



London in Bloom & South & South East in Bloom

Green Lines

September 2022



After two excellent Award Ceremonies it now brings us to the close of another successful Blooming Year, thank you.

The Awards at Tower Hamlets were attended by over 240 guests with many receiving multiple awards. Awards were made to RHS Its Your Neighbourhood Communities, together with numerous Parks and Greenspaces and of course the traditional main entries of Villages, Towns, and Cities.

London in Bloom is grateful to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets for hosting its Awards and to Cllr. Shafi Ahmed, Speaker of the Council and Cllr. Iqbal Hossian, Cabinet Member for Culture & Recreation who were in attendance.

Not content with running the LIB Awards on the 21st September the Trustees and Campaign Team organised and delivered the S&SEiB Awards on the 23rd September hosted by Farnham Town Council & Farnham in Bloom. An outstanding event attended by Mrs Mary Creswell, Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey, Cllr. Alan Earwaker, Mayor of Farnham and the Farnham in Bloom Team who did so much to make the rearranged Awards possible.

Too many superb entries to mention here, but the enthusiasm and passion for Bloom remained high with more community gardening groups becoming involved and we even had strong entries from HMS Royal Navy this year.

Conservation entries across both regions showed continued support for our natural landscapes and our need to conserve native plants and animal species. Country Parks entries too where of a high standard both across London and the South & South East.

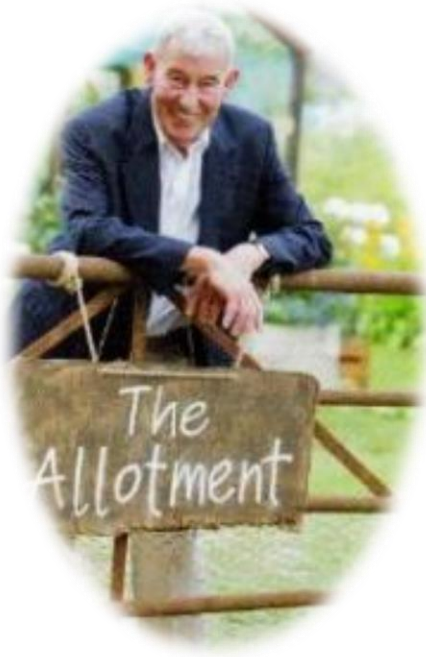
It was also good to see the care being taken to conserve our natural resources with many entries converting to sustainable plantings. Gardening, as we saw at both Awards, is a broad church with a wide range of gardening styles. We welcome them all.

So after an “interesting” gardening year, perhaps it’s time to sit back and reflect on what was achieved. We at Bloom HQ are delighted that our regions have achieved more than expected. In the South & South East we have maintained our pre-pandemic entries and London achieved a record number of entries, bucking the national trend.

So take a little time out now before we start scouring the seed catalogues and start planning for an even more successful 2023!

Best wishes from all the Trustees, Ambassadors and Judges and thank you for a great year- Ed:

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



The death of Queen Elizabeth II has had a profound effect on the Nation. Despite all the pomp and circumstance all the rituals, it's her Majesty's humanity that is at the heart of her appeal which is why everyone is feeling her loss so personally.

It has also been a time to reflect on our own personal experiences involving Her Majesty. When I was interviewed in 1972 for a new position in the Central Royal Parks, I was told at the interview, the successful candidate would share responsibility with another appointee for the management of St. James's Park, Green Park, Hyde Park, the Central Nursery and Kensington Gardens. You can imagine my initial shock and the total surprise when I was informed on my first day by the late Ashley Stephenson, I would also provide horticultural assistance to Buckingham Palace and Clarence House. My only previous encounter with a member of the Royal Family was as an RHS Wisley student involved in a Japanese Garden at Chelsea in 1967. Myself and a fellow student who had built the Garden were given two passes which allowed us to stay at the Show when the Royals attended. We had positioned ourselves at one of the main entrances to the old canvas marquee, opposite the Embankment entrance, where they all arrive. In fairness to the two of us, we were only given the passes on the Monday morning so had no time to change from our work clothes which in my case were in a pretty dishevelled condition. So you can therefore imagine my horror when HRH Princess Alexandra started to approach. My initial thought was to disappear, but my mate reassured me, she would not stop to talk to us, she did! I have never forgotten how natural she was and genuinely interested in our replies to her questions. This has always been my experience when meeting other members of the Royal family.

