



## London in Bloom & South & South East in Bloom

### Green Lines

### March



As I write, the days are getting longer, the frosty nights are less, and brighter days appear to be on their way. Plants are starting to emerge from their winter sleep, and the display of spring bulbs gives one a much needed 'fillip' despite all that goes on in the World.

It is good to receive a growing number of entries into this year's competitions; some new, some returning and our usual amazing 'Blooming' friends who join us every year, so thank you. Our judges and assessors look forward to seeing your efforts and achievements in June & July.

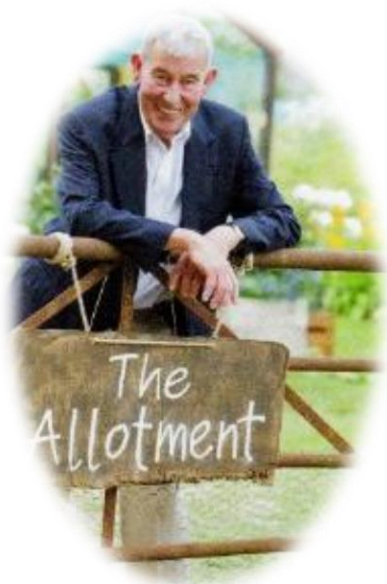
Let us hope that as COVID restrictions are finally removed, we can get back to some semblance of normality, if not entirely "gardening wise".

This year's efforts to reduce the impact of climate change through our Gardening are reflected in the updated main villages & towns criteria and encourage us to do as much as we can for the planet and, of course, a higher score in the competition. Make sure you read the criteria thoroughly and respond as best you can. An article in next month's edition will offer some ideas for responding to the criteria.

This year, we celebrate Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee, and if you have not already done so, why not support The Queens Green Canopy initiative. It has never been more important to plant trees for future generations and help slow climate change effects. So if you are an individual or in Bloom group and have space, please plant a tree. If planting a container tree in April, please make sure you give it a good start by regularly watering well, especially during the long dry period. For a list of suitable small trees, go to [www.frankpmatthews.com](http://www.frankpmatthews.com), whose trees are seen in many Garden Centres.

Keep Gardening - Ed.

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



I'm sure like me since the start pandemic, and it is very noticeable the ever-increasing price on everything from food household goods and now with the terrible events in Ukraine fuel prices.

However, I would like to offer two gardening gems that are very different but have one fantastic thing in common. The admission is free!

I was introduced to this hidden horticultural gem by my father. He lived in East Preston, and more often than not, it was included in my monthly visit to see him. I am, of course, referring to Highdowns Gardens. The Gardens were created out of a chalk pit overlooking the South Downs, where there was little soil and unsatisfactory plant growth conditions. The Garden is the achievement of Sir Frederick and Lady Stern. As a young man, he rode in the Grand National. Unfortunately, his name does not appear on the list of the winning jockeys!

He was also the recipient of the Victoria Medal of Honour from the Royal Horticultural Society. When I was a student at Wisley in 1966, we were told by the Director, Frank Knight, that the Alpine Committee was holding a very important meeting to discuss the re-landscaping of the Rockery Gardens. We were told that a member of the Committee was Sir Frederick Stern, who used a wheelchair and had insisted arrangements were put in place so that he could take part in the discussions with his fellow committee members. All 18 students had to create a pathway down the side of the Rockery to allow wheelchair access at every level. On the day of the visit, we were all allocated to areas of the Garden well away from the Rockery, and not surprisingly, neither did we receive a vote of thanks!

Sir Frederick and Lady Stern lived in the big house next to the Gardens, now a hotel. The Garden was created when many expeditions went out to China and the Himalayan regions to collect rare and beautiful plants. Many of the original plants from these collections can still be seen in the Garden today, particularly plants collected by Reginald Farrer and Ernest Henry Wilson. Sir Frederick and his wife left the Gardens to Worthing Borough Council, whose park staff maintain the grounds. Everyone was very concerned when all of the Parks Department were privatised. Fortunately, the Gardens are now run by Trust and a loyal team of volunteers. The whole area has been deemed a national collection. The gardens' view is beautiful and includes the sea and the South Downs.

The Gardens are at their best in the spring and early summer when there is a colourful succession of Spring Bulbs such as Snowdrops, Crocus, Anemones, Hellebores and Daffodils.

