



London in Bloom & South & South East in Bloom

Green Lines

April



2022 is already shaping up to be a fantastic Bloom year. Not only are numbers up to pre-pandemic levels, with some categories even higher than before, we also get to welcome returning entries and add some fantastic new entries!

Often, we can trace the origins of new entries, but often we have no idea, and if you are of a curious disposition (like Anne and I), it can be infuriating but exciting at the same time and goes to show how far the word of Bloom travels.

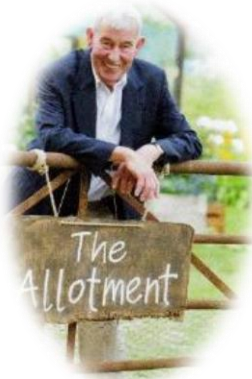
As we edge closer to this year's judging, it seems a good time to celebrate the incredible resilience of Bloom. I know we have touched upon this a fair few times over the last few years, but it makes us proud to be part of such an important and growing movement. From the smallest community to the largest boroughs, what always shines through is the love of what we do, and the connections Bloom allows us to make.

So, in the run-up to this year's judging, make sure you enjoy every moment; even the frustrating ones are part of your journey. Enjoy your judge's visit and share the experience with those hard-working folks around you. And when you get your certificate or trophy for your work after the awards, display them proudly: you never know who you might inspire.

Anne & Kate

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

As a young lad each season brought new surprises and colours to the garden. Can you remember back that far I hear you say! However, over recent years, either they arrive too early or late or in some cases do not appear at all. It is not surprising that plants are as confused as we are and suffer the consequences. Gardeners have become used to changing traditional planting dates according to the weather. Once again, a light frost causes severe damage to early flowering spring plants. A lack of rain has shortened the growing period of Forsythia.



I recently visited the World Garden (Lullingstone Castle) and saw the devastating damage from the recent minus 9 ° on the 3rd of April. Mimosa and Ceanothus that were in full bloom had been destroyed. Camellia and Magnolia's flowers were black and even new shoots on Ivy's were also badly affected. Despite all these disasters in the garden April is still my favourite month of the year. Once the clocks change, the garden wakes up from its winter hibernation and even in these very stressful times puts a smile on our faces. It is like waving a magic wand as each day something new bursts into flower or leaf. We also have renewed energy to get out into the garden. However, do not get too excited as Jack Frost could still reappear. Every year I make the same plea as garden centres offer bedding plants for sale. Unless you have the facilities to keep the plants undercover wait till the middle of May.

For the first time for two years local Horticultural Societies have been able to hold their Spring Flower Shows. I was invited to judge at three shows and am delighted to say the entries had increased considerably from the last spring show.

I was very impressed by the initiative of one show committee that wanted to attract new members, particularly the new gardeners, as a result of lockdown. They held a social evening which included food and drink, which is always a winning formula. They also encouraged people to enter the Spring Show without obligation to join the Society. Several classes were just for people who had never previously taken part. I have always been a great supporter of local gardening clubs.

They provide an excellent variety of talks during the year, spring and summer shows, outings, plant sales and the opportunity for new gardeners to get helpful advice which is so important particularly for all these new gardeners the media tell us we have gained since the lockdown started.

Apart from local societies, our own Reg Leach, and locally written tips of the month on Facebook and regional radio shows, what have the national media done to help? In my opinion, very little. The days of Percy Thrower, Jeff Hamilton and Harry Dobson are long gone!

I believe this is an ideal opportunity to give people like Toby Buckland, Carol Klein, Adam Frost and the excellent Tom Brown, Head Gardener at West Dean, who incidentally writes a very informative article in the Telegraph weekend supplement, to appear on a weekly show which helps guide gardeners, particularly new ones, through the seasons.

I am also looking forward to my first Garden Show at the end of the month.

It is Toby Buckland's Garden Festival at Powderham Castle in Devon, at which he is building a series of raised beds, and between us, we are going to demonstrate what, when and how to plant them for the season.

