



London in Bloom & South & South East in Bloom

Green Lines

May 2022



Not long to go now....

Just a few weeks before London in Bloom and South & South East in Bloom judges and assessors start their visits to entries and communities across Greater London and the six counties of the South & South East region. Trustees, Ambassadors and Judges are looking forward to their visits, and this year they will be visiting 750 entries. So, I hope, where applicable, itineraries are organised, presentations prepared and judges briefing notes sent in so each entry can achieve as much as possible and receive deserved recognition for all of the effort.

Most of us will have had some rain which has refreshed our gardens and parks so, hopefully, entries will be looking green and vibrant during our visits. If the rain has passed you by and areas are looking a little dry, please let your judges know the situation. Remember being careful with mains water is one of the themes and is covered by our criteria in many cases.

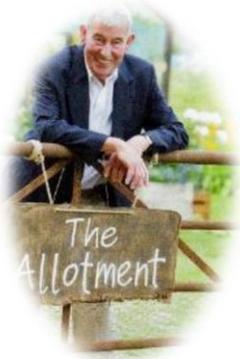
This year with greater emphasis on the environment (main entries) please, as best you can, explain the efforts you have made and where possible show the judges what you have achieved.

We wish every participant the very best of luck and we look forward to seeing you at our Awards in September.

Best of luck to all In Bloomers.

Ed.

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



May is one of the busiest months in the horticultural year. Apart from all the seeds sowing and planting in your gardens and allotments, the Show's Season is also beginning.

This year 2022 RHS Chelsea Flower Show returns to its usual May slot [24th to May 28th] for the first time since 2019. As you know from a previous article, my first experience of working on an exhibit at Chelsea was as a RHS Wisley student in 1966. I have been very privileged to be part of various teams that have won ten gold medals, two silver-gilt, one silver and a bronze medal.

The biggest problem for exhibitors preparing for Chelsea is the plants that will be on display. Early May is when you start hardening off and hoping that everything will flower on time. This year is no exception; after a cold spring followed by hot spells. It has also been very dry which can have an adverse effect on plant growth.

Exhibitors will tell you with all their knowledge and experience; that luck still plays a major part.

I remember taking plants to Chelsea in tight bud and the day before judging, using a hairdryer to encourage the buds to open. Conversely, on numerous occasions we have had to redesign features at the last minute because the plants have flowered too early.

Many years ago, I was part of a team from the Royal Parks that created a display to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Part of the carpet bedding display involved the Royal Crest. Unfortunately, the grass we were using refused to grow, and in desperation, we used Mind Your Own Business [*Soleirolia soleirolii*], which proved very successful. Everyone in the team had to learn and remember the Latin name just in case when Her Majesty visited the display; she asked for the name of the plant!

Naturally, the show's format has changed over the years, and this year is no exception.

In 2016 there were 106 nurseries in the Great Pavilion. This year around fifty-seven commercial nurseries will exhibit. Unfortunately, the stands are also getting smaller. There will be twelve show gardens this year. Most of the gardens have a pitstop at Chelsea on their way to a permanent destination.

This is an approach which I applaud because it means gardens now need a reason to be there. The emphasis this year is based on natural gardens.

Several charities are involved with gardens, including Perennial. This year is the first-time Perennial has been allocated a site on the main avenue. It has been created by garden designer Richard Myers and is called the Perennial Garden with Love.

One of the gardens that I am looking forward to visiting is the St Mungo's Garden, an urban pocket park. It is a public place that makes a big difference to a domestic space. It brings together people and plants, health, and wellbeing.

Chelsea is an excellent opportunity to get the message across that we need more green spaces in our communities. This particular garden will be relocated to two sites near London Bridge: at Guys Hospital and close by the river.

Hopefully, they will be included in the ever-increasing list of places to be judged by the London in Bloom It's your neighbourhood scheme.

Finally, I have played a small part in helping the London Fire Brigade who, to my recollection, are the first of our Emergency Services to build an exhibit in the discovery zone. It is based on the ever-increasing need for people to replace their front garden with a space to park their cars. The Fire Brigade have created two front gardens.

One of the gardens has used a permeable surface and includes planted areas with a tree and permanent and seasonal plants. The other has a non-permeable surface, and following heavy rain has resulted in the car, and the property being subject to flooding. The Fire Brigade has been called, which nowadays is a common occurrence.

In the next edition of Green Lines I will review RHS Chelsea 2022.

