



South & South East & London in Bloom

Green Lines

January 2022



The year to say Yes !!!!!

We often receive enquiries from new bloom groups, from the smallest community to towns, parks, cities, and everything in between, thinking about getting their group involved. A common theme that runs through many of our conversations is "next year; we think we will be ready". But what is ready? In terms of a bloom group, this often means those extra planters, that extra sponsor or an extra volunteer or two. There will always be something we feel we can add to or build on. But that to us is the beauty of Bloom; there is always something to do, always ways to grow and improve, new people to get involved, new passions to ignite.

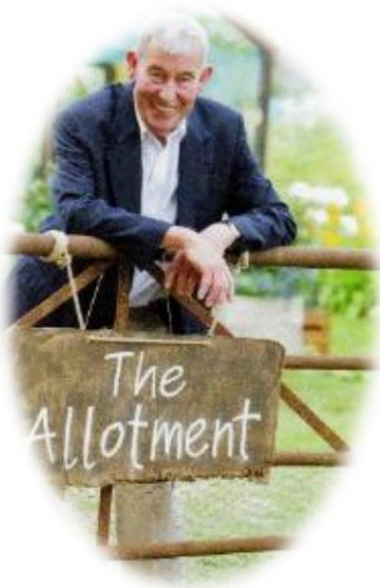
There is a perception that an entry must be perfect before they take the plunge and put in that first entry. But what constitutes perfect? Is there such a thing? Perfect implies that there is nothing else to be done.

We are here to support and guide, not criticise and tear down. Our assessors and judges are here to encourage and help, and we have ambassadors to answer your questions. We cannot explain how proud we feel at Bloom HQ when we see the results come back each year. To see the scores, climb, those grades jump, we can't wait to see your faces at the Awards as the results are readout. We understand the hours that have been put in and the hard work those results represent. So many entries had come in when they thought they "weren't ready" and have done well, and we have then watched them grow and improve each year-on-year.

We think for us and many others, the last few years have taught us that we shouldn't put off life. Who knows what tomorrow will bring, so why wait? Sometimes you just have to go for it. Put that toe in the water and make 2022 your year to say yes!!!

Kate & Anne

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



York Gate is a one-acre garden created by the Spencer family between 1951-1994. The design is based on the International Arts & Crafts Movement (1880-1930), which was developed in reaction to mass industrial production.

Interestingly, the Spencer family did not develop York Gate until some thirty years after the movement had disappeared. The concept of an ideal Arts & Crafts Garden links the house with the garden. The Spencers created 14 rooms inter linked through a succession of vistas and is planned through meticulous attention to detail.

Fred Spencer and, their only child, Robin laid out the garden, retaining farm stone walls and reusing stone flags and blocks, and putting in the basic framework of the main pathways. This was complemented by Sybil's skills as a plantswoman.

The Spencer's modelled much of the garden on Hidcote Manor, which is still one of the most influential large Arts & Crafts Gardens in Britain with its twenty-two linked rooms of hedges, trees, shrubs, and herbaceous borders.

Robin Spencer designed gates, seats, sundial and a folly. Many of the designs were influenced by Edward Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll Gardens.

Unfortunately, Fred died suddenly in 1963, as did their son in 1981. During the next twelve years Sybil cherished the garden adding to the already considerable plant collection. Sadly, Sybil passed away in 1994. It was her wish that the garden and house would be given to Perennial. She wanted the Garden to continue to attract visitors for both education and pleasure. A

bid for a grant in 2016 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund was successful. This enabled the Charity to purchase the adjoining property, increasing car parking and extending its wildflower meadows.

In accordance with Sybil's wishes, the Garden is being used by the Northern College of Garden Design at Craven College for their foundation diploma. Part of the Lottery Bid has allowed volunteers to research different aspects of York Gate's history which will eventually provide a valuable archive and an informative interpretation for visitors.

The new café serves homemade food reflecting the seasons and promoting local produce. You can sit on the new sun terrace overlooking the newly created Mediterranean Garden. A private dining room allows for group bookings. The Plant Centre offers a wide range of plants many of which are propagated from plants in the garden. Finally, there is a gift shop.

The Gardens are open from April 1st – November 1st, Wednesday – Sunday. York Gate is 15 mins drive from Leeds City Centre or 30 mins from Harrogate.

