



## London in Bloom & South & South East in Bloom Green Lines November 2022



London and South & South East in Bloom are Britain in Bloom Federation members. The group comprises all the UK Regions & Nations who meet to discuss the future of Bloom not only as Regions and Nations but also the broader Bloom movement and, of course, the Britain in Bloom finals. The group has met twice since September to discuss where Bloom will go in the next few years. As you might expect, these meetings have shown that each Region and Nation is unique, each pursuing its goals and meeting the needs of their regions/nation's entries, all trying to sustain their programs.

However, despite regional goals being attuned to local and regional aims, there is considerable synergy in all we wish to achieve. With so many competing demands, entrants and regions/nations must consider how best to proceed. Wetter autumns/ winters, which we have seen in the past month and the extreme heat we saw in the summer, means we may well have to consider how we all garden in the future. Larger Towns & City entries have the prospect of lower budgets in the next few years and may be concerned about how that will affect services and impact horticultural projects and the care for our open and green spaces.

So, what does this mean for the BIB Federation? As a collective, collaborating with partners with common interests, will lead to solutions being found to ensure Bloom is still accessible, and relevant and continues to work to secure our horticultural and gardening health.

A meeting is being held in January to discuss further how regions, nations and the RHS can secure a more sustainable Bloom open to all. Whatever the future may bring across the wider Bloom, we in our joint regions will continue to thrive. So, be assured that the Trustees of both London & South & South East in Bloom will continue to provide support and access to Bloom and visit your fabulous entries and communities, recognising the efforts made.

So, with the weather being less than helpful and with Christmas approaching, a bit of fireside gardening and planning is what we need plan for the regional competitions in 2023. During this period, Trustees of both regions will be working hard to ensure that 2023 is as successful or even more successful than last year and, with your support, even better.

Keep you posted

Kind regards, Ed:

## Developing Bloom

Small charities, like ours, are dependent on raising sufficient income each year to keep us going. Sadly, although the pandemic is behind us (hopefully), several excellent sponsorships ended, and we have had to rely on a few long-term supporters and income from our amazing entries. We would like to know if you know of any businesses, large or small or any individuals who would like to collaborate with us to see our Regions continue our work of the last 50 years. Income from sponsors, donors and advertisers is essential if we are to keep entry fees and event tickets affordable.

However, despite the absence of major sponsors, in 2022, with your continuing support and that of the Royal Horticultural Society, Farnham Town Council and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, we ran a successful program, seminar and two significant awards events.

### **But where should we go in 2023?**

We have yet to find venues for a seminar and judges and assessor training. We need a venue that is preferably gratis and is easily accessible has capacity for about 100 or more guests and is in an area where mock judging could be undertaken, so if you know of a venue, please let us know. Even better if it has a catering facility.

Equally, any suggestions for award venues for both regions would help us start our planning for another year.

Another annual conundrum is finding enough assessors and judges to enable entries to receive a visit. Last year across both regions, we visited over 650 entries. While a growing number of entries is always a good problem to have, if we could find a few more judges and assessors, this would help enormously, and our campaign managers Anne & Kate would be delighted. So, if you or somebody you know has professional gardening or horticultural skills and knowledge, a good “eye” and access to IT, we would be pleased to hear from you or them. Not just professionals, enthusiasts and those with a passion for all things gardening, especially if you have been involved with a community gardening project or been part of an award-winning “It’s Your Neighbourhood” group, perhaps your experience could help others develop their community projects by visiting, advising and assessing.

You will be mentored and supported in your first year as a new judge or assessor.

### **London in Bloom & South & South East in Bloom is seeking a fundraiser to join the team.**

Bloom is entering a new growth and development phase and is seeking a person(s) with experience of fundraising to help both regions increase their income streams to meet the challenges ahead.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming part of our team, please get in touch with [peter@londoninbloom.co.uk](mailto:peter@londoninbloom.co.uk) or [peter@sseib.com](mailto:peter@sseib.com) in the first instance providing contact details so that a meeting can be arranged.