This is followed by bearded iris and peonies, especially the large tree varieties.



Excellent free parking and a cafe.

The address is: Highdown Rise, Goring by Sea, Worthing, West Sussex. BN1Z 6FB.

Please note the Garden is accessed via a dual carriageway (A 259). If you are travelling westwards, you cannot make a right turn. Proceed to the roundabout turn back on the same road eastwards; Highdown will be on your left.



The second gem that also has free admission is the South Downs Heritage Centre, part of the South Downs Nurseries Group owned by the Tate family.

The plant area displays many plants grown in their nurseries.

In 2013, the family asked Jonathan Tate and his daughter Sarah to project manage a new Heritage Centre. The old Heritage Centre was being demolished and exhibits safely stored. A new 1500 square metre vernacular-style Sussex barn was constructed from restoration grade oak. Fashioned by hand in a traditional workshop by a team of master carpenters. In 2016 I was asked by Clive Gravette, who was very involved in creating the Museum of Gardening, a large part of the Heritage Museum, to open the new building officially. Apparently, all the horticultural personalities originally asked required a large fee!

Clive Gravett resigned from the rat race in 2004 to start his own horticultural business. He founded the Budding Foundation, a charity to support young people in need. He had an unbelievable collection of garden machinery, and his hero was an American, Edwin Beard Budding, who invented the lawnmower. Visit the Centre and discover the history of Gardening

in Britain and explore rare artefacts dating back over the last few centuries. The Museum has a collection of over 30 vintage lawnmowers dating from the 1860s. Adjacent to the Museum is the Sussex Food Hall which brings together the best local and regional food producers. Including Budding Pale Ale, which incidentally was my fave!! Refreshments can be attained from the Barn Coffee Shop and Restaurant.

The address: South Downs Nurseries, A273, Brighton Rd, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 9LY. Groups are very welcome.

Keep smiling, keep safe, keep Gardening. Jim





## The Queens Green Canopy

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a unique tree-planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, which invites people from across the United Kingdom to **"Plant a Tree for the Jubilee"**.

Everyone from individuals to Scout and Girl Guiding groups, villages, cities, counties, schools and corporates will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environment by planting trees during the official planting season between October to March. Tree planting will commence again in October 2022, through to the end of the Jubilee year.

London in Bloom and South & South East in Bloom are pleased to see the many groups, villages, and towns planting trees to celebrate the Jubilee.

One such initiative can be seen in Farnham, Surrey, where schools and community groups have planted forty trees along the banks of the River Wey. These Trees, Birch, Liquidamber and Amelanchier, will be a permanent reminder of this most valuable initiative.

South & South East in Bloom was most pleased to be part of this initiative and have an opportunity for the region to be involved.

Thank you, Farnham and

Farnham in Bloom



### Sponsor News.

More companies are joining us and supporting Bloom, and we are pleased to add the Garden Superstore to our growing list of sponsors this year. The Garden Superstore is kindly offering a discount to those who wish to make a purchase. See the advert for more information.

A photograph of a green metal wheelbarrow filled with dark brown compost, set against a blurred background of green foliage.

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The logo for 'the Garden SUPERSTORE' is located in the bottom right corner of the advertisement, featuring the same stylized 'G' and text as seen in the main logo.



## GARDENING TIPS & TASKS for April

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

Spring is well on its way, and wildlife is increasingly becoming more active. It's a great time to be finalising your plans for the summer to come and how to brighten up your garden or community area.

### BASKETS, TROUGHS & POTS

If you've not put out your spring-flowering baskets yet, you can do now, so long as they have been hardened off. Check chains and brackets before putting them in situ.

If you now have a space in the greenhouse or polytunnel, which is starting to warm up with the longer days, start your troughs and summer baskets, so they can be ready to put out from late May into June. To get a fuller basket, it's good to plant the sides and the top. They look so much better than having bare sides when they are hanging in situ.

### BEDDING

If you are still deciding on the summer bedding displays, select those plants that should be looking their best at judging time from mid-June throughout July. Think about colour mixes that compliment each other and consider standard or dot plants within the scheme. It's a personal choice, but I like to see beds that are domed slightly, so the soil level is higher in the middle of the bed, rather than the bed being flat. Mounding the beds slightly shows off the bedding better. Alternatively, select taller plants for the middle of the bed and lower plants towards the edges to create the same domed effect.