Finally, I received my spring booster dose of the Covid 19 vaccine, and I'm pleased to say that twice I gave up my seat to people who were younger than me!

Keep smiling, keep safe, and keep Gardening. Best wishes, Jim.

GARDENING TIPS & TASKS for May

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

Welcome to the April column with 'Tips and Tasks' for May.

Our gardens are burgeoning with new growth and flowers, so regular maintenance is paramount to keep everything under control and keep plants flourishing. Here are some things to be getting on with but do take time to sit down and enjoy your garden too!

BASKETS, TROUGHS & POTS:

Some of you will have already planted up your summer baskets and be growing them on under glass.

If you haven't started yet, it's not too late. Instead of buying a pre-planted hanging basket, have a go at making your own.

When buying a basket to plant up, try to get one with a water reservoir bowl at the base. I prefer open-sided baskets lined with moss, as you can plant the sides and the top. As an alternative, you can line a basket with plastic or a pre-shaped liner and punch holes into it, gently pushing small bedding plants through from the outside.

I think it's better to see a fully planted basket in situ that covers the sides and the top, but it's a personal choice.

Ideally, select a range of plants that will give some height on the top and, more importantly, trailing plants for the sides. To create a ball of colour, you may consider one type of plant, such as impatiens (Busy Lizzie), to create a ball of colour.

Consider the flowering period, selecting plants that flower from June through to the first frost to get the best value from your basket.

Here are some tried and tested favourites:

- Bidens.
- Brachycombe.
- Busy Lizzie.
- Ivy leaf Geranium – good drought tolerance.
- Petunia – trailing surfinia types which have a pleasant scent too.
- Trailing Begonia.
- Trailing Fuchsia.
- Trailing Lobelia.

Include foliage plants, such as Helichrysum, to set off the flowers. You may even want to include something a bit more temperate such as Chlorophytum elatum Variegatum (Spider plant) that will give white and green leaves and flowering shoots down the side of the basket.

To plant up an open-sided basket, gradually line the outside edge with moss and add the compost, planting through the sides, working your way up the basket from the bottom to the top.

It is better to use compost that contains a slow-release fertilizer and add a gel that holds water and releases it during drought, helping the plants survive - particularly if you are going away for a few days. Peat free compost is preferable, as peat can dry out quickly and is difficult to wet again – plus, we should all be moving away from using peat. As with any planted container, water regularly and add a liquid feed throughout the summer to keep the basket flowering well and regularly deadhead.

BEDDING:

Towards the end of the month, remove winter/spring bedding plants if they have survived until now. Prepare the beds for planting summer bedding by lightly digging them over, adding new compost to raise the soil level and incorporating a slow-release fertilizer.

Polyanthus can be lifted, divided and planted in a shady corner of the garden during the summer to grow on for replanting in the border again next autumn. Remember to keep the water, though.

If you sowed your summer bedding plants, make sure they are hardened off before planting them out. If buying them, check the plants are not pot bound.

BIRDS, BEES & BUTTERFLIES:

As well as herbaceous perennials attracting wildlife, try sowing herbs this time of year, in the open ground. As they reach flowering, they will be attractive to bees and butterflies later in the year – and you'll have fresh herbs too.

BLOOM THOUGHTS:

Hanging baskets will drip water readily and as a result, will create the perfect environment for weeds to flourish directly under the basket, so weed underneath regularly.

If you are launching your local Bloom 2022 Campaign, see if you can use an empty shop and its frontage to advertise your group, list your activities for the year, and invite new volunteers. Talk to your ward councillor, local authority, or shop landlord to see if you can temporarily use an empty shopfront – sadly, there are too many of them these days, so it's a good idea to make use of them where possible – and you'll be able to brighten up your high street too.