South & South East in Bloom & London in Bloom are small charities working with over 650 communities dedicated to improving their Horticultural, gardening, environmental, community and voluntary links.

## Welcome



We are pleased to announce that the Honourable Lady Fiona Barttelot of Stopham House, West Sussex saw here with her husband, Sir Brian, has joined Jim Buttress as a South & South East in Bloom Patron. Lady Fiona is a keen gardener and supporter of many worthy causes, and we are most pleased that her knowledge and experience will help us develop our charity further in the coming years.

## Awards 2022

### **Geoff Hyde, Former Chairman, Trustee, Treasurer, Company Secretary – London & South & South East in Bloom**

This year we were able to resume our traditional style of awards ceremonies for both London and South and Southeast.

The feedback from those who attended showed how much this event is appreciated. Despite the tension of waiting for results, there was as ever much pleasure in meeting current and former judges, talking with fellow contestants about the problems of the year, and admiring the beautiful floral displays and dressing of the venues. It creates an atmosphere more like a family gathering for a wedding than an official recognition.

We have just had all the bills in for the awards, and may I say how grateful the Trustees are to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the Town of Farnham for hosting these events so beautifully and generously. As Treasurer, I must watch our funds very closely, and what strikes me is what bargain entrants get in attending the awards. We do not cover our costs of holding the awards, which we regard as recognition of all the work entrants put into their Bloom endeavours, though we are always seeking sponsors (does anyone know of any?)

Here are what I mean: A cup of coffee and a biscuit on the High St will cost, these days, about a fiver. And a meal somewhere near the standard of our awards (i.e., with a nice tablecloth and floral decoration, not a fish and chippery) with the main course, and a glass of wine, and service charge, must be at least £25 to £30.

If you reduce the entrance fee you paid by the value of attending the awards, there is a little left, sometimes even a minus. That's a bargain worthy of Black Friday!

Kate Harris, Co- Campaign Manager – London & South & South East in Bloom.  
Debtors Prison, Botanical Illustrations and a Royal Coup.



I came across the story of Elizabeth Blackwell while listening to a history/true crime podcast a few months ago and decided her story had to be shared.

Elizabeth was a botanical illustrator and author, born in Aberdeen in 1707 to a wealthy merchant father and artist mother. She is best known for her work engraving the plates of “A Curious Herbal”. Due to her affluent upbringing, Elizabeth was educated in music, languages and art, as was expected of young ladies of her class. Elizabeth went on to marry her second cousin, Alexander Blackwell, when she was 27, much to her parents’ disapproval. Alexander was what can only be described as trouble. At the beginning of their marriage, he was practising as a physician when he had no qualifications. In a bid to avoid reprisal for his actions, the couple fled to London, where he set up a business as a publisher, a role that needed four years of formal training. You may be surprised to hear that Alexander had no such formal qualifications. As a result, Alexander began to rack up large trade fines, which he was unable to pay

due to his liking for a lavish lifestyle and he subsequently landed himself in debtors’ prison for 2 years.

A resourceful woman, Elizabeth set a 6 year long plan in motion to raise the funds to pay off the debts of her beloved husband. Personally, I think I might have left him there, but that would have deprived the world of her work. Drawing (no pun intended) on her education in art, Elizabeth set her sights on creating a unique illustrated herbal, called A Curious Herbal. Herbals were books used by physicians (real qualified ones) as reference to the medicinal properties of herbs and plants and was illustrated to identify the plants in question. Elizabeth’s was the first of its kind in England.



Elizabeth regularly visited the Chelsea Physic Garden to examine plants, enabling her to draw them to create her book. She also created botanical engravings and hand coloured them. Not letting her husband get away with not earning his part, he was tasked with the job of providing the scientific and common names in various languages to accompany the illustrations along with what they could be used for. During this time, famous naturalist and collector Sir Hans Sloane, provided financial support to help publish *A Curious Herbal*, which was no mean feat for a woman at that time.