In the meantime, keep smiling, keep safe, and keep Gardening

Awards 2022

After last years "interesting" Zoom Awards, we are pleased to say that this year we are back to a face-to face awards thanks to the generosity of a couple of our mainstay entrants.

Farnham Town Council with Farnham in Bloom are providing the Maltings for the South & South East in Bloom Awards on September 13th and the London in Bloom Awards will be held at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Ecology Centre on the 21st September.

A huge thank you for their support this year and over many years and we look forward to enjoyable events for all those able to attend.

Details and information about the Awards including ticketing will be available soon after judging has been completed.

GARDENING TIPS & TASKS for June

Reg Leach - SSEiB Judge & Ambassador & Parks Manager – retired.

Welcome to the May edition of the bulletin, with some June' Tips and Tasks'

This month will see the longest day for daylight hours (yes, I know - already!), but you can have an enjoyable time in the garden, both working and resting.

BASKETS, TROUGHS & POTS

If you've not already done so, put out hanging baskets, making sure they are watered and fed regularly. To keep bedding plants flowering well and long into the season, deadhead as soon as the flowers start to fade and feed frequently. When hanging up baskets check the brackets and chains are safe and secure and not positioned too low where someone may knock their head on them! Also keep a check on the ground beneath the basket, as weeds thrive under a dripping basket. Closely monitor their watering needs. Even if the sun is not out, your baskets can easily dry out if there is a strong breeze.

Containers will always dry out quicker than the soil in beds and borders so check them regularly too. Also check for vine weevil larvae.

BEDDING

Prior to planting out your bedding plants dunk the pots and containers you have grown them in, into water to ensure the roots are wet before planting. If your bed or border is dry it's a good idea to water, it well the day before planting.

If you sowed half-hardy annuals earlier in the year indoors, harden them off now if you haven't already so and plant them out. If you sowed hardy annuals directly into your beds and borders, you may need to thin them out, planting those you have lifted into another area of the garden, plant into pots and containers, or swap with a friend or neighbour. Although this can be time consuming and a little tedious, deadheading bedding plants will help further flowering.



BIRDS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES

Hang feeders into trees and other high spots out the way of cats. Keep them topped up with seed and keep a bowl of water nearby too.

Encouraging birds into your garden brings not just an added interest but they can provide other benefits too – pest control - that may result in less use of chemicals to control aphid, slugs, and snails. I have a number of pairs of greenfinches and goldfinches that come into the garden. As I keep the feeders topped up all year round, they are regular visitors and come with their young. Herbaceous plants and flowering herbs are also a great attraction for bees and butterflies. During the summer months monitor the number of birds, bees and butterflies that visit and consider ways of increasing their appearances next year.

BLOOM REMINDERS

Judging will commence this month, so make sure you have timed your route for the big day and try to provide as much information as possible that meets the criteria.

BULBS

Deadhead any remaining, late flowering spring bulbs such as tulips, leaving the leaves to produce food that will go back into the bulb for next year's flowers. If you've not already done so, plant out summer flowering bulbs and corms.

CLIMBERS

Regularly tie in new shoots of climbing and rambling roses as new growth buds open and develop and give a high potash feed. Rampant growers like honeysuckle need to be kept under control too. If you want to expand the framework of your climbers, train, and tie in new shoots, horizontally if possible and into gaps on the wall or fence.

If you never managed it last month, cut back the early flowering clematis species and try to reduce the amount of deadwood from previous years that may have built up underneath. Deadhead climbing roses regularly, as with all other roses to keep them flowering throughout the season

GLASSHOUSES & TENDER PLANTS

As the weather continues to be warmer, it's a good idea to put moveable plants out into the garden for the summer, which frees up the greenhouse and reduces the need for such frequent watering as the air outside is cooler. Gradually harden them off to the outside and if an unusually cold night is forecast, bring them back in overnight.



HEDGES

Prune evergreen hedges such as Yew, BUT please check for bird nesting first.

If you want to reshape Yew hedges, they will regenerate well if you need to prune hard to re-establish a good shape.



HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS

Check that tall floppy plants are well supported as they develop. As the first flush of flowers start to fade, cut them down to encourage new flowers – Delphiniums and Lupins respond well to this. A general-purpose feed will help too.

LAWNS

Mow frequently, at least once a week if you can, as lawns respond better to frequent mowing.

Feed with a high nitrogen fertiliser to keep the lawn looking green and if there is a weed problem use a selective weed killer. Check your local garden centre for a combined weed killer and fertiliser.

