



EAST MIDLANDS

# EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM

## GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES & PARTICIPANTS

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The following pages tell you all about the competitive "In Bloom" Campaign and the non-competitive RHS "It's Your Neighbourhood" campaign.

If you are in the East Midlands Region, i.e. Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire or Rutland, you are eligible to participate in either of the above campaigns with us.

More information and all entry forms and guidelines mentioned here can be downloaded from our website: [www.emib.org.uk](http://www.emib.org.uk)

You can contact Elaine Atkinson, East Midlands in Bloom Secretary or any of our dedicated team of volunteer judges for advice and/or a free advisory visit.

Elaine Atkinson Tel: 07925 565346 Email: [secretary@emib.org.uk](mailto:secretary@emib.org.uk)

Or write to:

Elaine Atkinson, 4 Marshall Avenue, Grimsby, DN34 4AN.

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The Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom campaign is one of the largest horticultural campaigns in Europe, involving over three thousand communities across the United Kingdom each year.

"East Midlands in Bloom" is one of 15 regions/nations that are part of the national RHS "Britain in Bloom" campaign. Participating communities are asked to focus their initiatives around RHS Britain in Bloom's three core pillars of:

- Horticultural Achievement
- Environmental Responsibility
- Community Participation.

Participants are encouraged to promote these aspects throughout the year, culminating in the judging in July and continuing beyond.

Participating communities create lasting improvements to the local environment for the benefit of those that live, work and visit there – today and in the future. The campaign runs year-round, and communities can be involved for as long as they like. Communities first participate in their region/nation "in Bloom" and from there they can be nominated to participate in the RHS Britain in Bloom Final.

RHS Britain in Bloom is the only campaign which takes such an integrated approach to community improvement and employs horticulture as its foundation. This means "In Bloom" communities tackle everything from litter, graffiti and anti-social behaviour through to conservation, sustainability and improving horticultural standards – not to mention the positive impact on sense of place, and community spirit and pride.

Everyone can enter this campaign! East Midlands in Bloom / RHS Britain in Bloom is an inclusive campaign and any community – no matter how small or large – can get involved.

To take part in to "in Bloom" you need to enter your whole community, not just part of it, and you enter the category which corresponds to your size based on your electoral roll. The only exception to having to enter the whole community is the Urban Communities category and BIDs. \*

For example, you could enter Nottingham in the appropriate category (City) and/or you could enter Hyson Green (an urban area within Nottingham) as an Urban Community.

\* For smaller community groups there is the **RHS It's Your Neighbourhood** campaign (page 24).

All "in Bloom" participants can benefit from advice and support from the RHS:

- Special access to expert RHS advisors' individual advice
- Access to a vast array of information and helpful tools on the RHS website:
  - The Plant Selector (helping you choose appropriate plants for your area)
  - Month by Month guide to what to do in the garden
  - Guide to organic and sustainable gardening
  - Guide to wildlife gardening.

In addition, "in Bloom" groups can have access to valuable support from their region/nation organisers.

Full details of the campaign and case studies from previous participants are available on the website on [www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom](http://www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom) If you would like to receive additional information in the post or via e-mail please email [britaininbloom@rhs.org.uk](mailto:britaininbloom@rhs.org.uk)

The benefits of the campaign are:

- Cleaner and greener surroundings
- Creating a sense of community through improvement of public spaces and positive interaction between community members
- An increase in civic pride and sense of community empowerment by engaging people in the improvement of their own community
- Safer environments for the enjoyment of locals
- Long term improvement for the environment by addressing issues such as sustainability, resource management, conservation, litter, graffiti, dog fouling etc.
- Reduction of anti-social behaviour
- Positive effect on the local economy such as increased commercial enterprise and tourism
- Regeneration of run down and/or disadvantaged areas.

## EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM – a quick guide to the campaign

Welcome to your region! If you are considering East Midlands in Bloom Campaign, or even if you have not quite decided for the year (closing date for entry form is 30<sup>th</sup> April) please bear these points in mind:

- Keep records of everything you do which may include photographs, flyers or press cuttings about any seasonal planting, fund raising events, litter picks, press or publicity articles that feature anything promoting your Bloom entry. This can be used as evidence of your **year-round** activities to be shown to the judges when they visit you in July.
- Complete and return the Entry Form which you can find on our website as soon as possible before the closing date.
- Check the population of your entry from your **electoral** roll to see which **category** you fit into from the table on page 4. This table shows you how long you have to show the judges around your entry.
- Plan a **route** around your entry that comfortably fits within your allocated time (e.g. if your entry is a Town, you will have 2 ½ hours for the judging route). The judges will only mark what you show them, so try to avoid taking them past any 'grot spots'. Also try to show them examples that fit within each of the **3 RHS core pillars** (see page 2).
- Try and get young people involved from a local school or youth group by promoting the East Midlands in Bloom Best School Garden Special Award (page 15). Encourage them to hold a local children's painting and/or digital photography competition with a nature/horticultural theme in mind.
- If you are still undecided whether to enter, remember you can contact us for an **advisory visit**, and your first time entry is free (except the BID category) so you have nothing to lose, in fact **everyone wins** just by entering!
- Don't expect to win a gold medal award at your first attempt, it is much better to be realistic and 'test the water' the first year and then take the judges' advice for improvement for future years. Gold awards are the pinnacle of achievement and may take years of careful diligence to be reached.
- If you still feel daunted, then consider the RHS 'It's your Neighbourhood' which is a non-competitive campaign and you are assessed (not judged) only on what you yourselves have planned to achieve and how far you have come to achieving your targets that year. There are five levels that you can aim for, progressing upwards every year from 'Establishing' through to 'Outstanding'.
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## ABOUT EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM (EMiB)

East Midlands in Bloom was established over 30 years ago. The campaign focuses on the three RHS core pillars of excellence which are:

- Horticultural Achievement
- Environmental Responsibility
- Community Participation

It has a dedicated team of experienced management team members and judges most of whom are horticulturally qualified who give their time voluntarily for advice to entrants and judging, and the committee which is open to a representative from every East Midlands in Bloom entrant (you). There are two major events each year: the first is a workshop/seminar, taking place in February, to which all interested parties are invited; the second is the Presentation of Awards in September, to which representatives of all Bloom entrants are invited to receive their awards. IYN's Presentations are held separately details of times and location are sent out each year. There are twice-yearly newsletters issued in December and May, and two Committee Meetings usually in June and November where decisions are made on any proposed changes to how EMiB is run.

A number of regional winners will be invited to represent East Midlands in Bloom in the UK National Finals. They will compete against the winners from 15 other regions/nations, including Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, and the Channel Islands.

***To enter the campaign simply complete and return an entry form at any time before the end of April to be eligible to enter that year. You will be contacted by a judge in May, to confirm a judging date in July. You will be expected to provide a judging route to show the best aspects of your entry, and also show a diary of events which should include evidence of all year round planting, community events, fundraising and any other activities that have been organised to improve your community.***

**Any interested party can request a free advisory visit for their community from one of our Bloom Team.**

If you are a small group just taking the first steps to improving your local area please do take the time to read about the non-competitive **RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood'** campaign (page 24). To be added to our mailing list or to obtain any other information, please contact EMiB Secretary Elaine Atkinson, or

e-mail: [secretary@emib.org.uk](mailto:secretary@emib.org.uk) Downloads of entry forms and additional information can be found on our website: [www.emib.org.uk](http://www.emib.org.uk)

## CATEGORIES AND TIMES ALLOWED FOR JUDGING:

CATEGORY	POPULATION from electoral roll*	JUDGING TIME (route). Additional time is available, see below**	Entry fee
Small Village	Up to 300	1 hr	£10.00
Village	300 - 1,000	1hr	£10.00
Large Village	1,001-2,500	1 ½ hours	£10.00
Small Town	2,501-6,000	2 hours	£20.00
Town	6,001-12,000	2 ½ hours	£25.00
Large Town	12,001-35,000	3 hours	£50.00
Small City	35,001-100,000	3 ½ hours	£75.00
City	100,001 +	4 hours	£100.00
Urban Community	Up to 25,000	2 hours	£10.00
Small Coastal Resorts	Up to 12,000	2 ½ hours	£25.00
Large Coastal Resorts	12,001 +	3 hours	£50.00
BID (Business Improvement District)	not applicable	Maximum 2 hours	£100.00

\*Population figures for categories must be taken from your **Electoral Roll** (verified by your local records office) and **must** be included on your completed entry form. Population banding alone (from column above) is not sufficient.

