be spending with them so they are not disappointed if you need to rush the judges along.
- ❖ If you are planning a reception for the judges after the visit to meet with the people involved or prize winners of your competitions, then please advise the judges beforehand to enable them to plan their day. Their schedule is very tight but if they know what is planned beforehand then they will be very pleased to spend the time with you.
- ❖ Introduce the judges to everyone – but don't expect them to remember all the names (name badges could be used). A list of their names and who/what they represent would also be helpful.
- ❖ Do remember the judges enjoy meeting the people involved with your entry into the 'In Bloom' Competition.
- ❖ Do give the judges time and space to take in what they are seeing and being told - otherwise they may just miss that vital element that would have given you that extra point you needed to be a winner.
- ❖ Do remember if you are judged in the afternoon that the judges will probably have judged that morning. If the judges require more time they will say so.
- ❖ Be prepared to give the judges a few minutes on their own.
- ❖ Do provide the judges with a portfolio showing what has been done during the previous twelve months, e.g. bulb planting etc. and/or any activities that have taken place at schools (e.g. EMIB Children's Painting Competition). The portfolio will be used by the judges as an aide memoir and will be returned if requested.
- ❖ Don't make the Portfolio a copy of War & Peace!
- ❖ Don't spring any surprise receptions on the judges.
- ❖ Don't cram too much into the visit.

**Don't be put off, enjoy the day, it's your day!**

## PORTFOLIO (Villages)

### **Content**

- ❖ A brief introduction/resume about your entry including the names and roles of your committee members
- ❖ The portfolio should be thought of as a diary or record of the tasks and events that have taken place over the past twelve months. This should include all-year-round photographs and, wherever possible, before and after shots. Please note that all photographs should be dated and relatively recent i.e. Not taken longer than two years ago
- ❖ It should illustrate your achievements to date and outline your goals for the future
- ❖ The judges are interested in year-round effort and work undertaken in areas not included in the tour (for example show evidence of people actually getting involved in projects outside of the summer)
- ❖ Show how your 'in bloom' is funded (if through a fundraising event e.g. coffee morning etc, it's also good to see photos!)
- ❖ Press coverage is all-important but please don't just fill the portfolio with press cuttings: why not find some display boards and use them to showcase your in bloom activity. These can then be examined during the judges' comfort break.

### **Recommendations**

- ❖ Not larger than A4
- ❖ Not more than 15 pages (30 sides)
- ❖ Please do not include important documents. Portfolios are either kept for reference and/or may be returned if requested. Please make sure judges are aware of when and where to return them. Alternatively they can be collected at the Presentation of Awards in September.
- ❖ Please remember that the size of font you use for your text can make a big difference to the number of words you get onto the page, e.g.

East Midlands in Bloom =12 point

East Midlands in Bloom =11 point

East Midlands in Bloom = 10 point

Don't however; go too small, the Judges do after all need to be able to read the document. The preferred font size is 12 point.

- ❖ The portfolio doesn't have to be professionally designed; there are **no** marks for portfolio presentation. Do however, keep it simple and clear, and concentrate on content detail which demonstrates your community's efforts to create improvements to your local environment.

## For East Midlands in Bloom:

### **How many and who wants it?**

- ❖ One copy (one per judge if possible)
- ❖ For the judges
- ❖ On the judging day

## PORTFOLIO (Towns and Cities)

### **Content**

- ❖ A brief introduction/resume about your entry including the names and roles of your committee members
- ❖ The portfolio should be thought of as a diary or record of the task and events that have taken place over the past twelve months. This should include all-year-round photographs and, wherever possible, before and after shots. Please note that the photographs should be dated and relatively recent i.e. Not taken longer than 2 years ago
- ❖ The judges are interested in year-round effort and work undertaken in areas not included in the tour (for example show evidence through the use of photographs of people actually getting involved in the planting of winter/spring displays and other projects outside of the summer)
- ❖ It should also be where you should outline your policy and strategy plans, these might include or outline key objectives and approach for the 12-month period alongside longer-term aims for bloom delivery. Please ensure these include any partnerships and community participation plans, education aims and preparations for future development
- ❖ Give examples as to how you conserve and manage your natural resources
- ❖ Give examples of initiatives to combat litter and graffiti etc