Why not organise a visit to the Gardens to coincide with the Harrogate Spring Flower Show. You could also include a visit to the RHS Garden at Harlow Carr.

Keep smiling, keep safe, keep Gardening – Happy New Year – Jim

Jim's Christmas and New Year Quiz Answers.

1. What is the star sign for someone who has been born on Christmas Day - **Capricorn**
2. A European Economic Community vegetable - **Brussel Sprout.**
3. What animal will represent the Chinese New Year for 2022- **Tiger**
4. What is the bestselling Christmas single of all time - **White Christmas**
5. Christmas Island is in which ocean - **Indian.**
6. What are the Bourbon reds and Norfolk Blacks - **Turkeys**
7. Unkempt symbol of Christmas (flower) - **Ragged Robin**
8. Astronauts broadcast which Christmas song from space in 1965 -**Jingle Bells.**
9. How many ghosts revealed themselves to Scrooge in a Christmas Carol - **Four**
10. The snowman was shown on T.V. for the first time on Boxing Day in which year. 1980, 1982 or 1985 - **1982**

Schools Environmental Challenge/Environmental Challenge

We are running both challenges again this year. For more details and an entry form, please email Anne or Kate. Anne@sseib.com, Kate@sseib.com,
anne@londoninbloom.co.uk or kate@londoninbloom.co.uk or phone 020 8662 1021

GARDENING TIPS & TASKS

Reg Leach - SSEiB Judge and Parks Manager – retired.

Welcome back after the Christmas & New Year festivities. I hope you had an enjoyable and relaxing Christmas, and I wish you all a happy and healthy 2022. If you have not already done so, now is an excellent time to plan your gardening year and decide on colour schemes and maintenance schedules. Pick up those seed catalogues, trawl through them with a coffee or tea in front of the fire and think of the warmer weather to come!

HERE ARE SOME TASKS FOR FEBRUARY...



BASKETS, TROUGHS & POTS:

Clean out empty ones and wash with a disinfectant such as Jeyes Fluid, then dry & store, ready to use this coming Spring again.

If you have been growing on baskets undercover, harden them off before putting them out. If you can, leave them a bit longer before hanging outside, as a cold snap could be detrimental.

BEDDING:

Check winter/spring bedding for annual weeds that will thrive happily in our winters these days, particularly chickweed, so remove before they get a chance to flower and seed. However, be careful if you have spring bulbs in these beds, as they will now be emerging!

BIRDS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES:

When planning this seasons planting, do consider wildlife. Where possible, select plants for birds, bees and butterflies, be it a wildflower meadow, herbaceous plants or new hedging.

BLOOM 2022:

This is a good time of year to update your portfolios and photographic records and to take 'before and after photographs of your winter projects. Judges like to see evidence of all-year-round activities and events.

If you have new projects or developments to show the judges this Summer, make sure they are included on any tour.



BULBS:

Spring flowering bulbs will be showing shoots now, so be careful not to hoe them off when weeding or planting nearby. If you have a frost-free greenhouse, it's an excellent time to consider starting Dahlias and other late spring/summer flowering tubers and bulbs.

GLASSHOUSES & TENDER PLANTS:

Regularly check whether plants and cuttings are not too wet or rot or disease, such as pelargonium cuttings. Discard those suffering to avoid spreading. If your glasshouse is empty, use 'natural' fumigants such as a garlic-based mix that are safer to use. Most natural-based fumigants shouldn't harm plants but do read all instructions first.

HEALTH & SAFETY:

Keep paths and steps as clean as possible. At this time of the year, the weather can make them slippery with additional hazards of moss, lichen, and algae, so keep clean and well swept.

If you have hanging baskets, do check the brackets and chains frequently to ensure they are safe and secure before hanging out baskets.

As Covid-19 and all its variants are sadly still with us, take care when working in groups and continue following safety guidance where possible.

HEDGES:

In mild winters, birds may nest early, so please check for nesting birds before carrying out pruning works.

Now is an excellent time to plant bare-root hedging plants. Try to select native plants such as Hawthorn, Beech (Copper and Purple), Holly, Hazel, Guilder Rose, Dog Rose and Hornbeam. I would suggest buying small whips of native plants for hedging as they are cheaper and often established quicker and better than potted plants. Ensure you have a well-prepared trench ready in advance with incorporated organic matter. Always soak the roots before planting to give them the best start. If whips were purchased in bundles, the roots might well have dried out somewhat.



HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS:



If you want to lift and divide herbaceous plants, it is good to do this now, before new shoots emerge. Lift carefully with a fork, and once out of the ground, divide carefully using two forks inserted back-to-back through the middle of the rootball and slowly prise apart. Replant at the same depth as they were in the ground previously and water in well.

Herbaceous plants will, for the most part, be dormant, but depending on the weather, they may have started to put out new growth, so check first and be careful when working on borders not to damage new shoots.

If you see new shoots and if they are long enough, experiment with taking a few cuttings of them to increase your stock.

LAWNS:

I will discuss 'Lawn Care' next month.

PATHS STEPS & HARD SURFACES:

As mentioned above, these can become slippery in damp weather, so endeavour to keep clean and autumn leaf free to minimise accidents.

If you have 'crazy paving' slabs as a pathway with no concrete grouting but only soil between the slabs, consider planting low growing herbs such as thyme and chamomile in between.

SEED SOWING – (Annuals):

If you have not already done so, you can sow Sweet Pea's undercover to get them started early. Only start hardy annuals (H.A.) early.

SHRUBS:

It's still okay to plant new shrubs. When positioning and planting, consider their ultimate height so they don't shade out smaller plants behind. Constantly water in well afterwards. If you are planting pot grown shrubs, it's good to soak them in their pots for an hour or so to ensure the centre of the rootball is moist before planting.



TOOLS & MACHINERY:

During this quieter year, it's worth cleaning and sharpening tools ready for the coming Spring and servicing any machinery, such as mowers.

TREES:

Bare root deciduous trees can still be planted ahead of bud break, allowing them a little time to settle in before getting back into growth. You can also plant evergreen trees and containerised trees. While needing to stake newly planted trees, please don't overdo it, as it's good for the tree to have slight movement, which will encourage anchoring roots to develop.

Happy Gardening and see you next month. Reg

Carbon footprints and me – Kate Harris Co-Campaign Manager

It's hard to miss the mention of the environment and carbon footprints in our day to day lives, especially as part of our bloom family; it's in the articles we read, the news we watch, our marking criteria and all over the internet. It can also be easy to brush off the impact we as individuals can have outside the standard reduce, reuse and recycle. Still, as part of a more significant Bloom movement, the small individual changes we can each make can be part of something much more significant. Across London in Bloom and South & South East in Bloom, we have a combined estimated reach of around 16.2 million people, and if Bloom continues to grow as it has over the past few years, this reach will grow further. Imagine how much impact we could make if all of us, 16.2 million, made minor changes to our gardening practices in our own spaces and gardening communities. It is pretty staggering when you look it in as cold hard figures.

So here are a few additions we could make to our green spaces that help reduce our carbon footprint. In doing so, these changes can be fantastic for biodiversity in our local communities, parks, and gardens.

Ponds can not only be a beautiful addition to green space, but they also attract scores of wildlife, from the smallest of insects living in your pond to the stunning flashes of colour provided by Dragonflies and Damselflies as they dart over your pond as they hunt in the warm summer sun. A perfect visiting spot for birds and mammals and even wasps and bees as the weather gets warmer. But not only is a pond, regardless of the size, an invaluable destination for all creatures. The sediment that lines a pond from soil and broken-down matter helps lock away carbon and provide nutrition for pond vegetation, fish, insects, and organisms.

Across the U.K., we have approximately 23 million gardens; on top of that, we have countless parks and communal and residential green spaces. If everyone who has a garden planted one single tree, that would be a staggering 23 million additional trees. Now add one tree planted by every community group, communal green space, and park without compromising farmland. One tree alone can absorb four tons of carbon over 20 years. So, any trees planted now will directly impact the future of our planet, and trees directly benefit multiple species.

Making your compost can also be hugely beneficial not only to the environment but to your garden. Making your own, using garden waste and some compostable food waste reduces what is sent to landfills and incinerators, meaning less harmful gasses being added to the atmosphere. It can be a budget-friendly addition to your garden. Compost heaps also attract countless insects and invertebrates.

A hedge is another excellent way to actively absorb carbon whilst providing excellent habitats for many species. It can be a great way to increase privacy in your green space.