\*\* **The additional time allowed** In addition to your judging time/route, an extra 30 minutes is permitted which can be used for: 15 minutes for press/publicity opportunities, and 15 minutes to show judges your year-round involvement by other means such as display boards with newspaper cuttings, photographs or a short video.

§An **urban community** must be an identifiable community within a larger conurbation (sometimes described as an urban 'village or town'). It must have its own sense of identity and have its own "in Bloom" group (a group dedicated to leading the "in Bloom" initiative locally). An urban community may not have its own Council, or be able to stand alone, but it will have its own 'sense of place'.

±A **coastal community** must be an area that actively encourages visitors with a resort, beach and/or harbour (which can be part of a commercial harbour), adjacent to or within easy and reasonable access of the local community.

The area will have facilities providing varied recreational opportunities for visitors. The beach/ harbour will have some of the following: café or restaurant; shop; toilet; public transport; supervision; first aid. A coastal resort is described as an area which has substantial visitor accommodation and tourism as an integral part of the local economy.

+ A **BID entry** must be an official business improvement district; a business improvement district is a defined area within which businesses pay an additional tax (or levy) in order to fund projects within the district's boundaries. For a list of bona fide BIDs please visit the UKBIDS website on [www.ukbids.org](http://www.ukbids.org)

We have sponsorship opportunities available for categories. Please contact us for details [sponsorship@emib.org.uk](mailto:sponsorship@emib.org.uk)

## IN BLOOM MARKING CRITERIA *(Use in conjunction with the guidelines on pages 6-16).*

**Please note:** The same marking system is used across all categories, from Small Village to City, **except** Business Improvement District and Urban Community (page 14), and 'It's Your Neighbourhood' (pages 24-25).

This is the "East Midlands In Bloom" marking sheet that judges use:

		<b>10-9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7-6</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A1</b>	<b><u>Overall Impression</u></b>  Taking account of all relevant factors, how strong is the impact of the entry in creating a memorable impression? Are the designs and materials used appropriate to their locations? Emphasis here is on coordination and overall quality.	High impact with <b>excellent</b> attention to detail delivering the desired results in an appropriate and consistent manner.	Most areas are high impact with <b>very good</b> attention to detail although a few areas are inconsistent.	<b>Good</b> overall impact although not always balanced. Some areas make an impact but others need to be more vibrant with better design.	Although generally <b>satisfactory</b> , more attention to detail is required in order to increase impact and improve consistency of design.
<b>A2</b>	<b><u>Maintenance of Planted Areas</u></b>  Are the areas within the entry maintained to an appropriate standard, including cultivation, weeding, feeding, pruning, grass maintenance, tree management and maintenance?	<b>Excellent</b> standards of cultivation. Very consistent throughout. Horticultural maintenance and general care is outstanding.	Standards are <b>very good</b> with few exceptions. Horticultural maintenance is managed consistently.	Standards of horticultural maintenance are <b>good</b> and fairly consistent. There are a few exceptions where further attention is required.	Standards are generally <b>satisfactory</b> . However, the horticultural maintenance programme requires further attention to detail in some areas.
<b>A3</b>	<b><u>Plant Selection</u></b>  Are the plants used in the planting schemes suited to their growing conditions and locations and is there year-round interest, where appropriate?	<b>Excellent</b> plant selection with extensive year-round interest, and almost no exceptions.	Plant selection is <b>very good</b> overall with only a few exceptions and ample year-round interest.	Plant selection is generally <b>good</b> , but there is room for improvement in some areas in order to extend year-round interest.	Plant selection is generally <b>satisfactory</b> , however it requires further consideration in order to extend the season and maintain interest.
<b>A4</b>	<b><u>Plant Quality</u></b>  Are the plants vibrant and grown to their full potential? Are they generally free of pests and diseases?	Plant quality is <b>excellent</b> , plants are very healthy, vigorous and grown to their full potential.	Plant quality is <b>very good</b> , plants are mostly healthy and vigorous, with only a few exceptions.	Plant quality and health is generally <b>good</b> , but not always consistent. Lack of vigour in some areas.	Plant quality and health is generally <b>satisfactory</b> , but could be improved.