At the time of my appointment to the Royal Parks, the Head Gardener at Buckingham Palace was Freddy Nutbeam who used to push the Royal Children round in his wheelbarrow. He invited me to the Palace for a tour of the gardens. When I arrived via the tradesman entrance at the corner of Grosvenor Place, I was introduced to his wife who had made cake, which incidentally she did every time I visited. The visit was timed to coincide with her Majesty's annual holiday at Balmoral. It would appear for whatever reason they had changed that departure date. When I set off on my first tour of the Gardens, you can

imagine our complete surprise when we saw the Queen out walking with her beloved corgis. I just stood there in total shock bowing my head. However Mr Nutbeam questioned her on still being at the Palace. She actually apologised to him!!

I was fortunate to meet her on quite a few of these informal occasions. Although respectful, the more natural you were in your approach the more she responded. It was exactly the same when I visited Benny, who was the Queen Mothers Gardener at Clarence House. I have been very fortunate to have met members of the Royal Family when I was part of the team with the Royal Parks apprentices building exhibits at Chelsea , planting ceremonial trees and many other events involving the Royal Parks.

Finally in 1977 which was Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee, I was involved with the late Robert Legge in creating an exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show to celebrate the Silver Jubilee. The RHS had given Royal Parks the Cenotaph which is in the middle of the Marquee. Hillier's always occupied this site. Bob Legge designed a crown which contained Saintpaulia, [African Violets] which provided the purple sides of the Crown. The folds contained Cineraria maritima to provide the silver effect and the Crown sat on a purple cushion. The entire structure was fixed to the Cenotaph and put in place using a telehoist!! Around the base we planted a mixture of annuals and the path on which Her Majesty was going to walk was edged with the Garden Pink, Doris, which Bob found out was one of Her Majesties favourite flowers. Incidentally, the Queen and her Mother were also very fond of sweet peas. We had also constructed and planted a carpet bedding display which commemorated the Silver Jubilee and the date. Unfortunately, we had a failure with the grass in the display. In desperation we used a plant with the common name was "Mind Your Own Business." We were all told to remember the Latin name just in case Her Majesty inquired about the plant. I have never forgotten.

HELXINE SOLEIROLII.

Wonderful memories of an incredible lady.

Keep safe, keep smiling and keep gardening

Jim



THE METROPOLITAN PUBLIC GARDENS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 303330

The MPGA seeks a new GRANTS OFFICER.

The MPGA is one of the longest established horticultural Charities in London, founded in 1882, and has played a vital role over the years in the preservation and improvement of green open spaces, community gardens and neglected sites throughout the Capital. Volunteers entirely run it.

We are looking for someone who is IT literate, has good management and spreadsheet skills and an interest in London's parks, gardens, and green spaces.

Job Description .

Maintain a record of grant applications received and work with the Grants sub-committee to record the results of their recommendations.

There are usually somewhere in the region of 35 applications per year of which some 30 are approved. This number has recently been affected by the pandemic and has been much smaller as projects have been shelved.

Consult with the Hon Treasurer and the Executive Committee on all relevant matters.

Attend quarterly Executive Committee Meetings, normally held in the afternoon. These may be face-to-face or virtual.

Provide the Committee with regular updates on grant applications and maintain contact with the beneficiaries.

Produce a Grants Report for the Annual Report.

Please apply to the Chairman:-

Rex Thornborough
36 Baxendale Street
London E2 7BY

07889789567

rexthornborough@btinternet.com

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



Hints & Tips for October

Autumn and winter are now fast approaching. I hope 2022 has been a rewarding year for you all, both in the garden and on your community projects. The hot weather last July will no doubt have caused the loss of some plants, so now is a good time to consider freshening up beds and borders.

There are a number of tasks to do in the garden, as the days get shorter. Frost is also becoming an increasing risk for vulnerable plants.

