



London in Bloom & South & South East in Bloom

Green Lines

July 2022



As you read this, you should be safe in the knowledge that judging and assessing are over for another year, but what a year!

Entries unable to meet judges, judges unable to visit entries due to COVID, hot days followed by extreme heat and grass looking like hay meadows. But, apart from those distractions and our Campaign Managers working overtime to make it all work, we have all delivered another tremendous Blooming year.

This year my judging and assessing sessions took me to London & the South & South to a few places I had not seen for a decade or more, to a few places that left me horticulturally breathless at how much effort had been put into the preparation, despite all that was sent to try. From the smallest of entries, the effort of all was rewarding to see in our Neighbourhoods, Parishes, Parks & Gardens and Village, Town, and Cities. It was not just the gardening and horticulture but the people I met too. Volunteers and professionals are working to protect our at-risk wildlife, planting sustainable schemes, creating attractive places, and the knowledge and care that goes along with that.

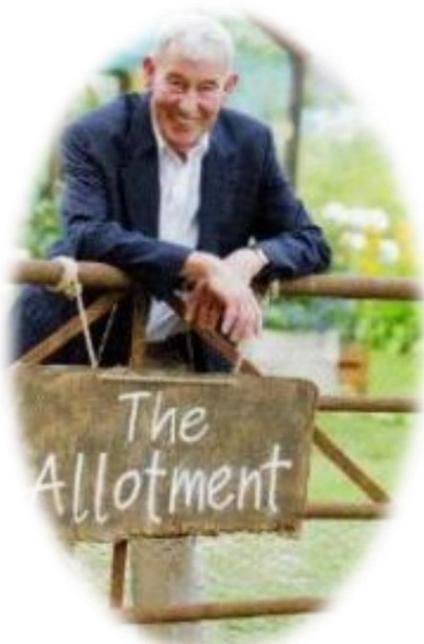
This year perhaps more than ever, I realised how privileged I am to be part of Bloom and to visit projects, neighbourhoods, parks & gardens, and Boroughs to see the work both professionals and volunteers do.

We are now preparing for our Awards this year, and information about the London & South & South East Awards will have been sent to you. The South & South East in Bloom Awards, hosted by Farnham Town Council and Farnham in Bloom at the Maltings, will be on the 13th of September.

The London in Bloom Awards will be staged on the 21st of September and hosted by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets at the Ecology Pavilion, Mile End Park.

Until then, take a break and relax. Ed:

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



In 2003 I judged an entry for the Brighter Kensington and Chelsea Scheme under the Flyover at Westbourne Grove.

The local Authority had permitted a group of volunteers to take over a very overgrown and neglected area under the Flyover, which was adjacent to the Grand Union Canal. Unfortunately, it was also a meeting place for people who had fallen out of Society.

The volunteers actively encouraged people with problems to help restore the area. They created a series of woodland walkways, including several raised beds with vegetables which they shared with the volunteers. Most of the materials were recycled out of nearby builders' skips. As Chairman of London in Bloom, I was so impressed by their efforts that I convinced the Committee that we should initiate a pilot scheme in 2004/5 called It's Your Neighbourhood.

The rest is history!

This year there are 138 IYN entries in London and 91 in S&SEiB.

In the early days, we gave each entry a certificate of Commendation. The National Bloom Campaign now receives more IYN entries than any other category in the Competition.

Naturally, in the early years, volunteers struggled to survive either through lack of financial support, physical help, or local council support. Although some neighbourhood schemes are still struggling, the majority are on a much more professional basis. They have Committees which hold regular meetings, create year plans, and display notice boards to explain who and what they provide and maintain in their local area.

It never ceases to amaze me what they are prepared to undertake. The volunteer's enthusiasm is infectious, but, in my experience, the successful entries are led by one very determined person.

This year I judged 20 entries, mainly for London in Bloom. Each entry was different, but the common denominator was they were trying to provide a better, safer environment for the residents and visitors.

It was fascinating to see how each group organised their work days, achieved funding, recruited volunteers and, most importantly, either received support in kind or financially from their local council and grounds maintenance contractors.

I became aware that some IYN schemes struggled to receive any of the above support. Although they soldiered on, it was apparent the volunteers were frustrated at the negative response they continually received to their requests.