		10-9	8	7-6	5
<b>B1</b>	<b><u>Local Identity &amp; Pride of Place</u></b>  Is there a sense of place, with appropriate acknowledgement of local heritage and its relevance for the community; e.g. art in the landscape, signage and interpretation etc. Consider the pride taken in hard landscape (including streets), open spaces (including grass areas and beaches if appropriate), street furniture maintenance, etc.	Extensive evidence of efforts to highlight/enhance local identity. An <b>excellent</b> impression made about what makes the area unique. Street furniture including litter bins and seating is in excellent condition.	Considerable evidence of efforts to highlight/enhance local identity. A <b>very good</b> impression made about what makes the area unique. Street furniture including litter bins and seating is in very good condition.	Some evidence of efforts to highlight/enhance local identity. A <b>good</b> impression made about what makes the area unique. Street furniture including litter bins and seating is in good condition.	Little evidence of efforts to highlight/enhance local identity. A <b>satisfactory</b> impression made about what makes the area unique. Street furniture including litter bins and seating is in variable condition.
<b>B2</b>	<b><u>Natural Environment</u></b>  Is there an understanding of what biodiversity means locally, e.g. regarding the protection and conservation of the natural environment and wildlife habitat? Have any provisions been made, e.g. wildflower areas, bat/bird boxes and insect hotels, where applicable aquatic/marine conservation sites. Has an assessment of their effectiveness been made, where possible?	The natural environment is managed to an <b>excellent</b> standard supporting an extensive range of flora and fauna, with little improvement required.	The natural environment is managed to a <b>very good</b> standard supporting a considerable range of flora and fauna; very little effort would lift it to excellent.	The natural environment is managed to a <b>good</b> standard supporting a range of flora and fauna. Requires further work to improve it in places.	The natural environment is managed to a generally <b>satisfactory</b> standard supporting some flora and fauna. Needs significant improvement in places.
<b>B3</b>	<b><u>Environmental Quality and Resources</u></b>  What has been done to minimise the use of resources, e.g. water, chemicals, pesticides and to implement solutions like recycling, composting etc.  To include cleanliness, absence of litter, street weeds, graffiti vandalism, flyposting/temporary signage, chewing gum, and effective dog fouling control measures.	Extensive evidence of resource management initiatives. All areas are cleaned to an <b>excellent</b> standard. There is effective control of street weeds, no graffiti vandalism or flyposting.	Considerable evidence of resource management initiatives. All areas are cleaned to a <b>very good</b> standard. There is very good control of street weeds, very little graffiti vandalism and flyposting.	Some evidence of resource management initiatives. All areas are cleaned to a <b>good</b> standard. There is generally good control of street weeds, but some evidence of graffiti vandalism and flyposting.	Little evidence of resource management initiatives. All areas are cleaned to a <b>satisfactory</b> standard. There is some control of street weeds, but considerable evidence of graffiti vandalism and flyposting.
		10-9	8	7-6	5
<b>C1</b>	<b><u>Year Round Activity and Future Commitment</u></b>  Evidence of forward planning and year-round activities, initiatives or events. Highlighting where they are adding value and	<b>Excellent</b> evidence of activities taking place throughout the year and of advanced planning. The annual programme of activities is exceptional.	<b>Very good</b> evidence of activities taking place throughout the year and of advanced planning.	<b>Good</b> evidence of activities taking place throughout the year and of advanced planning.	<b>Satisfactory</b> evidence of activities taking place throughout the year and of advanced planning but some areas of improvement needed.