COMPOSTING:

As the autumn leaves are now starting to fall, collect them off beds, borders, containers, ponds, and the lawn and if you're able to, compost them. Make sure you regularly collect the leaves, particularly the morning after a hard frost, as they will drop much more readily following a frost.

If you don't have a compost bin ready for autumn leaves, consider buying one or making your own. The easiest way to build your own is to get hold of some wooden pallets. You

will need four of them, which can be secured to each other to make a square. If you have space, you can align two or three of them together, so you will need three for each extra compost bin, perhaps even cutting a hinged flap at the bottom to scoop out your ready-made compost next year. Ask your local garden centre or builders' merchant if they have any spare pallets.

Add softwood pruning's to the leaves and other green waste. You can add grass cuttings too but mix them with other green waste as they do not mulch down well on their own.

Don't of course add perennial weed such as couch grass and oxalis.

If you only have a light leaf fall in your garden, you can put them directly onto your borders, so the worms can work them into the soil over the winter period. Silver Birch leaves are good for this as they are small and break down quickly. Larger, tougher leaves such as the London Plane will take some time to break down, so it's best to compost them with a mix of other vegetation.

If you have a pond, it's a good idea to net it before leaf fall.



BASKETS, TROUGHS & POTS

Although many of us only plant hanging baskets for the summer months, they can be re-planted for the winter/spring season and will give a good splash of welcome colour early next year. Although for the winter there are not so many choices of plants to use, there are still a considerable amount to choose from. Plant up with winter pansies and include some variegated ivy so there are some trailing plants to cover the sides and perhaps include some miniature daffodils. You can also plant up baskets with cyclamen or even winter flowering heather to give a bright display during the winter through to the spring. You may want to try polyanthus and native Primula too.

If your garden or location is subject to cold winter winds, you may wish to plant up baskets early next spring instead, to avoid the worst of the weather. In this case, you can plant now or later on and grow them on under cover. When the baskets are about to show some colour, harden them off carefully before hanging in situ.

BEDDING

Summer bedding will have passed its best by now. If you still have yours in, dig out the remains of your summer bedding and empty out hanging baskets, troughs, and containers. It's a good idea to wash out and sterilise containers before storing or re-using before replanting with winter/spring bedding. If your summer displays included bedding geraniums and ivy leaf geraniums, although it is getting late consider taking cuttings or pot up and over-winter them, keeping them relatively dry, and frost-free and in a light and airy position, preferably a glasshouse or conservatory, or even a window ledge throughout the winter, ready to start them up again next spring.

Prior to planting winter/spring bedding try to incorporate some organic matter – from your compost bin - or buy a few bags of well-rotted horse manure and dig into the beds. When planting, if you include bulbs, such as Tulips into you scheme, put the bulbs in after planting the bedding. If you plant them first, you may accidentally cut through them with the trowel! As a guide, plant bulbs to depth of around 2 ½ times their diameter. Taller Tulip varieties should be planted a little deeper to give them better wind resistance when they are flowering next spring.

BIRDS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES

Following on from the heading above - Bedding - please consider wherever possible to reduce the amount of formal bedding and increase herbaceous perennial planting, which require less watering and are beneficial to wildlife. Also consider a new or enlarging an existing wildflower meadows. As mentioned before, when mowing off wildflower meadows consider laying the arisings at another location to start a new meadow elsewhere, as the arisings will contain wildflower seed.

BLOOM THOUGHTS

For those of you that entered London in Bloom and S&SEiB you will now have your reports from the judges (after the Awards ceremony). So now is a good time to have your AGM to discuss how the year has gone and to plan for next year, considering the judges' comments.

As the longer evenings are fast approaching, order a few seed catalogues so you can plan and develop your garden for next year.

Also consider organising a 'Plant Exchange' event. Exchanging surplus plants you may have accrued while lifting and dividing plants with friends and neighbours or with another local Bloom group.

BULBS, CORMS & TUBERS

Those susceptible to frost:

Plants such as Canna, Dahlia, and Agapanthus (in severe winters), are susceptible to frost and are likely to need protection. When the leaves have turned yellow, cut them down.