Now you would think after his wife raised the money and got him released from prison, he might have turned the corner and decided to keep on the straight and narrow, and for a short time he did. Moving into the field of agriculture, things were going well. So well in fact that on the recommendation of the Swedish Ambassador he emigrated to Sweden in 1742 and in 1744 he even earned the patronage of King Frederick and received a royal estate to continue his agricultural work and the role of physician seemed to find its way back onto his resume. To remind you, in case you had forgotten, Alexander had no formal training for this role. The plan was for Elizabeth to follow Alexander out to Sweden once he was settled. However, before this was to come to pass, Alexander managed to get himself embroiled in a plan to change the line of succession of the Swedish Royal Family and despite professing his innocence, he was promptly executed by beheading on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1747, famously laying his head the wrong way on the executioner's block, resulting in the executioner to have to correct him.

Elizabeth passed away in 1758 after living the remainder of her life in comparable obscurity. Her life was not lacking in strife, and it sounds like her parents were indeed correct about their feelings about Alexander. Her story is one of resilience and tenacity and one that resulted in an incredible piece of work that landed her firmly in the history books and I do strongly urge you to look up her work as her illustrations are quite beautiful.



### Crazy Weather - Ruth Growney, Trustee, Judge, BIB UK Finals Judge

I feel so sorry for the plants currently – they don't know what to do! The weather is unseasonably mild, although incredibly wet, which is causing all sorts of anomalies in my garden.



Roses are still in flower, (lovely to bring into the house for a burst of scent) and there is a second flush of flowers on the summer flowering clematis.

The winter flowering jasmine and a winter clematis have also decided that it is time to flower, and the fence is covered with a cacophony of colours not normally seen together.

But whilst my garden cannot make up its mind and I enjoy the benefits of the flowers spare a thought for those whose gardens are currently completely under water and suffering. I work (if you can call it that) one day a week in Pulborough “playing” in the beautiful garden of some dear friends of mine I have known for ages. Some eight years ago we started to completely re-vamp their large garden (it has lots of different levels and spaces) to create a series of garden rooms and seating areas so that they could enjoy the spectacular views across the rooftops of Pulborough old village and on to the South Downs. We are still working on the garden, mainly since my friend Claire changes her mind a lot! For example, what was originally designed to be a formal parterre and knot garden has turned into a vegetable garden with raised beds. New bits are added, ponds come and go, and every week there is always something to do.

Anyway, I digress. The reason I mention Pulborough is that I walk from the train station to my friends' house each week and anyone who knows the area also knows that it sits on a flood plain and floods to some extent every winter. I thought you might like to see the results of all the rain we have had with a couple of photos I took on Thursday 17 November.



The river Arun has risen to such a level that it has flooded the gardens of those properties who normally enjoy a beautiful view across fields to the South Downs but who now look out at an enormous lake and are keeping their fingers crossed that at least some of their plants will survive this onslaught.

As I write this it is raining (again!) but hopefully it will not get as bad as a few years ago when you could only get in and out of Pulborough at low tide! (Strange but true)



## What is 'bloom' in 2022? Molly White, South & South East in Bloom Trustee & Ambassador

Affectionately known as 'bloom' the annual competition of Britain in Bloom and its numerous regional counterparts has developed, almost unrecognizably since its inception 59 years ago. Born out of inspiration from Fleurissement de France, after horticulturist Ray Hay MBE visited whilst on holiday in 1963. Under the watchful eye of the RHS for 20 years, the BIB campaign has continued to diversify with regional counterparts increasing in strength and influence. I won't tell you there isn't work to be done; there absolutely is and that's why I'm so passionate about my involvement in the bloom. I'm just one person; but together we create teams and communities, and our input and work begin to create ripples of increased inclusion, diversity and progress.

Like anything, to continue succeeding, 'the bloom' needs the ability to change and evolve over time. Nothing sits still, horticulture is continually evolving; theories change, priorities change, circumstance changes.

The competition is no longer merely about 'hanging baskets along the high street' bloom really is about so much more, and it has been for some time.