If you are still suffering from moss in the lawn, it can still be treated, but as the moss dies it will go black and the lawn will look worse before it gets better! Trim up the edges to the lawn at the same and frequency as mowing, to give a well-defined edge to any formal lawn.

If you have a wildflower meadow for a lawn – great for butterflies and other beneficial insects - don't feed the meadow, as wildflowers prefer poor soil and don't of course use any weed killer on the meadow! Do consider converting 'formal' lawns into wildflower meadows wherever possible.

PRUNING

You can now prune back early flowering shrubs such as Weigela and Deutzia as they should have finished flowering, this will encourage new growth for next year's flowers. Cut out some of the oldest wood to ground level to encourage new growth from the base. Pruning shrubs after flowering also helps to control their size, particularly as many of us have small gardens. It's easy to let a few shrubs take over the whole garden if they're not kept in check!

ROSES

As with climbing roses deadhead regularly to encourage more flowers. When deadheading always try to cut down to an outward facing bud (with a sloping cut). Roses will benefit from a high potash feed at this time of year. This encourages stronger growth and helps repel aphid attack.

SEED SOWING

There is still time to direct sow some favourite annuals directly into beds and borders to add a splash of colour into those sunny but empty areas but keep well-watered until they establish.



SHRUBS

Hoe regularly to keep weeds down, especially those quick growing annual weeds. In dry warm weather hoe off the weeds, leaving them on the soil, and let the sun to dry them off.

A little tip: When weeding, work your way along the bed or border in one direction and then at the far end, turn around and work back the other way. It's surprising how many weeds you may miss if you don't work in both directions!

If you have a problem with pernicious weeds such as bindweed and ground elder carefully use spot treat with a systemic weed killer.

Fill in the gaps in shrub borders with bedding plants to give a burst of colour, or sow annuals directly into the soil once prepared as a seedbed.

As suggested last month, try sowing some old favourites in the gaps such as Clarkia, Godetia, Cornflower and Nasturtiums.

TREES

As mentioned in previous articles, make sure that trees planted in the last year or two are on a watering frequency to help them establish for the first couple of years.

WATER CONSERVATION

I know I regularly say this, but if you don't already have water butts, do consider installing them to collect rainwater from your house and outbuildings such as garages and sheds. Perhaps encourage local shops to install them so you can use their water butts for watering baskets around the town and village.

Watering is essential at this time of year, particularly for baskets and containers that will dry out quicker.

To reduce water wastage, you could lay out a trickle irrigation hosepipe around the garden, that targets pots and containers. To this, you could also add a timer so that the water only comes on at night – when less water is lost through evaporation. You can also use 'grey water' that you have used in the house, BUT don't use water that has had chemicals in it. The best 'grey' water is captured each morning whilst running the hot tap in the house, until it becomes hot, rather than let it run down the drain.

However you water, make sure you do it often in the hottest weather, best after sundown and remember that with baskets in particular, the wind will dry them out too. Another tip is to hoe around plants to loosen the top of the soil before watering, so the water doesn't run off so easily.

WEEDING

Regular weeding of beds, borders and containers is essential, to prevent annual weeds seeding. Carefully dig out perennial weeds where they are not wanted and try to get out all their roots.

Do take time to enjoy your garden and enjoy the colours and the scents.

See you next month. Reg



Shire Horses help rewild Wandsworth in ambition to recover nature in London

Not-for-profit organisation Enable has been awarded funds as part of an exciting city-based rewilding project, Rewild London. Enable, who manage and look after Wandsworth's green spaces and parks on behalf of the Council will apply this funding to King George's Park in Wandsworth. Supported by The Mayor of London, and in partnership with the London Wildlife Trust. The aim is to create wildflower meadows and biodiversity rich woodlands which will function as habitat corridors for pollinators, such as wild bees and butterflies, across the borough.

What is Rewild London?

A total of £600,000 has been granted via the Rewild London Fund to nineteen projects across London that will help to rewild the city and recover nature. The nineteen rewilding projects across the city will enhance and connect fifty-four of London's most important places for wildlife – called Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) - and create more natural habitats for plants and animals to thrive.

Why King George's Park?

Right in the heart of Wandsworth and declared as a site of Borough Importance in 2000 for its value as the central wildlife corridor within the area – this strip of natural habitat connecting populations of wildlife otherwise separated by the surrounding built environment is a prime location to benefit from this exciting enhancement.

What will Enable do?

