



London in Bloom & South & South East in Bloom

Green Lines

August 2022



This newsletter will be only a short version this month as we are currently busy ratifying awards, organising certificates & trophies and the Award Ceremonies for South & South East and London in Bloom. I hope you have all received your invitation to attend (two per entry) and applied for your tickets. The closing date for tickets closed was the 17th of August, but we still could squeeze a few more in if you have forgotten or missed the emailed invitations and several call-outs.

Please let Anne or Kate know if you still wish to attend as a matter of urgency.

The drought is still showing its effects, and hose pipe bans have become the norm for many of us. Water is such a precious commodity, so please take care and only water what is essential and then only with a watering can.

Having judged and assessed many entries this year and in previous droughts, it's probably time for many of us to reassess our gardening practices. We will provide some information and guidance over the coming year about what we, as gardeners, can do to mitigate what looks like arid summers in the future. We sincerely hope you have not lost too many plants this summer and your gardens will recover as they have in the past.

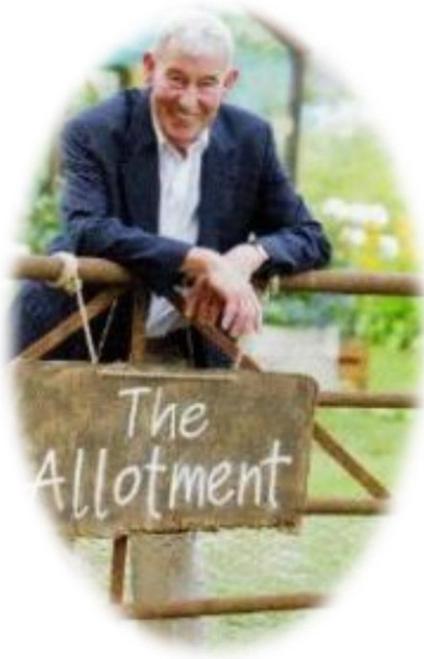
We will soon have updated websites and we will let you know when they are up and ready, so you can see what's changed.

In the meantime, we look forward to seeing you at our Awards, but if not, enjoy the rest of the gardening year and please don't stress over the drought; grass and most plants will recover once we get some significant rainfall!

Two good articles from Jim & Reg follow, and some great ideas of what to do next!

Best wishes, Ed:

Jim Buttress VMH – Patron South & South East in Bloom & London in Bloom



At the beginning of August, I was a guest celebrity at the Taunton Flower Show and took part in a Gardeners Question Time which was sponsored by the local radio station Apple FM

The majority of the questions concerned the present drought conditions and how we should consider gardening in the future. It was apparent the audience was very anxious and, in some cases proposing some drastic action! I decided to stand up on the stage and do my Corporal Jones impression.

“Don't panic” “Don't panic.”

I want to share with you some of the suggestions we gave the audience as a sensible way forward. If you have a Conservatory or garden shed with a gutter, recycle the rainwater into a water butt. Use plants from hot climates, Southern Hemisphere, e.g., Osteospermums, Verbena rigida, Echinacea varieties and Geums.

Until we receive considerable water, I would avoid doing the following jobs in the garden.

1. Planting spring bulbs in the ground
2. Splitting and replanting herbaceous perennials
3. Autumn lawn care to improve health and appearance by scarifying [raking out thatch], aerating [spiking] compacted areas, topdressing and reseeding bare patches.
4. Trees and shrubs under these drought conditions will prematurely shed their leaves and give the appearance of dying. Do not prune or even remove the plants. Plants are more resilient than you think. I suggest you leave items alone.

You can always test by scratching the bark with your thumb or finger. If the plant is still alive, the underlayer (Cambium layer) should be green. If these conditions continue, we should adopt a different approach to maintaining and planting in our gardens. We need to improve the structure of the soil by adding plenty of manure or garden compost. In the early spring, mulch as much in the garden as possible. I would apply a slow-release fertiliser to trees and shrubs in the Spring. When selecting plants, use silver foliage like lavender or Senecio. Plants with furry leaves retain moisture. Narrow shape leaves survive well in the

conditions, as do herbs. A recent article in a national newspaper by a horticultural scientist stated that keeping your plants really well watered all the time encourages them to need more water. If you reduce the water you use without causing your plant to wilt, you will train them to be drought tolerant. Abscisic acid is produced by plants' roots when they are partially dried, which makes the plant close the Stomata pores (holes) in leaves, reducing the water it needs.

Tom Brown, the Head Gardener at West Dean College, Chichester, has created a 12,000-square-foot Meadow using a variety of deep-rooted and drought tolerant perennials, which he is using to teach people about gardening with less water and using such plants as Rudbeckia maxima, Agastache, Tulbaghia, Echinacea and Echinops. It's well worth a visit.