### BIRDS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES

Even though the weather will be warmer now, it's good to keep the bird feeders topped up. You may also consider building a loggery for invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians and installing a solitary bee house. Herbaceous plants are beneficial to attract butterflies, as are herbs, buddleia and many other shrubs, so include these wherever you can.



### BULBS

As the spring-flowering bulbs such as Daffodils fade, deadhead them to avoid their energy-producing seed but don't take off the leaves. Allow the earlier flowering bulbs such as Crocus to die down naturally, too, rather than cut the green leaves off, as they will be feeding the corm/bulb for next year's flowers. The same applies to your lawn; if you have Crocus and snowdrops in them, leave these areas unmown until their leaves have entirely died down.

## CLIMBERS

Tie in new growths as they are produced, training them into gaps. If you have Clematis Montana and other early flowering species, they can be pruned if they have finished flowering but avoid doing if a late frost is a forecast.

## GLASSHOUSES & TENDER PLANTS

If like me, you overwinter the more miniature hardy summer flowering bulbs in the garage or greenhouse, start to bring them out during the warmer weather but take them back in at night if there is a likelihood of frost. I'm thinking here of plants such as Canna and Dahlia that you may be growing in pots or planting them out in the border in the case of Dahlias.

## HEDGES

Please avoid work on them at this time of year if at all possible, as birds will be nesting. If they have to be worked on, check thoroughly for bird nests, but it is best to avoid work altogether unless there is a health and safety issue. Major hedging works should always be done outside of bird nesting season. Also, remember that birds nesting can occur throughout the spring and summer.

This caution also applies to large shrubs that birds may be nesting in.

## HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS

Continue to tie in as they become taller. Hopefully, you will have put in twigs or frame structures earlier for them to climb through. If not, do now before they get too tall.

## LAWNS

Renovation works were covered last month. If you still need to carry out work to the lawn, do so this month before the weather gets too warm.

Now is an excellent time to apply a high nitrogen feed to your lawn to green it up. Avoid applications on sunny days as they may scorch the grass.

## PATHS & HARD SURFACES

Keep clean and weed-free as much as possible, and in areas with dense shade, make sure they are not slippery. If hard paving is particularly hazardous, you may pressure wash them to remove algae.

## PESTS & DISEASES

Start to check for black spot and mildew on roses. Only use fungicides as a last resort if you have a real problem. Look out for slugs and snails, too, although current thinking is that they are a valued part of the ecosystem – it's hard to decide on!



## PLANTING

Containerized shrubs can still be planted, but add them to your watering schedule. If the root ball is compacted, try to ease the roots apart carefully before planting; this will encourage their roots to grow better into the surrounding soil.

Similarly, herbaceous plants can be planted too. Consider their position first, considering their ultimate height at maturity, so they don't shadow out smaller plants behind.

## PRUNING

Now is the time to prune winter flowering shrubs such as Hamamelis if they have finished flowering. However, many of these can be left unless you need to manage them in a small space. One of the general rules for pruning most shrubs is to do this soon after flowering to allow maximum time for new growth for next year's flowers.

## ROSES

Tie in new growths of climbers as they are produced, particularly if you encourage them to cover bare areas of a wall or fence. If you never got around to doing the final prune of HT roses in March, it's getting late, but you may still want to do so this month, reducing their height, opening up the middle and taking out dead, diseased and crossing over wood.

## SEED SOWING – (Annuals)

As the season progresses, you will now be able to direct sow the hardy annuals (HA) and the half-hardy annuals (HHA). This is an excellent way to use gaps in borders, giving pockets of colour later in the year. I like the old favourites such as Clarkia, Godetia, Nasturtiums, Annual Chrysanthus and Mesembryanthemum.

## SHRUBS

Besides pruning, as mentioned above, it's a good idea to apply a general-purpose fertiliser to shrub beds, mainly if you were unable to apply a mulch last autumn/winter.

## TREES

Trees planted during the winter need to be watered frequently during their first summer to encourage them to establish, so it's worth drawing up a watering schedule that ties in with baskets and troughs as the temperature continues to warm up. Check tree ties, too and adjust as required.