The Rewild London project in Wandsworth seeks to improve the biodiversity value of King George's Park through the creation and development of biodiversity-rich habitats as defined

in Wandsworth Council's Biodiversity Strategy. This includes wildflower-rich neutral grasslands, woodland copses, and scrub, including deadwood. The site location is key, as despite being centrally located, this part of the borough has a lack of recent records for pollinators with good hot spots (areas with significant amounts of pollinators) on either side. The project is about increasing connectivity around the park and allowing nature to thrive. It's important to remember that we don't just mean butterflies and wild bees as pollinators, but this also includes moths, hoverflies, beetles, soldier beetles, and more.



To make these biodiversity improvements, Enable will be reducing the nutrients in the existing grassland using shire horses to pull mowers and harrows! The bonus is the visiting horse's hooves make gaps in the grass to allow wildflower seeds to establish more efficiently and strongly. We will sow the wildflower seed this autumn as well as creating stag beetle loggeries in the woodland.

On 17th and 18th May, shire horses Joey and William attended the site to carry out the first stage of their work. These sessions were run by Enable and Wandsworth Council in collaboration with Operation Centaur- a working horses' group that keeps the art of collaborating with rare breed heavy horses alive through estate conservation, heritage, community projects and equine therapy. The session was attended by local school Southfields Academy, with forty students coming along and seeing the horses in action and enjoying a Q&A session.

What is the benefit?

A crucial component of the Wandsworth Rewild London project is community engagement, attempting to bring nature closer physically to Londoners and help people connect with the nature already around them. The rewilding project will run alongside a wider series of community engagement events titled 'Welcome to King George's Park' that help facilitate community-nature engagement in Wandsworth.

The Rewild London Scheme and this exciting rewilding component in Wandsworth both have great potential to improve access to nature across the Capital. Enable is thrilled to be part of the Scheme and will continue to share updates publicly as the project progresses.

Ruth Growney – Trustee & Judge



OPEN GARDEN SEASON IS HERE!

We all love looking and exploring other people's back gardens (or is that just me?), discovering new and unusual plants, and "stealing" ideas for our own spaces. One of the most perfect ways to do this and raise a bit of money for charity is to visit one of the many gardens of the National Open Garden Scheme. The Scheme has little yellow books for different counties; these contain a list of all the gardens open in that area along with the dates they are open plus other relevant details. The books are readily available (I usually get mine from the local garden centre), or you can visit their website at www.ngs.org.uk

There is also Open Gardens www.opengardens.co.uk which is along the same lines but is run by two keen gardeners who have organised Open Gardens in their village for a number of years.

Both schemes describe what's open and when and the type of gardens you can visit. You can stay in your local area or travel further afield and discover some real gems.

Some are single gardens, but others are where a whole series of gardens are open at the same time.

The beauty of both schemes is that if you find yourself at a loose end, you can look up what is open and go visit, or you can plan visits with friends around specific dates.

One of my all-time favourite sets of gardens to visit is back this year, and I am really looking forward to re-visiting the Amberley Open Gardens www.opengardens.co.uk/open_gardens.php?id=2054. The views from some of these gardens are quite spectacular; the planting is also quite diverse. All set in the wonderful surroundings of the quaint village of Amberley in West Sussex. On Sunday, June 12, from noon till 6.00, there is plenty of time to visit most if not all of the sixteen wonderful gardens on show and still have enough time for a cream tea! There is also usually a fantastic selection of plants available to buy too – what a perfect combination!



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.

An advertisement for The Garden Superstore. The background is a photograph of a green wheelbarrow filled with brown compost, set against a blurred green garden background. The text is overlaid on the image.

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The logo for 'the Garden SUPERSTORE' is located in the bottom right corner of the advertisement.

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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 alike 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 500 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 the impact its business has 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 organizations, 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



Windowflowers is an independent family-owned and managed horticultural nursery, supplying and maintaining the finest floral and plant displays to businesses and local

authorities for over 70 years. Based in the West of London, they grow over one million plants and import over half a million stems of cut flowers and plants each year to their nursery. They have a team of eighty trained horticulturalists, nurserymen and florists working out of over thirty vehicles to ensure that your displays are always healthy, neat, and colourful.



London and South & South East in Bloom rely on sponsors and donors to help us deliver our annual programs and provide opportunities for all our entries and participants. We have a range of opportunities to engage with our regions, from budget-friendly schemes to the more elaborate. So if you know of anyone who can help or donate, please let us know.