If frost susceptible plants are planted in your border and you decide to take the risk and leave them in the ground, apply thick mulch over the crowns to give them extra frost protection. However if your soil tends to retain moisture, the tubers may rot during the winter!

If they are in pots. it's a good idea to take them out, removing the tubers carefully and divide them up creating more plants for next year. Then repot them into a dry compost and place them into a frost-free shed or garage and allow them to dry out. The soil should be kept dry over the winter to avoid the tubers from rotting. Next spring, when the risk of frost has passed, you will be able to bring them out again.

For bulb planting with Bedding, see above.

CLIMBERS

Vigorous climbers such as Wisteria will have become unruly. Cut back this year's growth to two or three buds of the old wood to keep them in check and to retain the old framework. If you want to increase the framework, select appropriate shoots, and tie them in to the area you want to cover. Treat climbing roses the same way.

GLASSHOUSES & TENDER PLANTS

Lift if they were planted out in the borders and bring them in, re-pot and cutback as appropriate. As winter progresses, reduce watering to avoid plants rotting – Pelargoniums are an example of this.



HEDGES

If they require another trim, do so now, but if you have a native hedge try to leave it if there are lots of berries present as the birds will be feeding off them.

HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS

Don't be tempted to cut off dead flower heads of sunflowers or other seed-bearing flower heads, leave them for the birds.

Cut back perennials, which have finished flowering, but leave grasses with their flower spikes, as they will give winter interest to the garden.

Provided your herbaceous plants have fully died down and the soil is not too wet, now is a good time to lift and divide them and to reorganize your border to move plants into their best positions.

Sun-loving plants may be in too much shade. Move taller plants to the back of the border. Consider lifting and replanting your borders for a better effect next year. Some herbaceous plants may be

too vigorous for smaller borders and may need to be moved to larger beds.

Now is also a good time to introduce new herbaceous plants into the border, adding new colour and interest, or to replace older plants that are a bit tired.

When all the autumn/winter work has been completed on herbaceous borders, decompact carefully and mulch the beds with well-rotted organic matter as mulch, which will give extra protection to plants and help to suppress annual weeds.

LAWNS

The grass will be growing much more slowly now, if at all. If however you do need to cut the lawn again, by raising the height of cut you will leave a thicker sward, helping the lawn get through the winter and will also help reduce wear and tear.

Remember to also keep the lawn clear of fallen leaves too.

If your lawn is in good condition and does not need major renovation, it's a good idea to apply an autumn feed that will help produce stronger roots. In the next few months I'll write about some winter projects, such as lawns.

WILDFLOWER MEADOWS

If you have a wildflower meadow that has yet to be cut down, you will need to cut and collect (as wildflower meadows need poor soil conditions to thrive). The arisings, which will contain seeds, could be thinly laid onto another area of grass, to create a new wildflower area. It's not as effective as starting a meadow from scratch, but it can work given time.

PLANTING

Leave the planting of bare-root plants, shrubs, and trees until a little later in the year, the ideal month is November. Bare root deciduous trees should only be lifted/planted after they have dropped their leaves and are best planted between November and March.

If you want to purchase containerised plants, it's a good idea to plant them while there is some warmth in the soil, while their roots are still actively growing.

PRUNING

If you haven't already done so, trim back Lavender and Rosemary to keep them within their allocated space in the garden, but don't trim them too hard or into the old wood, as they will not regenerate.

ROSES

If your roses are covered in rose hips leave them for birds and wildlife.

SEED SOWING – (Hardy annuals)

Now is a good time to prepare a suitable area for sowing hardy annuals for next summer. There is a wealth of hardy annuals to choose from including Clarkia, Poppy, Corn Marigolds, Godetia, annual Chrysanths and Cornflower. Consider replacing traditional bedding plants for the more sustainable and bee friendly hardy annuals next year.

It's a good idea to fill gaps in your border with hardy annuals, or perhaps plant one of the beds up with a selection of culinary herbs! They can be sown direct and will give a welcome splash of colour in the summer.

SHRUBS

Now is a good time to assess shrub borders. Shade-loving plants may be struggling in the sunnier border and taller plants may screen smaller plants behind, so lift and replant for a better border next year.