Now my experience is still relatively recent, I've been involved in the bloom for a mere 5 years; I'm still very much the youngster, soaking up the knowledge, wisdom and experience of my slightly older and much more experienced peers. Saying that, I know I bring something different to the table and that's why intergenerational work is so vital, in all walks of life, in all circumstances.

So, what's bloom all about in 2022, well in a nutshell; it's about communities improving their space whether it be in an urban or rural environment. By increasing their community participation, considering their environmental responsibility, and considering horticultural excellence. Before I delve deeper, I think it's important to say that bloom is about all three of these factors blossoming together; for they are interlinked more than you might realise.

With anything between 1600 and 2000 communities entering each year in regional competitions and around 45 going forward to compete in Britain in Bloom, the campaign to capture the hearts of our towns and villages is still prevalent across the British Isles, the nationwide campaign is thought to attract in excess of 200,000 volunteers and numerous paid staff that enter through their place of work: be that a local authority or business.

So 'the bloom,' this is basically split into two parts, the RHS IYN awards and the annual competition for towns, villages, businesses and so on; IYN, aka 'It's your neighbourhood' these are awards that are non-competitive and designed to inspire communities, encourage you to get outside and start caring for your green space. This can be a space of any size, so really, it's there for everyone, any size group and any ability. As with the entire campaign there is clear guidance to help shape your project, support you and inspire you. The annual competition is very similar, but some would say it's more competitive and scores on a bronze, silver, silver gilt, gold scale but a little competition is healthy hey!

So, who really knows what the breakdown of bloom is? Nationally we see this competition, 'Britain in Bloom' it often pops up on our TV screens in the summertime but the important elements I feel are slightly lesser known, there are the regional competitions; across 16 regions in the UK, these 16 are running their independent bloom campaigns and the winners of these feed into the national finals. Without those 16 regions, that are like cogs in the middle of this campaign; there wouldn't be the number of projects happening and there wouldn't be this rise towards national recognition.

Titles, it seems I'm now shrouded in them, but what these really do is enable me to be more immersed in my region, see what is happening on the ground in the area I live and see how the campaign is both positively affecting communities and missing in other communities.



I am a volunteer for the region of the South and South-East and for London. A judge, an ambassador for Surrey; my home county and a newly appointed trustee for the South and South-East. The role of ambassador was bought in across our region to help support entries on a county scale, focusing need and giving a point of contact within your own area. The South and South-East is a huge region, extending from East Wiltshire to Kent and down to the IOW. Whilst there are plentiful numbers of entries, there are large pockets in our communities that aren't participating in Bloom. We must ask ourselves why? What can we do? How can we change this? Is community gardening happening in these areas? Or is there no provision and how can we help change this?

If you look at the South and South-East region, you are looking at over 300 entries; these range from your biggest parks, your most historic properties and well-known town centres, all the way to your supported gardening groups and that grass verge on the way out of the industrial park. Whilst we look at the design of these areas, we want to know about the maintenance; we want to know who in the community is taking their time to look after this green space, to improve it, to love it and to share it with others to enjoy. The campaign is about year-round connection, it's about improving your space for the community and the environment through-out the year, not just for judging day or when the carnival is on. This is about real sustainable change that improves the quality of people's lives.

So, what do I want to achieve in my roles? Well, that's an easy one, I would like horticulture to be more accessible to young people, families and minority groups; not as easy to achieve as it is to type, but I would like our communities to consider when and how groups are run so they can access the harder to reach members of our population. Removing barriers such as cost and finding ways to make non-native speakers welcome. I would like to see more community gardening happening in the towns and villages across Surrey, I live in Woking, a town where none of its council parks, green spaces, villages, cemeteries or community gardening projects is involved in bloom. I know that gardening is happening in my local area, but it's segmented, it seems like the bloom and its message isn't currently supported by the council and this causes a broken image across the town. Finally, I'd like to see the positive outcomes for residents that are using green space, actively and passively to improve their mental health and well-being; this conversation needs to continue, we need to see those good news stories. Long term, in an idealistic world, I'd love to see horticulture within our mainstream curriculum through secondary education. Young people need to know that horticulture is a career option, and this must happen across the board, not just in the schools that choose to promote it. It needs to stop being used as a weapon, a reward for good behaviour and a punishment for bad behaviour. What does that teach our children?