## WEEDING

Try to increase the frequency of weeding as annual weeds, in particular, are now growing rapidly. Dig out perennial weeds before they get too established.

Happy Gardening, and keep safe. See you next month - Reg,



Winter colour at its best?



## Wasps – Picnic hooligan or garden hero?

### Kate Harris – Co-Campaign Manager

In the list of the top 10 most common fears, Entomophobia – the fear of insects – sits snugly in there. While I'm sure for many spiders would be higher up the lists of terrifying insects, wasps are often not far behind. I mean, what other insect can send a table full of people diving for cover faster than a wasp? Those sugar hungry picnic intruders make you want to push your granny in its path to give you a faster getaway. You just can't trust them! They aren't like their more trustworthy cousins the bees who bumble past minding their own business, but wasps? Not a chance, they will sting you as soon as look at you!!

Before I was old enough to have my own garden and begin to see the great work that wasps actually do, I can honestly say I had a distinct dislike for them and my regular questions were "what do they even do?" and "What is the point of them"? I have two very vivid childhood memories that just cemented my distinct dislike for these winged assassins. Whist out on a family picnic my Dad made the unfortunate decision to bite a wasp, not on purpose I may add, but a sneaky wasp had decided to land on a crisp just as he bit down, and given that he is extremely allergic, his lip swelled up like a balloon, much to the horror and childish amusement of my brother and myself. Another summer and another family picnic and some blackberry picking saw another of the striped terrors sting my brother in the armpit. To be quite honest it's enough to put anyone of wasps and picnics for life!

However, if you ask me wasps are in need of a bit of a PR makeover, because the impact they have on our gardens is quite staggering. Wasps are an undeniable apex predator of the insect world. The UK alone has over 7000 species, which come in all manner of shapes and sizes, some solitary and some who create the most intricate and quite stunning nests.

Adult wasps feed on sugars in the form of nectar from flowers and honeydew from aphids. Whilst out and about collecting

nectar wasps also become accidental pollinators, although not to the extent of bees, but useful none the less. Where they really come onto their own as the aforementioned apex predator is while they are hunting insects to take back to their nests to feed their young. I won't go into the rather gruesome nature of how this happens, let's just say they sting for a reason and it's not to harass us human folk. What I find most impressive is the sheer volume of the insect prey they collect each year; the estimated figure is 14 million kilograms. This prey consists of caterpillars and green flies, amongst others.

Now I'm not saying I want to share a picnic blanket with them, but when you weigh up the enormous benefit wasps are to our gardens and green spaces, and how overrun they would be without these garden heroes, maybe it's time that we cut them a little slack and see them for the marvel that they are.



## Plant for Dry Shade.

Dry shade is one of the most challenging conditions to grow plants, and many of us give up assuming it's too complicated. So here are a few ideas that might help. These plants will help to suppress weeds, reduce water loss plants that will not only survive but also thrive,

### Ground Cover

Cornus canadensis  
Hedera helix Hibernica  
Hedera minima  
Pachysandra terminalis 'Green Carpet'  
Vinca major 'Variegata'  
Vinca minor  
Vinca minor f. alba 'Gertrude Jekyll'

### Ferns

Blechnum spicant  
Dryopteris affinis  
Dryopteris affinis 'Cristata The King'  
Dryopteris erythrosora  
Dryopteris filix-mas  
Dryopteris wallichiana

### Grasses or Grass Like

Acorus gramineus 'Variegatus'  
Carex comans 'Bronze'  
Carex Comans 'Frosted Curls'  
Carex oshimensis 'Evergold'  
Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola'  
Liriope muscari 'Big Blue'

### Herbaceous/Semi Herbaceous

Acanthus hungaricus  
Alchemilla mollis  
Ballota pseudodictamnus  
Bergenia 'Eroica'  
Bergenia 'Silberlicht'  
Euphorbia x martini  
Euphorbia x martini 'Ascot Rainbow' ®  
Geranium macrorrhizum 'Album'  
Geranium macrorrhizum 'Spessart'  
Geranium nodosum  
Helleborus argutifolius  
Heuchera 'Autumn Leaves'  
Heuchera 'Caramel' ®  
Heuchera 'Lime Rickey' ®  
Heuchera 'Marmalade' ®  
Nepeta 'Six Hills Giant'  
Phlomis russeliana  
Stachys byzantina 'Big Ears'  
Stachys byzantina 'Silver Carpet'  
Tiarella cordifolia  
Waldsteinia ternata



### Preparing your Entry – Part 3

We look at the third opportunity to engage with the judges and show what you have achieved.