I judged three IYN schemes in the same London Borough very close to each other. It was the first time they had taken part in the scheme.

Two entries had taken advantage of a Cleaner, Greener, Safer Campaign managed by the Council. They had both submitted plans for a scheme with insufficient funds to complete. In both cases, they were successful with their application.

However, when I mentioned this scheme to the third IYN entry, I was amazed to find out they had never heard of the scheme and needed help more than the other two IYNs.

I believe we have reached a stage in the IYN Campaign when all this collective knowledge should be available to all the entries.

The Royal Horticultural Society, the London Gardens Trust, Professional Gardeners Guild, and the Institute of Horticulture, to name just a few like-minded organisations, have advisory schemes or help desks. This enables their members to share ideas and seek advice on different topics.

I understand people may be reluctant to share their ideas and expertise. However, I was encouraged by the positive responses I received from entrants I judged this year to my proposal.

I have spoken to Anne, Kate & Peter, who also welcome the idea. They suggest IYN entries submit their thoughts to them on this matter.

As my Dad always told me, 'Son, it's not what you know but who you know!! I am sure between us; we can provide a much-needed service for all IYN entries to enjoy.

Keep Smiling. Keep Safe, Keep Gardening.

Jim

Note: Anne, Kate & Peter support Jim's suggestions, but with the LiB & S&SEiB Awards taking precedence at the moment, this is something to work towards later in the year.

Schools Environmental Challenge

Kate Harris – SSEIB & LIB Co- Campaign Manager

Those involved in Bloom for a while may remember we had a large school's program across London and the South and South East, numbering into the hundreds. As times changed and school funding reduced, and the rising cost of running the Bloom meant this had to be paused, and time was given to how we could still be involved with schools, all be it in a more minor, more cost-effective way, and so, the Schools Environmental Challenge was born.

Since relaunching our school's programme, numbers, while small, are starting to increase as we get into a rhythm of learning to live and evolve the way we do things in these post-pandemic years. As I have mentioned in previous articles, there is a newfound interest in the environment and the world around us. Green spaces, from parks to gardens and even school grounds, are places of refuge for both people and nature, and the past few years have proved this more than ever.

There is a perception that these green spaces need to be big to be beneficial, but that could not be further from the truth. Using the space around us, big or small, can benefit wildlife. A pond, for example, does not need to be huge to encourage invertebrates and amphibians and provides a place for animals and birds to drink. Even small trees provide shade to sit under and habitat for countless creatures. We need to move away from thinking bigger is always better. Schools that entered this year ranged in size and geographical areas, each using its space differently. The one thing they all had in common was an enthusiasm to make a difference, a joy in learning and a desire to improve the area around them for themselves and the local wildlife.

So, we would like to congratulate everyone involved for their brilliant work and see what you achieve over the next year!! We had a few schools withdraw for various reasons, and we look forward to seeing them back next year.

S&SEIB

Claverham Community College, Battle – Silver - East Sussex County Winner

Anthony Roper Pre-School & Kindergarten CIO, Eynsford - Gold

Garlinge Primary School and Nursery, Garlinge - Gold

The Discovery School, Kings Hill - Gold

Kings Hill School, I Kings Hill - Gold - Kent County Winner and Overall Winner

LIB

Rosendale Primary School, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea - Silver Gilt

Streatham Wells Primary school, Lambeth - Silver Gilt

Bevington Primary School, Lambeth - Gold

Bishop Thomas Grant School, Lambeth – Gold

Sunnyhill Primary School, Lambeth - Gold & Overall Winner

GARDENING TIPS & TASKS

FOR AUGUST

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

Welcome to the July bulletin with some tasks for August. By this time, all the judging will be over, so relax and enjoy your gardens and community sites. August should be about spending time in the garden relaxing and enjoying it with family, friends, and neighbours.

However, if, like me, you find it hard to relax in the garden - as you notice there is some dead-heading to do here, or you spot some weeds over there, try not to succumb. The main priority this month is to keep the garden going, especially after the recent extreme heat so keep feeding, but water sparingly as a hose pipe ban is pending if we don't get any appreciable rain. If you need to water, water early or later in the evening and don't water over foliage and flowers.

BASKETS, TROUGHES & POTS

Continue to regularly feed plants in pots, containers and, of course, hanging baskets, which will be pot-bound by now, so the plants will be increasingly reliant on any extra nutrients you can give them to continue flourishing into the autumn. Also, dead-head to keep them flowering well.