So how can you get involved? If you're a resident; search on social media for a local project near you, search for South and South East in Bloom, look at the village noticeboard, ask in the local shop? Is there a newsletter or magazine that needs a better read? Failing that; ask me. If you're running a project, consider how you are promoting it. It's not essential that the project enters South and South-East in Bloom but there's plenty of support waiting to help you if you do, to nurture your project and give you guidance. It's also a great way to meet other likeminded people, share information and strengthen your community. If you are a council member having read this; I urge you to consider the benefits of bloom to your community; the positive environmental effects, the reduction in isolation and loneliness and the improved impact of your blue and green spaces for visitors and residents alike.

The three pillars of Bloom are something we need to talk about until the end of time, because for the positive survival of humanity we need strong communities, we need horticulture, and we need a healthy environment.

Molly White @horticulturaldreamer on Instagram Molly's Garden maintenance on Facebook @hortidreamer on twitter

## GARDENING TIPS & TASKS FOR DECEMBER - Reg Leach Ambassador, SSEiB Judge and Parks Manager – retired.

Welcome to the November column, with gardening Tips & Tasks for December.

This time of year, is mainly about finishing off jobs such as planting, pruning and tidying up the garden before winter fully sets in. Many jobs will have been completed by now, but here are some reminders.

### BEDDING

Although it's getting late to be planting winter / spring bedding, you may still find some plants and bulbs at the garden centre. However, hold off planting if we are experiencing sharp frosts that may have hardened the soil and wait until the soil is softer.

Although the choice of winter / spring bedding is less than summer bedding, choose between Wallflowers; Bellis; Myosotis; Primula; Viola and Winter Pansies. Also try to include something trailing too if you are planting up baskets and troughs.

Don't forget that if you are including bulbs amongst your bedding, put the bulbs in after the plants to avoid them being chopped in half with the trowel! As a rough guide, plant bulbs to a depth of 2 ½ times their diameter.

### BIRDS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES

During the winter season consider planting more plants beneficial to wildlife next year. Such as native hedgerows, flowering shrubs and herbaceous plants all of which will help our native birds, bees and butterflies, particularly if they are early or late flowering.

When carrying out pruning works consider laying sizeable bits of wood at the back of shrub beds to create log piles for insects.

Through the winter months keep bird feeders topped up and include some fat balls.

Leave any berried shrubs for the birds.

### BLOOM THOUGHTS

Over the winter period hold a team meeting to plan your next 'Bloom' year and discuss the judge's comments that you will have received, incorporating these into next year's planning.

It's also a good time to put your feet up and look through seed and plant catalogues and look forward to the warmer weather next year.

### COMPOSTING

Continue to collect up and compost leaves, thin twigs and green waste from pruning works and any green waste from the kitchen.



## **GLASSHOUSES & TENDER PLANTS**

If you are housing tender plants in your glasshouse, check the temperature is kept above freezing — depending on what you are housing. Perhaps install a heater with a frost stat, so heating only comes on when the temperature drops to 0°C (32°F). Another consideration, if the greenhouse gets very damp in the winter and you have an electricity supply, is to use a de-humidifier that is set to its lowest setting at night. The recycled water collected can then be used to water plants in need of a drink!

On warmer days provide some ventilation to refresh the air.

Check plants in the glasshouse regularly. If some are showing signs of decay (such as pelargoniums cuttings), discard those infected to protect the rest.

If you have taken the risk to leave some tender plants in beds and borders over the winter, these will probably have been taken care of already, but if not, make sure they are well mulched.

As with empty pots and containers, if the glasshouse is free of plants, give the structure a good clean inside to eliminate any pests and diseases.