BULBS – Including Corms and Tubers:

Summer flower bulbs have been available for a while in the shops, and you may have already potted some up to get them started early undercover. Now that the weather improves, some more miniature hardy summer bulbs can be potted up and placed outside or planted in sunny borders. However, keep checking on the weather. Should a late frost be forecast – have some fleece to hand!



Here are a few suggestions...

- Agapanthus.
- Canna.
- Regal Lillies.
- Tuberous Begonia.

As spring bulbs die down, try to resist chopping off their leaves if they are still green, as they will be producing food for the bulb and next year's flowers. If they have entirely died down, the leaves will easily separate, and if there were bulbs in the lawn that have dried off, the lawn could now be fully mown.

If you have tight bunches of snowdrops in the garden, lift, thin and replant while they are 'in the green' – still have their green leaves - and plant out in other parts of the garden. If you want to lift and replant Daffodils and Tulips, let them fully die down first and either dry off and store or replant them in a shady, cool spot elsewhere in the garden.

CLIMBERS:

Continue to tie in new growths to fill gaps along a wall or fence and deadhead during the flowering season.

HEALTH & SAFETY:

When taking down winter/spring baskets and before hanging up summer baskets, check the bracket and chains are in good order and will take the increased weight of a watered basket. Also, make sure they are high enough so nobody can walk into them! When taking down or putting up baskets, make sure two of you support the ladder and look out for pedestrians and vehicles passing by.



HEDGES:

Trim hedges regularly before the new growth becomes woody. BUT please check for bird nesting first.

HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS:

Check herbaceous and perennial plants are well supported as they become taller. There are several ways to support them. For an informal look, use dried twigs, or you can use green canes, bamboo or, for the more formal look, wooden pyramids/tripods. During the season, cut down flower spikes to encourage a second flush as they finish flowering.

Increase hoeing and weeding to prevent them from flowering and seeding at this time of year.

LAWNS:

Mow your lawn regularly at this time of year, preferably weekly and, if possible, with a box mower to reduce the risk of thatch build-up. Maintain a defined edge to borders and paths by edging up each time you mow. A regular liquid feed will help maintain a good green sward. Use a selective weedkiller if undesirable weeds persist. Do try and resist spraying lawns if you have 'weeds' such as low growing Clover, Trefoil and Vetch in the lawn as they are great for bees.

Seed bare patches of the lawn but keep well-watered before and after germination.

A lady at the Entrants Seminar at Wisley recently asked me about controlling leatherjackets on her lawn, as the starlings were ruining her lawn to find and eat them. This, of course, is a great way to control such a pest, but not if it will cause severe problems for your lawn. Try a natural control such as *Nemasys* Leather Jacket nematodes, mixed with water and applied to the lawn.

PATHS & HARD SURFACES:

Try to keep paths clear of weeds, moss, and algae to avoid slip hazards. Consider using Industrial white vinegar as an alternative to herbicides.

PESTS & DISEASES:

Regularly inspect for aphid attacks, black spot on roses and control with environmentally safe pesticides and fungicides. Control slugs and snails as appropriate! Also, look out for bright red lily beetles on your Lillies and *Fritillaria imperialis*.



PLANTING:

Planting trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants can still be done, but only potted ones, and make sure the ground is well prepared and that the plants are well watered in. Dunk them into a bucket of water for at least an hour before planting to ensure the rootball is moist all the way through. Avoid buying overly pot bound plants.

PRUNING:

Hard prune early flowering climbers, such as *Clematis Montana* – if mature, there will be an abundance of dead growth within! Also, prune hard *Forsythia*, *Ribes*, *Winter Jasmine* and *Osmanthus* if they have finished flowering to encourage new growth for next year's flowers.

ROSES:

Regularly deadhead to encourage continual flowering during the summer. Continue tying in new growth of climbing roses to increase the framework.