- ❖ Demonstrate how you get the wider community involved
- ❖ Indicate how you encourage recycling
- ❖ Show how your 'in bloom' is funded (if through a fundraising event i.e. coffee morning etc, it's also good to see photos!)
- ❖ Press coverage is all-important but, please don't fill the portfolio with press cuttings: why not find some display boards and use them. These can then be examined during the judges' comfort break

### **Recommendations**

- ❖ Not larger than A4
- ❖ Not more than 15 pages (30 sides)
- ❖ Please do not include important documents. Portfolios are either kept for reference and/or may be returned if requested. Please make sure judges are aware of when and where to return them. Alternatively they can be collected at the Presentation of Awards in September.
- ❖ Please remember that the size of font you use for your text can make a big difference to the number of words you get onto the page, e.g.

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- ❖ The portfolio doesn't have to be professionally designed; there are **no** marks for portfolio presentation. Do however, keep it simple and clear, and concentrate on content detail which demonstrates your community's efforts to create improvements to your local environment.

### **For East Midlands in Bloom:**

#### ***How many and who wants it?***

- ❖ One copy (one per judge if possible)
- ❖ For the judges
- ❖ On the judging day

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## **IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD**

This is the non competitive category of the Bloom Campaign and is ideal for any group taking the first steps towards community improvements. Any group (defined as more than one person!) eager to make a difference to their local environment, whether a few neighbours keen to tackle local litter, or a larger action group determined to turn-around a problem 'grot spot' or eyesore is eligible to enter.

East Midlands in Bloom are delighted with the standards achieved by our neighbourhood entrants since this category was introduced in our region in 2006.

The Royal Horticultural Society's It's Your Neighbourhood campaign is part of the wider Britain in Bloom initiative, providing an opportunity for smaller community groups to get involved.

It's Your Neighbourhood is a unique scheme for volunteer led community gardening projects/groups which are focused on cleaning up and greening up their local area, whether that is the estate where they live or the back alley they share or the local community centre's outdoor space.

It's Your Neighbourhood is an inclusive, non-competitive scheme which welcomes projects/groups of all kinds.

**Getting involved** is very easy, in fact, you only need 2 things:

1. A group (2 or more people!)
2. An idea for a project.

*Once you have these things, you are ready to get started!*

It's Your Neighbourhood is all about bringing members of the community together to make a positive change to the place they live, work or spend their leisure time. Groups participating in the campaign are asked to focus on its three core pillars of:

- Community Participation (40% of marks)
- Environmental Responsibility (30% of marks)
- Gardening Achievement (30% of marks)

While participating groups are not judged against each other, they are visited by environmental and horticultural "in Bloom" experts, who provide valuable feedback and helpful advice on how to develop current activities and encourage ongoing improvements.

Based on the assessment visit, each community will receive an RHS certificate of achievement reflecting the extent to which participants have met the It's Your Neighbourhood aims as encompassed in the three core pillars.

There are **five levels** of achievement in It's Your Neighbourhood:

Establishing, Improving, Developing, Thriving and Outstanding – and groups who have done consistently well over time may be nominated to receive the It's Your Neighbourhood National Certificate of Distinction.

It's Your Neighbourhood is open to groups of all sizes and with a variety of projects, as long as they are focused on cleaning up and greening their local area and as long as they are:

- A group
- Hands on
- Involved in community gardening
- Representative of the community and/or getting input from the community
- Benefitting the community
- Volunteer-led
- Sustainable over time
- Owned by the community and with the community responsible for the work.

Some examples of It's Your Neighbourhood groups are:

- A residents' group/association
- A "friends of" group
- A youth group
- An alley gate area.