Leave on the old flower heads of Hydrangea and Sedum to give some colour to the winter garden. It's also a good way to protect the new buds that are dormant at ground level, from frost.

When all the autumn/winter work has been completed it's a good idea to mulch the beds with well-rotted organic matter as mulch, giving protection to plants and suppressing annual weeds.



TREES

As mentioned above, nurseries should not lift deciduous trees that are still in leaf, rather wait until they are fully dormant, before lifting and planting.

WATERBUTTS

Now is a good time to consider water butts for the house and outbuildings to capture the winter rains or attach overflow water butts to existing ones to increase your capture. Natural rainwater is so much better for your plants than tap water.

It's a good idea to pack away the hosepipe now and lag the outside tap to protect from frost. While frost and severe winters are not as they were in London and the South East, we may still have weather cold enough to freeze outside taps

WEEDING

If the weather is mild keep hoeing to remove annual weeds, such as chickweed that seems to grow all year round in our region of the UK.

Until next month, keep safe and well and enjoy your garden.

Reg

Ruth Growney – London & South & South East in Bloom Judge & Trustee



My top 3 favourite plants for late summer/early autumn and it's all about the pollinators!

Top of my list has to be the unusual *Heptacodium Miconioides* or the Seven Sons Tree, originally from China. It is a bushy deciduous large shrub absolutely smothered with large clusters of small fragrant white flowers at this time of year. I fell in love with this shrub a few years ago and have planted two in my garden in different aspects, one is in practically full sun and the other in partial shade and they are both doing really well. They are tolerant of most soil types, liking moist but well drained soil the best, and are hardy down to -20 so will withstand the hardest of our winters. The flowers appear in mid to late July in tight, whorled sets of seven hence its common name. Following flowering, the sepals at the base of the flowers not only persist, but also turn bright pink as the seeds mature. The shrub also has a soft reddish stripey bark that provides winter interest – everything in my garden has to work for its keep! As a bonus it has to be one of the best plants I have seen for pollinators – always alive with bees, butterflies, hoverflies, and other insects. It is a fairly slow growing plant – reaching its full height of some 8 metres in 10-20 years but if you don't want it to get that big it responds well to being cut back in late winter/early spring when the plant is dormant. Remove any diseased, damaged, congested or crossing shoots, and shoots that are growing in unwanted directions can also be pruned out. You can propagate it

by seed - sow seeds under glass as soon as they are ripe (I haven't tried this) or take softwood cuttings in the spring or semi-ripe cuttings in mid-summer (I did this successfully a couple of years ago and they are now flowering happily in friends' gardens)

Next on my list is *Tithonia Rotundifolia* or Mexican Sunflower to give it its common name. This annual is really easy to grow from seed – which I do every year. The variety I grow is Torch and the flower heads are the deepest brightest orange you can ever imagine. The plant reaches around 1.5 metres and loves full sun. Again, this is an excellent plant for pollinators with the many flower heads buzzing with the sound of all the insects. The ones in my garden have been flowering their heads off since the beginning of July and will continue to do so until the first frosts. They make lovely cut flowers as well - just be a bit careful when cutting as the stems are hollow. Regular deadheading makes this one of the longest lasting flowering plants in my garden and such as blaze of colour.



Contrasting perfectly to *Tithonia* is my next choice - the ever-reliable perennial *Verbena Bonariensis*. The vibrant purple of the verbena against the orange of the *tithonia* is gorgeous and it is again one of the longest lasting flowering plants of the season flowering from July through to October. Butterflies and other insects also much love it. This year I have planted a couple of the shorter varieties of *Verbena* to complement the tall *Bonariensis* (it can get to around 2 metres tall but hardly ever needs staking). Lollipop and Rigida are the two varieties I have tried this year and they are working just as hard as their big brother to attract the pollinators.

I hope you get as much enjoyment from your garden as I do from mine – it's not just about the plants and flowers – it's about providing food and nectar for pollinators and for me it's sitting in the garden watching and listening to it literally "buzz" with life.

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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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 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 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 Worshipful Company of
GARDENERS

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 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.