Plant more plants, this one to any gardener that is relatively simple and comes with countless benefits for flora and fauna around us. No matter their size, plants all play a part in reducing carbon in our atmosphere. Choosing long lived plants like trees, shrubs, and hedges can help to lock in carbon and the less we disturb the soil, the longer the carbon stays locked away. I'm not telling you not to plant annual plants, we need to be realistic, but a good mix of plants in your space can make a huge difference.

When you first start talking about a subject like this, we can sometimes underestimate the difference we can make. Still, if you start to break this all down, it becomes clear that small changes we can make to our green spaces, from balconies which are often packed with plants to gardens and allotments, green

spaces, parks and more, can have a profound impact on our environment not only now but for generations to come. It is easy to say that we do a little recycling and claim that we are doing enough. We have a responsibility to do more and be better, and hopefully, these few suggestions might encourage you to make a small change and encourage those around you to do the same. Your neighbours or family members may not be directly part of our bloom family, but they can still make minor changes, too, and maybe a tiny ripple of change will spread out to those around us and eventually makes waves.

Goodbye to a Bloom'in Good Friend

We sadly learned of June Richards passing. June, Chair of Upton in Bloom, passed away on January 11th. June was a Bloom stalwart and has guided Upton in Bloom to high awards and a nomination into Britain in Bloom. June's enthusiasm and passion for Bloom will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

The RHS Connected Communities and Community Environment funds

The following groups were successful in applying for funding

South & South East in Bloom

- Headway Surrey, Guildford
- The Gateway Allotment Project, Reigate
- Woodingdean Community Association, Brighton & Hove

London in Bloom

- Chiswick House and Gardens Trust, Chiswick
- Environmental Action Coney Hall, West Wickham
- Friends of Agnes Riley Gardens, Lambeth

Here are a few of my favourite things/plants!! (what else)

Jean Griffin 'Dip.Hort. (Kew)' South & South East in Bloom Deputy Chair

Daphne bholua 'Jacqueline Postill.'



This is usually a medium-sized evergreen shrub. The leaves are leathery and may go yellow and drop off after flowering. This is nothing to worry about!

The plant is highly fragrant; I wish I could bottle the scent for later in the year.

Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Gold Star ', sometimes known as Abbotsbury Gold

A fantastic evergreen shining bright all through the winter, it has insignificant honey-scented flowers. Grows well in a sunny spot in well-drained soil.





Clematis urophylla 'Winter Beauty.'

This evergreen climber has nodding waxy flowers, which appear to cheer us up in early to late winter. It is highly tolerant of most soils, full to partial shade and appreciates a regular prune after flowering, mid to late Spring.

Clematis' Polish Spirit '

This one is a deciduous climber with single deep violet/purple flowers from mid-Summer to late Autumn. It enjoys full sun or partial shade, any position west to North facing and flowers on the current season's growth. Prune late winter or early Spring. You will not be disappointed with this easy-care Clematis.





Iris unguicularis, the Algerian Iris

Always the earliest to flower in my garden. It grows as a rhizome, is vigorous and evergreen. The flowers are variable in colour, possibly due to different soil makeup but usually pale to deep violet falls with white and deep yellow markings and are fragrant if you can bend down that far! The first flower appeared on January 3rd this year!

More of our favourite plants next month.

Gardening on the Radio.

Please follow Jean on the Radio. Jean likes nothing more than 'talking plants' and sharing gardening knowledge. In her own words, 'I am a plant-a-holic' with a plant packed garden and two allotments!'

Please send in your questions or just listen to Jeans Gardening Wisdom.

Write to: Sunday Gardening, BBC Radio Kent, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1QQ.

Email: radio.kent.gardening@bbc.co.uk or give Jean a call during the Sunday Gardening programme every week on BBC Radio Kent on 08459 811111.

Preparing your Entry – Part 1

Each year we are asked how best to prepare for a judges visit. This article looks at what Information the judge could benefit from having before the visit. This advanced Information is referred to as Judges Briefing Notes or the Portfolio in Britain in Bloom speak.

Before all of our smaller entries start to worry about providing this, it only applies to Core entries, Villages, Parishes, London Villages, Towns, Cities, Town Centre's, Business Improvement Districts and Coastal Entries. It does not apply to Its Your Neighbourhood entries, Parks or individual desktop entries.