Finally, whatever you do - Don't Panic!

Keep Safe, Keep Smiling, keep gardening

Jim



Figure 3 Echinops



Figure 2 Rudbeckia maxima



Figure 1 Agastache



Figure 4 Echinacea



Figure 5 Tulbaghia

.GARDENING TIPS & TASKS

For September

Reg Leach, SSEiB Ambassador, Judge and Parks Manager – retired.

Welcome to the August bulletin with some September 'Tasks'.

The weather has generally been kind to us this year for the judging season, and there has been the usual array of fantastic entries. Well done to everyone for all your efforts and hard work this year.

As we are going through a second heatwave this summer (as I write), it reminds me how we need to minimise containerised planting wherever possible in the future, as watering in the current conditions is becoming increasingly complex, particularly with hosepipe bans in place. So perhaps a review of containerised plants this winter for next year is timely!

As August drifts into September, the garden will inevitably look a little tired, with plants having expended a lot of energy in the last few months, particularly this year when we have had a good amount of sunshine. However, continue to water, feed and deadhead to extend the summer season well into the autumn – particularly for containerised plants.

Here are a few tasks for the month ahead. I have added a few more beneficial plants for birds, bees and butterflies, following on from last month's list.

BASKETS, TROUGHS & POTS

If your containers and hanging baskets are unfortunately past their best and looking the worst for wear, consider emptying them and sterilising the containers to kill off any vine weevils and or grubs and store them. Hence, they are ready to use again for winter/spring displays or next summer.

BEDDING

If your summer bedding is still looking good, don't be tempted to take it out too soon - we may have an Indian summer!

Keep deadheading to encourage more flowering. Towards the end of the month and into October, your bedding will probably have passed its best so consider removing and preparing the soil for winter/spring bedding. If you have some excellent humus from your compost bin, add it to your soil before replanting or buy some well-rotted horse manure and incorporate it into the soil.

If you sowed seeds of Wallflower, Bellis, and Polyanthus earlier in the year, late September or early October is the time to consider planting them out into their flowering position.

However, if the weather is still warm, hold off planting winter/spring plants and bulbs, but still prepare the beds, so they are ready.

BIRDS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES

Following on from last month, here are some more beneficial plants.

If the room is available, it is a good idea to include both early and late season flowering plants so birds, bees and butterflies can benefit at the start and the end of the year.

Herbaceous perennials/biennials and prairie-style plants

Just about every plant in this category is beneficial:

Achillea; Agastache; Aster; Borage; Catananche; Cosmos; Digitalis; Echinacea;

Echium pininana; Echinops; Eupatorium; Helenium; Helianthemum;

Lavatera; Nepeta; Perovskia; Phlox; Pulmonaria; Rudbeckia; Salvia (there are many varieties and colours these days); Scabious; Sedum; Stachys; Verbascum; Verbena.

Shrubs with flowers:

Some of the most favourite shrubs for bees and butterflies are Buddleia, Ceanothus; Cistus; Cotoneaster; Cytisus; Honeysuckle (which also attracts night flying moths as does summer flowering Jasmine); Jasmine (Winter); Lavender; Lavatera; Mahonia; Ribes; Rosemary; Trachelospermum;

Shrubs with berries:

Berberis, such as *B. darwinii*, has great orange/yellow flowers, followed by purple fruits, but Berberis can be vicious with their spines, so consider where you plant it – perhaps plant up as a hedge; they'll be a good deterrent, too on perimeter fence lines; Callicarpa; Cotoneaster; Leycesteria; Mahonia.

Hedges with berries: If you have space, consider a mixed hedgerow consisting of Blackthorn, Holly, Hawthorn, Pyracantha and Viburnum opulus.

Herbs:

All are great for attracting bees if allowed to flower, particularly Oregano, Thyme and Chives.

Ericaceous plants

Heathers – Erica, Calluna (Ling) and Daboecia. Not all Heathers need acidic soil but prefer slightly acid soils to flourish.

Summer flowering bulbs

They are also a valuable source for bees and butterflies, such as Agapanthus, all the Alliums and Lillies.





Other plants:

Don't forget sunflowers attract bees to flowers and birds for the seeds. In addition, some less hardy plants, such as Heliotrope and Lantana, do well outside in the summer.

I know I regularly say this but keep birdfeeders topped up throughout the summer and winter to encourage birds into your garden all year round. I have enjoyed an increasing number of Greenfinches & Goldfinches in my garden this year, and they also try to keep down the numbers of greenfly!

BLOOM THOUGHTS

With judging over for another year, now is a good time to review how the day went while it's still fresh in your mind and whether to tweak things for next year.