BEDDING

Bedding plants benefit from dead-heading, as much as roses and perennials, to keep them flowering well into the autumn; although this can be a bit tedious, it's worth it. Regular weeding and removal of annual weeds will also help bedding plants from having to compete with them. However, with any luck, your bedding plants will have filled out, reducing the likelihood of annual weeds by smothering them.



BIRDS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES

As promised last month, I have compiled a short list of some beneficial plants for bees and butterflies. Early flying bees need flowers in the early spring as they emerge, and both bees and butterflies will benefit from autumn flowering plants as they prepare for winter. The list below is by no means exhaustive, and the flowering times can often overlap the seasons.

Spring:

Allium; Aubrietia; Echim Ceanothus and Cistus (late spring); Berberis; Erysimum; Geum; Erica (Heather); Lavender; Muscari (Grape Hyacinth); Ribes (Ornamental flowering current); Pulmonaria, Primula; Rosemary and winter Jasmine.

Summer:

Agapanthus; Allium; Aquilegia; Buddleia; Ceanothus; Cotoneaster; Echinacea; Flowering Herbs, particularly Chives, Oregano and Thyme; Hebe; Heliotrope; Lavender; Lilies; Lonicera (Honeysuckles) which attract moths too; Roses; Salvias; Scabious; Verbena and

just about every flowering perennial!

Autumn:

Aster; Buddleia; Cosmos; Echinacea; Nepeta; Scabious; Sunflower; Sedum, and Verbena.

On my judging tour this year, I found a fantastic formal lawn where the weather had subdued the grass, and as a result, the lawn was covered in low-growing Ajuga, Clover and Trefoil, much to the delight of bees. I almost begged the warden not to have it cut while the bees could enjoy it – I hope I got the message across!

Look to increase berry plants, such as Berberis and Cotoneaster, for birds late in the season and winter, giving them something to feed on. In addition, wildflower meadows and almost all herbaceous perennials benefit birds, Bees and Butterflies.

I have mentioned this before, but please keep bird feeders and birdbaths topped up to encourage birds to continue visiting your garden. Birds love to snack on greenflies too!

Now is also a good time to start considering new or extra bird boxes, bird feeders, nesting boxes (Birds & solitary Bees) and creating loggeries for a range of insects, and don't forget Bat Boxes.



BULBS

Now is a good time to start thinking about spring displays of flowering bulbs, either for naturalising or bedding schemes, drawing up a shortlist, and determining numbers.

CLIMBERS

Continue to tie in new growths and dead-head flowering climbers too.

GLASSHOUSES & TENDER PLANTS

If you've not got around to it yet, take cuttings of tender perennials to increase your stock. If you have an increased stock, it will minimise the risk of losing your favourite plants altogether next winter. Newly rooted cuttings have increased vigour and, therefore, greater disease resistance. I'm thinking here of plants such as Regal and Zonal Pelargoniums.

Years ago, as an apprentice, I spent many hours going around Bristol's parks, taking cuttings of Pelargoniums (before bedding types from seed were available) and getting black fingers in the process. Then it was back to the nursery to prepare the cuttings and pot them for rooting and planting the following summer.

There are so few of the 'old-fashioned' variegated zonal/leaf-coloured varieties of Pelargonium these days; perhaps it's time for a revival? Two come to mind 'Mrs Pollock and 'Caroline Schmidt.'

HEDGES

Continue to trim hedges to keep them looking good and check for weeds underneath. Before starting, check for bird nesting, as they may have a late brood.

HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS

Keep on top of dead-heading to keep them flowering well and for longer into late summer and autumn.

PESTS & DISEASES

Check roses for black spots and mildew and look out for aphids. Treat as appropriate. Also, keep an eye out for evidence of slugs and snails, particularly after rain. When you think they've gone... they're back!

As always, with any chemicals, read the label before applying. If possible, keep use to a minimum, or find other control methods that are not harmful to beneficial insects. There are increasingly nematode controls appearing on the market these days.

PRUNING

Now is an excellent time to cut back Rosemary, Lavender, Hebe, and other shrubs that have flowered - but don't cut back Lavender too hard into the old wood, as they are not good at regenerating. Cutting back after flowering will help keep the size of the plants in check and encourage new growth.