## **HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS**

Remove any remaining stakes and supports from herbaceous and perennial plants. Cut down the old growth to ground level, unless there are seed heads beneficial to birds. If you have mature plants, you can lift and divide them to increase your stock, to fill in gaps elsewhere in the garden, give to friends and neighbours, or use them to create a new border or project.

To divide the root ball, dig it out and carefully insert two forks back-to-back through the middle of the root ball and slowly prise the two halves apart. Replant them to the same original depth.

## **HERBS**

Less hardy herbs that you may have in the garden could be carefully lifted and potted up. Bring them in to your conservatory, greenhouse, or window ledge, to extend their life and give you fresh herbs for longer.

## **LEAF CLEARANCE**

Keep collecting leaves off the lawn, pond, borders and from off low growing plants such as alpines and heathers and compost them.

## **PLANTING**

I refer you to last month's bulletin for planting.

## PRUNING



It's worth reminding ourselves about this subject, as pruning techniques are useful all year round.

What are you pruning for?

To encourage more flowers; encourage fresh coloured stems; reshaping; containment; improving health of the shrub, or all these reasons?

When to prune will depend on its flowering time in the year. As a rule, the best time to prune flowering shrubs is soon after flowering has finished. This enables the plant to produce enough new growth to flower the following year.

The principles of pruning are:

Remove all dead and dying wood; cut out thin and weak growth; remove stems that are crossing and open the centre of the shrub to allow in more light.

We also need to prune to contain a shrub's size within a small space in the garden or stop it encroaching onto a public pavement.

Always use secateurs for pruning — not hedge trimmers or strimmer's!

When you have finished pruning, the shrub should look a natural shape and **not** rounded off or lollypop shaped, unless of course you are creating 'interesting' topiary!



## Shrub Pruning:

Some shrubs flower on the previous year's wood while others flower on the current seasons wood. For example, Forsythia and Philadelphus will flower on the previous year's wood while Buddleja flowers on the current year's wood, so this will determine how and when to prune.

With Philadelphus for example, prune after flowering (around July/August) taking out to ground level about a third of the older stems to encourage new growth from the base, whilst leaving last year's wood. A similar process is followed for specie roses (the more natural roses such as the rugosa types), which are pruned after flowering, taking out a percentage of the old wood to ground level.

Always use clean, sharp secateurs and make a sloping cut just above an outward facing bud. Make sure that the cuts are clean, as a jagged cut may allow disease in.

A clean cut also allows the wound to heal quicker and to form a callous over the cut more effectively.

Also avoid leaving 'snags' a section of stem left above a bud or leaf joint. This will die off and may cause disease into the plant, so always prune as close above a bud as possible. Try cutting down to an outward facing bud.

After pruning, lightly fork the soil around the shrub to relieve any compaction. Add well-rotted manure if you have any, so that the winter rains can water the nutrients in, and it will also function as a mulch keeping annual weeds at bay. BUT be careful when de-compacting if you have planted bulbs in the bed!

When it comes to pruning shrubs that are grown for their coloured stems, such as Cornus (Dogwood), these should be pruned after the winter period, just as the stem colour is starting to be masked by the appearance of new leaves in the spring. Cut the stems down to about two buds just above ground level where new red stems will grow. If the stems are not cut down, the bright red colour, which appears brightest on new wood, will be higher up the stem year on year and it will lose its vibrancy. Try inserting some of the cut stems into the ground, you'll be surprised how many will root.

## SHRUB BEDS

Now is a good time to assess whether plants were successful last year and whether some need to go to make room for more appropriate plants that will best meet your scheme for next year.

When you have completed all your border work, which may have included planting pockets of spring flowering bulbs in any open area of the border, carefully and lightly fork the bed over, to relieve compaction and give a mulch of organic matter to keep weeds at bay and for the winter rains to wash nutrient into the soil from the organic matter. The mulch will also act as an annual weed deterrent.