The Tour:

Was everything of importance shown to the judge in the time allowed, what should have been included that wasn't, and what needs to be taken out?

Portfolio / Information provided for the judge:

If provided, what in hindsight should have been included that wasn't? Was there enough information about all year-round activities and events and details about the funding, support and sponsorship? For any project work, try to remember to take before and after photographs.

Feedback on the day:

The judge will have given comments during the tour, which will be useful for next year, so make a note and liaise with your team, perhaps include some of the suggestions for autumn/winter projects.

Judges reports:

When provided after the presentation Awards, the report will help you plan more for next year too.

BULBS/TUBERS

Deadhead to keep them flowering (such as Dahlias until the first frost) and deadhead bulbs, such as Agapanthus, so the energy goes back into the bulb, not into seed formation.

CLIMBERS

Wisteria will now have long, straggly growths, so cut these back to two or three buds of the old wood to keep them in check and to retain the old framework. If you want to extend the framework, select appropriate shoots and tie them into the area you want to cover. Prune and tie in climbing and rambling roses in the same way.

GLASSHOUSES & TENDER PLANTS

Keep a watch on the weather and bring them in towards the end of the month and into October as the nights get cooler.

HEDGES

Hedges may need one last trim for this year.

HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS

Continue deadheading herbaceous perennials to encourage later flowering, but leave any old 'Architectural' flowering heads to add interest in the garden, such as grasses and alliums. Leave the faded sunflower heads on, as they will continue feeding the birds.

LAWNS

Continue to mow if required or if you still have bents (flowering seed heads) and hold off any decompaction or seeding works until later as September can still be warm and the soil firm following periods of no rain.

LEAF FALL

Remove fallen leaves that now start to come from trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants as we move into autumn and compost them. If you don't have a compost bin, consider one before autumn sets in to produce your compost.

PRUNING

Prune back late summer flowering shrubs if they have finished flowering to allow new growth to be produced for next year's flowers. Also, consider cutting back shrubs that are taking up too much space and reshaping them, or make a note to move them in the late autumn.



PROPAGATION & INCREASING YOUR STOCK

Take cuttings of less hardy plants such as geranium (Pelargonium) and later bring them into the house on a windowsill, or put them into the greenhouse during winter.

Any herbaceous plants that have grown large over the summer months make a note of them and are ready to lift and divide once they have died down. Also, plan where you will put the extra plants in advance.

ROSES

Continue to deadhead to keep them flowering for a bit longer.

SHRUBS

Consider cutting back shrubs that are taking up too much space and reshaping them. Alternatively, if they are not too large, but are in the wrong place, consider replanting them into a more appropriate position elsewhere in the garden – but leave this well into October as we may still get some warm weather. They may dry out and suffer too much.

WEEDING

If you continue to have a perennial weed problem, you may need to spray. Avoid doing so while the weather is still hot, but apply before the weather gets too cold, and the plants are still actively growing. Weedkillers are less effective in colder weather.

That said, whenever you use chemicals in the garden, read the label carefully before applying and, where possible, control weeds and pests without using chemicals.

Until next month, happy gardening.

Reg

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Amberol joins S&SEIB & London again in 2022

Our business's heart is a desire to make *a visual difference*. This includes stunning floral arrangements in calm, peaceful villages and fast-paced city environments and keeping Britain tidy through our wide range of bin products. We believe that conversation and collaboration are essential to offer the best solutions for our

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John O'Connor Grounds Maintenance Contractor provides support again in 2022

John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance employs over five hundred staff and manages over 250 vehicles across the UK, providing complete landscape solutions to a range of sectors, including commercial and local authorities. The Company has always been mindful of its business's impact on the environment.



London in Bloom donors and Associates



London in Bloom is grateful for the continuing support of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, which has provided a grant to London in Bloom for 2022

MPGA is a long-established Charity that has played a vital role in preserving and improving countless gardens, neglected sites, and green open spaces across London. We provide modest grants to those who share with us a desire to improve the environment and thus the quality of life for the local community. Our work brings us into contact with various groups, including local councils, schools, hospitals, hospices, museums, voluntary organisations, and community groups.

The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, first mentioned in City Corporation records in 1345, is a survivor of the medieval craft guilds which exercised control over the practice of their particular crafts and ensured proper training through the system of apprenticeship.

The Company is a "living" guild, and the numbers of its members are both professionals and amateurs actively involved in the craft. All are united by a common bond of horticulture and gardens.



The Worshipful Company of
GARDENERS



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Our aim is a serious one – championing The Royal Parks by promoting their qualities, including horticultural excellence and historical significance, whilst offering practical support where appropriate. Allied to this is the service to its members through the provision and development of a broad range of social activities and keeping members abreast of current and past news of The Royal Parks.