So, here is some guidance which may be useful.

The following guide does not need to be followed to the letter but following the general principles will help add value to the entry and help the judges understand what has been achieved.

1. Ideally, Information should be in an A4 format and be no more than 30 pages, including front and back covers. Unless you wish it, it need not be professionally produced as it's the Information we need. We don't mark the content or the production quality. However, a well put together piece often leads to a higher score through a better understanding of what has been accomplished.
2. The Front Cover should be titled to include the entry's name, the year, and a representative image.
3. A forward by either the Mayor, Council Leader, your patron, or group leader – An overview and reason for entering, what is seen as a benefit in entering?
4. A diary of annual events (from the end of the previous year to mid-June). This gives the judge an idea of your year-round effort.
5. Format - Your progress and achievements under each heading of the criteria are the way forward; if you can provide this in criteria order (this makes for easier reading). Please provide as much background information as appropriate to the entry size and the organising group. Images and bullet points rather than reams of text tend to work better. Make the images of a size where the activity can be easily viewed.
6. Under each section, include any statistics such as number of plants planted, number of volunteer hours given, specific projects you are proud of and any funding received or in-kind support.
7. If you have been fortunate to raise funds from sponsors, do list them as they will be pleased to see they are being promoted.
8. It is unnecessary to include route details or any pre-visit planning as these could change prior to judging.
9. Finally, please save your work in a pdf format and send it to Anne or Kate before the deadline. The deadline will be clearly shown in the Entrants manual.
10. The judge(s) will read the document and ask you questions about various items, so make sure you have had a readthrough before they arrive.

Next month we will explain what we mean by giving a presentation.

Ruth's Christmas Quiz 2021 - Answers

1. Saint Dorothy
2. Helleborus Niger
3. Euphorbia
4. Mexico
5. Yellow – they are tiny. The red bits are bracts, not flowers
6. Because he is more of a Rocket Man
7. Dried Tree Resin
8. Norway
9. They keep dropping their needles!
10. Prince Albert
11. Mistletoe
12. Dioecious means that male and female flowers are on separate plants
13. Vitamin C
14. Tradition has it that Mary spread her cloak over a rosemary bush to shelter the white flowers turned blue.
15. The Star of Bethlehem (Ornithogalum umbellatum) blooms in Summer
16. Oak Come All Ye Faithful
17. Vanilla
18. It's a lemon tree, my dear Watson!
19. Peas on earth!
20. So he can hoe hoe, hoe!

Spring – the season of hope and renewal

Kate Harris – Co-Campaign Manager

After the Christmas festivities and alike are over, the decorations away, fairy lights boxed up, the appeal of cosy nights in becomes, well, less appealing. The short days and long nights can feel never-ending. If you are anything like me, your thoughts turn to spring, the season of fresh starts and new growth, the promise of longer days and warmer weather tantalisingly close, just January and February to get through.

By the Meteorological calendar, Spring begins on March 1st and ends on May 31st, the year split into four equal sections divided by temperature. The Astronomical calendar uses equinox and solstice to determine these dates. According to the Astronomical calendar, an equinox occurs when the length of day and night are equal. A solstice occurs when the sun is at its highest and lowest points in the mid-day sky. The Vernal or Spring Equinox comes first, signalling the start of Spring (this year 20TH March), followed by the Summer Solstice (June 21ST), the Autumn Equinox (September 23rd) and lastly, the Winter Solstice (December 22ND).



Whether you use the meteorological or astronomical calendar to define the start of Spring, mother nature will be busy doing her own thing. Flower and leaf buds on plants and trees, cherry blossom, daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips bulbs poking through the soil. The Dawn Chorus changes as birds seek out potential mates, suddenly busy in a flurry of gathering and nest building. The birdfeeders are suddenly alive with visitors and fluffy new chicks as the season progresses. I will complain about the amount of bird feed I'm getting through, but I love it all the same. Like the first daffodils flower, you'll hear



people comment, "oh, they are early this year" the untrained eye won't know that they are an early flowering variety, but we in the Bloom family will know and smile along with all the same. Cracking open those windows and letting that fresh spring air in, hanging out your washing on the line, spotting the first Bumblebee's as you're pottering around the garden, it is the simple things. As overwintering species, the first butterflies to be seen are Peacocks, Small Peacocks, Small White, Brimstone, Comma and Red Admiral in March but sometimes as early as February, which is always a pleasure to see. Hedgehogs, Dormice and Bats also appear as the temperatures start to rise. Our woodlands become a carpet of flowers, Wild Garlic with its delicate white flowers or the sea of blue as Bluebells stretching as far as you can see.