Cut back new straggly growth of Wisteria, back to about 2 or 3 buds of the main framework, or tie in the new wispy growths to extend the framework.

ROSES

Continue to dead-head and apply rose feed to keep them strong and healthy to continue flowering and to help fight off aphid attacks.

SHRUBS & TREES

Continue to hoe beds and borders regularly to prevent emerging weeds from flowering.

Check on shrubs that are not very drought tolerant, particularly during hot spells, such as Rhododendron and Azaleas, so water well and move to shadier areas of the garden if they are in pots. Keep last winter's planted trees on the watering schedule, check the tree ties, and loosen them if necessary.

WEEDING

Continue checking for weeds in beds and borders. By this time in the season, most annual weeds may be smothered as your bedding plants and perennials will have grown well and covered the ground. However, perennial weeds may still be lurking, so remove them by digging them out, trying not to break their taproots, such as with dandelions which will come back with even more shoots and flowers!

Until next time, enjoy your garden.

Reg



Pest Control – When The Pests Are Bigger Than The Usual Suspects

I'm one of the fortunate people who live in a rural setting, nestled in an area surrounded by grazing for dairy farmers, so it's quite normal, either early morning or early evening, to see the dairy herd trudging the local fields and roads heading in for their milking sessions.

What has surprised me over the years is just how fussing the "girls" can be about what they like and dislike in their diet, so when they have been grazed in the field, it's not unusual to see pockets of plants; they are happy to skip, nettles and thistles among them.

Over the nine years we've been here, I have realised that every time they wander past our plot, they are keen to try out our garden's delicacies.

A popular seasonal favourite is spring bedding, especially daffodils. I have 18 wall troughs at the front with a seasonal display along the 100ft length of the frontage, and if not guarded, they can be quickly reduced to stumps.

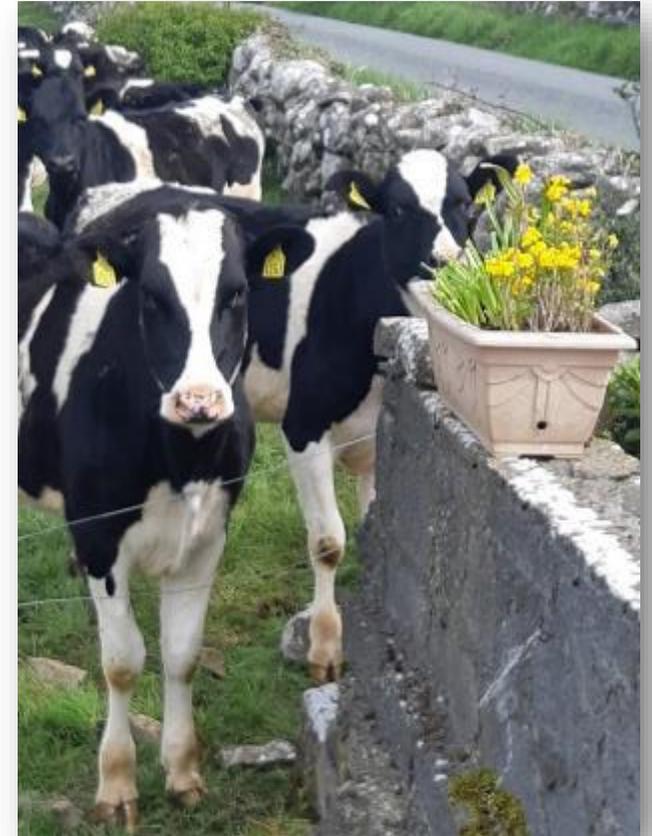
The "Pest Control" for this has provided my neighbouring farmer with a guide cable to shepherd the "girls" away from the property frontage during their milking trips, which has to be raised and lowered for every round trip.



They have also installed electric fencing to the side, as they have found a way to reach over and "prune" everything with reach.

When it comes to getting what they want, dairy cows can be very determined.

Even though stone walls and fencing surround our rear garden, they will keep trying, and as you can see, they do like a bit of spring perennials to balance their diet.





And summertime is no exception; compare what they should look like to what I'm left with ... yum yum

To this day, the dairy herd does like to keep us on our toes, and from time to time, the controls fail; in this case, the "girls" found the view into the garden too irresistible and trampled their way through the guide wire.