We now come to the sharp end of the process. We have briefly explored the Judges Briefing Notes or Portfolio, as many still call it, and we have considered the benefits of giving a presentation. This last article considers how best to prepare for a judge's or assessor's visit.

The visit is the culmination of a least a year's work to prepare the entry and, in many cases, is the result of years of effort.

So, where to begin. Perhaps the first port of call, if you are a previous entry, is to review the previous judges or assessor advice given in the report. While you may not achieve all recommended, it is a good starting point.

The second step is to consider how best to incorporate all of the judging criteria elements into your route. I appreciate that not every participating entry can cover everything but show as much as possible. Tell the visiting judge or assessor why it cannot be shown if elements cannot be shown. If you are working in a wider area than the route set for the visit, make sure the judges or assessor understand what is being left out and why. Areas left out can be covered in the Judges Briefing Notes/Portfolio or the presentation, so the opportunity to tell the whole story is not missed.

Whether on foot or by vehicle, or even both, tell the story of what is being achieved and how the that fits the aims of the criteria. Organise your route and test it out by rehearsing on the same day and time of the judges or assessors' visit. This will ensure that traffic and volunteers' and residents' availability are the same as the judging day. Please take a copy of the criteria, assess each stop, and score it yourself when rehearsing. This will give you a good idea of whether the stop will achieve a good score. If you see any area that is "less than good", consider changing the route or make such improvements that may be required.

Make sure, if you can, that it's not just you as the host who is telling the story, but you have included key members of your community who could tell the judges why they are involved and what benefit they consider Bloom to be.

Judges and assessors look forward to their visits and wish to come away with a positive image of what is being achieved. So don't forget to tell your story, and don't assume the judges will understand all that is being achieved if you don't tell them.

A fellow UK Britain in Bloom colleague I judged with in the early 2000s would always say he was looking for the story behind the picture, which always seemed good advice.

So prepare well, conder the route carefully and above all don't ask the visiting judges or assessors "what do you want to see" as it suggests a lack of preparation.

Please don't stress over the preparation but give some thought to showing the judges the fantastic things you are achieving. Do keep within the time allocated.

Best of luck, Ed:

## 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 SSEIB & 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'Connor 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 provide 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 from 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 numbers among its members are both professionals and amateurs actively involved in the craft. All are united by a common bond of horticulture and gardens.



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 on 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.

Both 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.



## New qualifications to support young people wishing to enter our industry. News from City & Guilds –

The two Technical Qualifications (TQs) for young people to start their working life in a sector which can offer sustainable, rewarding careers. In the Land T Level, there are several opportunities within the Land Management sector.

- Crop production
- Ornamental and environmental horticulture and landscaping
- Trees and woodland
- Floristry
- Habitat management
- Land-based Engineering

As the next generation enters the workforce, these qualifications will help students with the skills they need to flourish in their future careers. Studying a T Level will give learners confidence and readiness for work, increasing their employability and providing a sound basis to progress onto the first rung of their career ladder or the next stage of their education journey.

### **T Levels explained**

- The first T Levels are made available to learners from September 2023
- T Levels are aimed at 16-18-year-old students
- They're designed to offer a 'gold standard' route for students wishing to enter skilled occupations
- T Levels are nationally recognised programmes that have similar rigour to 3 A-Levels
- They're developed in collaboration with employers and businesses to ensure they meet the needs of the industry and prepare students for the workplace.

City and Guilds have set up Employer and Industry Boards (EIB) for each T Level OS to meet this requirement. A learner may progress after completing a T due to the ranges of specialisms and job roles within the Land-based sector and routes. We are looking to increase the number and types of employers participating in the EIB to reflect the land sector.

Therefore employers who are interested in being involved in these activities? they can contact [sally.green@cityandguilds.com](mailto:sally.green@cityandguilds.com)

Alternatively, if they are unable to be part of the validation group and activities but would like to receive updates on the Land T Levels, they can sign up to receive information and updates by completing the form: <https://www.cityandguilds.com/tlevels/land-based>