You don't have to venture far to see these changes in action, from your local park or woodland to the bare branches of the trees on your street that is so quickly covered with lush green leaves; even your window and balcony boxes can be an excellent place for visiting insects and the appearance of spring bulbs. I know I often romanticise and possibly even harp on a lot in my articles about getting outdoors, but you really can't beat it. It is so easy to get wrapped up in our daily lives and miss the little things which often hold so much beauty, and what a shame that would be.

The Elms for London Project

The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association has an exciting new project to tell you about. As many of you will be aware they run the hugely successful Bulbs for London initiative and this is now joined by Elms for London, where they will distribute young, disease resistant elm trees across London.

This is a team effort and so they are encouraging landowners, park managers, schools, community and friends' groups, and garden designers to join them to bring the project to fruition. It is felt that it will appeal to the public by way of its historical context and the fact it reinforces this iconic tree within the environment especially with its notable wildlife benefits.

Please visit the website www.elms4london.org.uk for more information and to find the application email.

South & South East in Bloom participants could consider planting Elms too as it would fit with Her Majesty the Queen's Green Canopy Campaign or "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee" .

There are several resistant Elms available here are a few.

Ulmus minor; Ulmus 'Columella' ;Ulmus 'Morfeo' ;Ulmus Lutece, ;Ulmus 'New Horizon';Ulmus 'Plinio',
Ulmus' Rebona'; Ulmus 'San Zanobi'; Ulmus 'Sapporo Autumn Gold'; Ulmus' Wanoux'; & Ulmus'
Wingham'

Several tree companies can provide resistant cultivars, Hilliers (Hillier Nurseries and Garden Centres | Hillier),

Frank P Matthews Trees (Ornamentals | Frank P Matthews) might be worth contacting.

A promotional graphic for the Elms4London project. The top half features a close-up of green elm leaves and a small white flower. Overlaid on this is the text "Elms4London" in white, and below it, a large quote in black: "Help us bring back the Elm". The bottom half of the graphic is white and contains the text "JOIN IN" in large black letters, followed by "Point your phone camera at the code to visit the website" and a QR code. A vertical URL "https://Elms4London.org.uk" is written on the left side of the bottom half.

Elms4London

“Help us bring back the Elm”

<https://Elms4London.org.uk>

JOIN IN

Point your phone camera at the code to visit the website

Ruth's New Year's Quiz – The Gardening Year

As we look forward to a new gardening year, here's a little quiz to keep you on your toes!

- January:** This is the time to start sprouting potatoes. What is this process called?
- February:** You might plant hellebores this month. By what common name are they known?
- March:** Two saints' days fall in this month. Which plants are associated with them?
- April:** National Beanpole Week falls in this month (I never knew there was such a thing!). Traditional beanpoles are made of which wood?
- May:** If you are planting tomatoes this month, you might consider companion plants to deter pests. What flowering plants might you use for this purpose?
- June:** Keep an eye on your lettuces! As the days get longer, they can be prone to flowering and seed. What is this process called?
- July:** St Swithin's day falls on July 15th. Why should gardeners be anxious about the weather on this date?
- August:** This is a good time to propagate rhododendrons. You can do this by bending a shoot down to the ground, cutting a nick in it and weighing it down in the soil to root. What is this technique called?
- September:** Now is the time to start planting spring bulbs such as daffodils. There are thirteen "divisions" or types of daffodils, the most common being the type with a cup longer than the petals. What is this type called?
- October:** Halloween brings October to an end, but what is the current record for the heaviest pumpkin ever grown?
- a) 167 kg (368 lb) b) 1226 kg (2703 lb) c) 450 kg (992 lb)
- November:** At this time of year, you might wrap grease bands around the trunks of your fruit trees. Why?
- December:** Choose the gift that keeps on giving at Christmas by giving someone a Hippeastrum bulb. But by what name is this plant better known?