Aim to complete border works by the end of Dec so early emerging bulbs will not be damaged or risk being trodden on.



## **TREES**

Check stakes and ties before the winter winds, and loosen ties if the girth of the main trunk has expanded during the last growing

### **Rose Pruning:**

It is good practice to reduce HTs roses by half their height (usually done in November) to reduce wind rock. The final prune should be done next Feb/ March. For climbers, prune back this year's growth to 2 or 3 buds of the main frame. Apply this type of pruning to most climbing plants to maintain their shape.

If you want to increase the climber's framework, tie in some of last season's new shoots into the spaces you want to fill.

For specie roses take out some of the older shoots at ground level, leaving the newer stems to flower next year, this will also encourage new growth from the base.

## **WINTER**

Use this time of year to clean and sharpen hand tools and have mowers serviced and ready for next year.

Pack away the hosepipe and lag the outside tap to protect from frost.

## **WEEDING**

Keep an eye out for annual weeds that will germinate in mild weather. Hopefully if you have applied a thick mulch they will not appear. However, dig out any perennial weeds before applying a mulch.

Happy garden planning over the winter months, Reg.

## Growing all year round with Amberol's self-watering planters - Rachael Ashfield Marketing & Service Coordinator

Many Britain in Bloom groups use the competition's judging criteria as a key tool when planning their entries for the annual competition – or simply as a useful guide to good practice. Although judging takes place during the summer months when many plants and flowers are traditionally at their best, as mentioned in the RHS marking scheme, keeping Britain blooming should be a year-round project. Certainly, the judges see it that way.

For example, in the Horticultural section, specific mention is made of the requirement for planting with “year-round interest where appropriate” with maximum marks awarded for “Excellent plant selection with extensive year-round interest.” In the Community section, 365 days a year approach is also given a high profile, with judges looking for evidence of “forward planning and year-round activities, initiatives or events”.

One of the most valuable features that Amberol's self-watering planters offer is their versatility, which makes them suitable for use all year round. Many In Bloom groups and gardeners faced the challenge of drought in 2022, but the difficulties of winter and spring planting are usually very different. So, although Amberol's self-watering planters are ideal for use during warm, dry conditions, they are also a great choice for community gardening groups looking to keep planting, growing and blooming 12 months of the year.

### Why are Amberol self-watering planters suitable for colder conditions?

1. Made from recycled or recyclable polyethylene, Amberol's self-watering planters are double walled which reduces extremes of temperature by keeping compost warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.
2. Plants can often become waterlogged during wet weather, but the overflow holes found above the matting in each planter ensure that this problem is avoided.
3. The planters help conserve water all year round. With climate change high on the agenda, and some regions still likely to be classed as being in drought even in the winter of 2023, Amberol's water conservation feature is hugely beneficial.

“Taking measures to minimise water usage” is also identified as an important strategy in the Britain in Bloom mark scheme. Whatever the season, self-watering planters help conserve water by:

- Ensuring that plants have water as and when they need it
- Ensuring that plants only take up the water that they need
- Reducing run off that occurs when compost is dry

Hanging baskets can be particularly difficult to keep watered without wastage – which is one of the reasons why the Amberol range of [self-watering hanging baskets](#) is so popular. And of course, they save time and money in terms of maintenance too. To find out more about Amberol's self-watering planters or to arrange a no-obligation bespoke virtual demonstration, call 01773 830 930 or email [sales@amberol.co.uk](mailto:sales@amberol.co.uk).

## Bloom Sponsors & Supporters - 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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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

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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 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**



The Royal Parks Guild is a voluntary Partner Organisation of The Royal Parks who are responsible for managing and preserving over 5,000 acres of historic parkland across London.

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.

The Royal Parks has worked with London in Bloom since its inception in 1967.

Windowflowers is the original and still the largest independent comprehensive supplier of Floral and Horticultural Services to the commercial sector in the UK.



We supply and maintain to commercial premises and local authorities, mainly within London and the surrounding areas but also throughout Southern England and the Midlands.

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