So now picture the scene, here is the front lawn; now imagine 40+ dairy cows roaming on this small "grazing area", enjoying the pasture and a rather lovely selection of herbaceous "hors d'oeuvres".

Now try to imagine the turf of the final furlong of Kempton Park at the end of race week, well, that was my lawn for a few months whilst I brought it back to what you now see. And the border didn't fare well either, and it seems that cows are keen on dahlias!

Was I annoyed, not in the slightest; as seasoned gardeners, we have come to live with the constant threats of slugs, caterpillars, birds, rabbits and so on, so why not a dairy herd, although admittedly, they can clear my troughs and beds an awful lot faster than slugs!

Ian J Griffiths – Gardener, Software Developer & LIB & SSEIB IT Systems Developer & Advisor

Gardening in Galway – Ireland



A new season for Amberol

As humans, many of us dislike change – and there’s no doubt that we have all had to endure much upheaval over the last two years. However, some changes can be positive and a sign of good things to come. For example, the hiatus of face-to-face judging in Britain in Bloom has given many In Bloom groups the chance to reflect and plan for the 2022 competition, while the RHS has introduced some significant changes to the judging criteria to reflect the increasing importance of sustainability in our environment.

At Amberol, we have also had our significant transition as we recently joined forces with British manufacturer Leaffield Environmental. We believe that this will be a positive change for customers and staff. If you are a customer of Amberol, you might not even have noticed that anything has happened!

That’s because many things will stay the same; the people you speak to; the products you buy, and most importantly, the service you receive.

About Leaffield Environmental

Leaffield Environmental is one of the UK’s leading manufacturers of rotationally moulded litter bins. As the name suggests, sustainability and environmental commitment are part of Leaffield’s core values. These values, combined with their high levels of customer service and product quality, make Leaffield Environmental a great fit for Amberol.

“Ideally, our customers should notice no difference in the service they receive,” explains Amberol’s MD Patience Atkinson-Gregory. “We will continue to trade as Amberol, making the same products from our factory in Alfreton. However, we hope that joining Leaffield Environmental will enable us to strengthen our brand and continue investing in innovative product development to expand our range. Our Britain in Bloom customers’ needs are evolving, and we must move with them to ensure that we are meeting demands around sustainability and efficiency.”

Leaffield brings an additional 30 years of experience in manufacturing sustainable plastic products and access to increased expertise, resources and support. Philip Maddox, Managing Director at Leaffield Environmental, is excited by the prospect of working with a company that is well respected and known within the In Bloom community, saying: “We have been working closely with Patience to ensure that we

maintain the Amberol ethos to ensure continuity of experience for their customers.”



Bloomin' great support

Some of these customers have been with Amberol for much of their long history. Patience is keen to acknowledge how important the support of so many loyal In Bloomers has been and will continue to be to the company.

She comments: "It's a delight to have so many dedicated and constant customers, and I would like to thank our customers in London and the South East for their support – as well as for the amazing work you do. We are all heading into a slightly changed world; it's important to learn from our challenges and take what's good from those challenges. We feel that joining Leaffield Environmental will be a hugely beneficial move for everyone concerned."

For information about Amberol's self-watering planters, litter bins, planterware, benches, and picnic tables, visit www.amberol.co.uk or call 01773 830 930. For more information about Leaffield Environmental, go to www.leaffieldrecycle.com.



Bloom Sponsors South & South East in Bloom



It's no secret that creating a beautiful garden or growing your vegetables takes time, dedication, and passion. There is always something new to get excited about and pay attention to with the ever-changing seasons. At **The Garden Superstore**, we understand what your garden means to you. We are passionate about sharing our expert, in-depth knowledge to help you on your gardening journey, from quality gardening calendars to product reviews and helpful guides to help your garden look its best all year round.

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We always keep an eye on the future, operating in a changing world. Towns, cities, and entire populations are rapidly transforming. The growth in digital technology is revolutionising the way we shop and live. We increasingly expect to purchase products tailored for us, whenever we want them, wherever we want them, delivered to us in a way that fits our busy lifestyles. We want more choice and convenience but less impact on the world around us.



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

customers. Collaborating closely with our customers, we offer tailored advice and free demonstrations to ensure they make the right decisions.

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



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