All It's Your Neighbourhood groups receive the following support from the RHS:

- A helpful support pack (a guide for participants)
- The chance to draw on the experiences of other local communities through a strong Britain in Bloom network
- Access to a network of 3,000 local gardening clubs and horticultural societies offering support and expertise
- Product offers from selected suppliers
- A quarterly community gardening review magazine
- Special access to expert RHS advisors' individual advice
- Access to a vast array of information and helpful tools on the RHS website:
  - The Plant Selector (helping you choose appropriate plants for your area)
  - The Plant Finder (everything you need to know about a plant including how to care for it and where to buy it)
  - Month by Month guide to what to do in the garden
  - Guide to organic and sustainable gardening
  - Guide to composting
  - Guide to wildlife gardening.

In addition, It's Your Neighbourhood groups have access to valuable support from their region/nation organisers. What are the benefits?

- **Cleaner and greener surroundings**
- Developing a **sense of community** and creating positive interaction between community members.
- **Safer** environments for the enjoyment of local people.
- **Reduction in anti-social behaviour.**
- **Increased civic pride** as local people take ownership of the improvements to the area.

- **Positive effect on the local economy** such as increased commercial enterprise
- **Helping the environment** through recycling, energy conservation, reducing litter, improving/adding green spaces and other sustainable practices
- Greater **community contact**/relationship with the local authority.

For further details please contact Irene Bates or visit our website where you can download participants' guidelines and see an assessment sheet.

More information including case studies from previous participants is also available on the RHS website: [www.rhs.org.uk/itsyourneighbourhood](http://www.rhs.org.uk/itsyourneighbourhood)

There is a *free* electronic RHS advisory service for "It's Your Neighbourhood" entrants at: [advisory@rhs.org.uk](mailto:advisory@rhs.org.uk) (please make "BIBIYN" your subject heading). This is open to registered groups only.

The CLOSING DATE for registration into the RHS East Midlands in Bloom 'It's Your Neighbourhood' 2011 is **30<sup>th</sup> April**. After this date you can register for the 2012 campaign.

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## RHS CAMPAIGN FOR SCHOOL GARDENING

This is a campaign organized by the RHS for young people to develop their understanding and appreciation of plants and the diversity of the plant kingdom, and to enjoy the physical, emotional and therapeutic benefits of gardening.

The RHS Campaign for School Gardening works by helping schools and youth groups to take positive action to transform an area in their school grounds or the wider community into a garden, and by encouraging teachers to use the 'outdoor classroom' to deliver the National Curriculum in a more flexible and imaginative way and give children first hand experiences of good citizenship.

Gardening offers huge potential for teaching the National Curriculum – not just science but subjects ranging from geography, art and design and history through to maths, PSHE and citizenship. Education has always been central to the RHS's charitable mission and it recently launched a 'Vision for Learning' which outlines plans to inform and inspire people about plants and growing – particularly those who don't usually have access to either.

For more information please go to: [www.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening](http://www.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening);

or make contact via e-mail: [schoolgardening@rhs.org.uk](mailto:schoolgardening@rhs.org.uk)

or write to School and Family Learning, RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The RHS produces a helpful range of literature about biodiversity including an information leaflet entitled 'Gardens and biodiversity'. There is also a range of Conservation and Environment leaflets on subjects relating to biodiversity such as:

- Wildflowers in the garden
- Wildlife in gardens
- Invasive non-native species
- Wild & endangered plants in cultivation
- CITES (Convention on International Trade in endangered species of wild flora and fauna)
- Bringing plants in from abroad

These leaflets and information about biodiversity are available from

[www.rhs.org.uk/Learning/research/conservation\\_and\\_environment.asp](http://www.rhs.org.uk/Learning/research/conservation_and_environment.asp)

To contact the National Britain in Bloom team please contact the RHS Community Horticulture team on:

[britaininbloom@rhs.org.uk](mailto:britaininbloom@rhs.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7821 3360

**In all instances please feel free to contact Irene Bates, East Midlands in Bloom Secretary:**

**Tel: 01332 679598 or via e-mail at: [info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk](mailto:info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk)**

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