SEED SOWING – (Annuals)

Both hardy and half-hardy annuals can now be sown directly into beds and borders or troughs and containers. Try some favourites such as:

Calendulas, Clarkia, Cornflower, Godetia, Nasturtium, Nemesia and even Sunflowers.

Sow into gaps of shrub and perennial borders in sunny spots for an extra splash of colour later on.

If you want to raise your own winter/spring bedding plants for next season, sow Polyanthus, Bellis, Pansy and Wallflower seeds now in an empty semi-shaded corner of the garden that can be developed during the summer. They can then be lifted and planted into position next autumn.

SHRUBS:

Continue to prune back spring flowering shrubs that have finished to encourage new growth for next year's flowers. Increase hoeing and weeding to keep weeds under control.

TREES:

Keep checking newly planted trees, particularly during warm/dry weather, to ensure they are well watered. Adjust tree ties as the main trunk develops.

WATERING:

It's never too late to invest in a water butt. Rainwater is far better for the garden than tap water, and there are significant environmental benefits.

To minimize water loss through evaporation, water before sunrise or after sunset will avoid leaf scorch.

WEEDING:

Keep up with regular hoeing at this time of year to keep annual weeds from flowering and seeding.

WILDFLOWER MEADOWS:

Suppose you are developing a wildflower meadow or have successfully established one. It is good to mow regularly up to the edge and have regularly mown paths cut through them to allow public access and provide close-up inspection for the young budding ecologists. An area of long grass does not constitute a wildflower meadow, so do encourage native wildflowers to take hold.

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

Swanley Horticultural College – Kate Harris – Co-Campaign Manager

Founded in 1889, Swanley Horticultural College was the first Horticultural College in the World. Situated in Hextable, Kent, it was surrounded by swathes of agricultural land, traditionally crops of sugar beet and potatoes were grown, with more exotic crops being added after the arrival of the local Swanley Railway Station. The college was the creation of Arthur Harper Bond, a keen horticulturalist who had purchased Hextable House for the purpose of the study of plants.

At the time it opened its doors, it was purely a college for men however it took just a few short months for them to receive their first application from a woman. Whilst this was initially turned down as there were no suitable facilities to house women, they soon began to accept female applicants and by 1894 the majority of the students were female. By 1903 there were no male students in sight and the list of courses had expanded to include botany, chemistry and beekeeping, amongst others and later The Constance Spry ran a flower arranging course.

Still in the midst of Britain's colonial era, many students grew up in far-flung corners of the World, with some students using their connections to travel overseas to study flora and fauna. With a hefty £80 course fee, the intake of attendees came from wealthy families, a stark contrast to the average £40 wage of a farm labourer working in the surrounding area. This was the era of finishing schools and horticulture was a far cry from the socially acceptable pastimes of wealthy young ladies.

In a time when ladies of a certain social standing did not work, let alone trifle in a dirty, hands-on profession, Swanley Horticultural College was a safe space full of like-minded individuals. Ahead of their time in many ways, these women broke from the traditional constraints of a woman of the age, scrapping frills, lace and long skirts and instead replacing them with tunics, smocks and britches, all far more practical for life at college.

Some of the first female graduates were, Annie Gulvin and Alice Hutchins who became the first female gardeners at Kew Gardens. Amongst their later graduates were landscape architect Brenda Colvin, Dame Sylvia Crowe, a landscape architect & garden designer and Frances Micklethwait MBE, a research chemist who received her MBE for top-secret work during wartime. The college's first female Principal was Fanny Wilkinson, the first professional female landscape gardener who designed more than 75 London gardens, including Myatts Fields and Vauxhall Park, both current London Borough of Lambeth entries.

The outbreak of WW2 saw students evacuated to the then home of the Midlands Agricultural and Dairy College, returning to Swanley in 1942. The college was hit by Luftwaffe bombs in 1944, damaging some of the property. In 1945 the college merged with South Eastern Agricultural College and as Wye College became part of the University of London, finally closing its doors for the last time in 2009.





intertwined with the botanical beauty of the German school still invokes that 19th-century atmosphere.

The Rosarium, a prominent feature in the Gardens, has a collection of old and modern roses with over 1200 on display shown in two sections. The Modern Roses are arranged in groups at the Rose Oval, with old and rare roses displayed in harmony with perennials such as Salvia & Nepeta. The Society maintains a wild Rose collection. No insecticides are used here so that no harm can come to visitors or wildlife.

Each summer, a Rose Party Is held to celebrate the Rose with exhibitions, seminars, sales and entertainment.

The Rose Gardens is considered one of the foremost gardens of this type in Northern Europe.

The Garden Society of Gothenburg

Over the years, judging has taken me to many parts of the UK and Europe, and during that time, I have visited 100's if not 1000's of Parks, Gardens & Botanical Gardens, many of which have been outstanding examples of the genre. But occasionally, a particular Garden, Park or Botanical Garden resonates very strongly with my idea of the perfect garden to visit. One such Garden I visit several times a year when visiting family is in the centre of Gothenburg (Goteborg), Sweden. The Garden Society of Gothenburg Garden, Trädgårdsföreningen. This 19th Century Garden was created in the 1840s when there was an increasing interest throughout Europe in cultivating flowers and horticultural art. The Garden Society used the Royal Horticultural Societies model to develop its Society. Captain Henric von Normann, the instigator of the Garden, was filled with admiration after visiting the famous Berlin Botanical Garden in Greifswald. and started to raise funds to create the garden in Gothenburg.

With their rolling lines of English horticultural art, the Gardens





The English Garden ideal of the 19th century advocated soft, natural lines and flower beds is still practised in earlier times and is returning in a contemporary form. Woodland areas, a rock garden, and a children's play area with integrated plantings can also be seen.

However, for many including me, the buildings create much interest both architecturally and horticulturally.

The Palm House opened in 1878 and was modelled on the Crystal Palace; it has over 1000 square metres of growing space divided into five sections; the Nave, the Mediterranean House, the Camellia House, a tropical section and of course, a water lily house. The Palm House was built in Scotland and



shipped to Gothenburg.



The Directors House with its double 'U' Pear trees is a classic Swedish building perfectly at home here in the gardens.

So, if you are ever looking for somewhere to go for the weekend and you're a plant-a-holic like me, Gothenburg is well worth a visit. It also boasts an outstanding Botanical Garden.

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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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 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, which has provided a grant to London in Bloom for 2022



MPGA is a long-established Charity that has played a vital role in preserving and improving countless gardens, neglected sites, and green open spaces across London. We provide modest grants to those who share with us a desire to improve the environment and thus the quality of life for the local community. Our work brings us into contact with various groups, including local councils, schools, hospitals, hospices, museums, voluntary organizations and community groups.

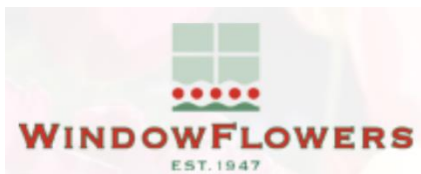
The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, first mentioned in City Corporation records in 1345, is a survivor of the medieval craft guilds which exercised control over the practice of their particular crafts and ensured proper training through the system of apprenticeship.

The Company is a "living" guild, and the numbers of its members are both professionals and amateurs actively involved in the craft. All are united by a common bond of horticulture and gardens.



The Worshipful Company of
GARDENERS

1345, is



Windowflowers is an independent family-owned and managed horticultural nursery, supplying and maintaining the finest floral and plant displays to businesses and local authorities for over 70 years.

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



London and South & South East in Bloom rely on sponsors and donors to help us deliver our annual

programs and provide opportunities for all our entries and participants. We have a range of opportunities to engage with our regions, from budget-friendly schemes to the more elaborate. So if you know of anyone who can help or donate, please let us know.