	demonstrating the strengths or uniqueness of the entry.				
<b>C2</b>	<p><b><u>Communication, Education, and Awareness</u></b></p> <p>Use of suitable interpretation, enabling learning and a greater understanding of purpose. Engagement with schools, young people or other groups. Promotion within the immediate area through local and regional communications. Appropriate communications and media involvement evidenced.</p>	<p><b>Excellent</b> use of signage and interpretation, and evidence of involvement in public awareness and educational programmes. Communications and appropriate media involvement are extremely well evidenced.</p>	<p><b>Very good</b> use of signage and interpretation, and evidence of involvement in public awareness and educational programmes. Communications and appropriate media involvement are very well evidenced.</p>	<p><b>Good</b> use of signage and interpretation, and evidence of involvement in public awareness and educational programmes. Communications and appropriate media involvement are well evidenced. A few missed opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Satisfactory</b> use of signage and interpretation, and evidence of involvement in public awareness and educational programmes. Communications and appropriate media involvement are evidenced but limited and there is room for improvement.</p>
<b>C3</b>	<p><b><u>Support and Funding</u></b></p> <p>Has the entry made every effort to engage the support of a wide variety of local groups and organisations? Participation should be representative of the local community. Evidence of fundraising and on-going support from a range of businesses and organisations appropriate to the size of the entry, making it viable and able to continue moving forward.</p>	<p>The range of groups and organisations engaged are an <b>excellent</b> representation of the wider community. Excellent levels of funding to ensure the viability of the entry. Support in all areas is sustainable and outstanding.</p>	<p>The range of groups and organisations engaged are a <b>very good</b> representation of the wider community. Very good levels of funding to ensure the viability of the entry. Support in all areas is very good and will be sustainable over time.</p>	<p>The range of groups and organisations engaged are a <b>good</b> representation of the wider community. Good levels of funding to ensure the viability of the entry. Support in all areas is good and, with effort, will be sustainable over time.</p>	<p>The range of groups and organisations engaged are a <b>satisfactory</b> representation of the wider community. Satisfactory levels of funding to ensure the viability of the entry. Support in all areas is satisfactory and fairly sustainable over time.</p>

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

Please remember that your entire tour route is subject to judging. That means what the judges see on the way from one feature stop to another, as well as what they see at all the stops and as they further explore sites on foot during the tour are ALL subject to judging.ave plans to address “problem” areas (i.e. vacant premises/plots, eyesores etc.). Finally, please also bear in mind that judges will be looking for your campaign activities to benefit your community not just for the judging period but for the longer term.

## SECTION A Horticulture

Floral displays are an important element of the East Midlands in Bloom Campaign but **should be proportionate** to the areas of sustainable planting and permanent landscaping within the entry. Floral displays may be present in a number of locations but typically, displays will be located in:

- Publicly owned areas, including parks, publicly owned buildings, roadside areas and roundabouts.
- Housing and residential areas, residential homes, schools, allotments etc
- Shopping areas, business areas and premises, commercial premises, public houses, hotels, garages, and transport terminals such as bus and train stations.

East Midlands in Bloom has environmental responsibility at its core and the judges will wish to see permanent/sustainable planting initiatives as well. Landscaped areas with permanent plantings could include any of the areas outlined above as well as:

- Woodlands, copse, shelter belts, verges, parks, public open spaces
- Business parks, industrial estates
- Screen planting near factories/industrial areas, eyesores, vacant premises/plots etc.
- Amenity planting near residential areas, car parks, shopping areas.

## SECTION B Environment

Please bear in mind that judges will be considering environmental responsibility across all areas of your local campaign so, for example, if you have a fabulous floral display they will also want to know if you have achieved this effect with consideration for the environment. Although this section does outline the key areas of environmental responsibility please bear this important core pillar in mind across all of your Bloom activities and initiatives.

Looking after our environment has become a very important community concern and we are all being encouraged to recycle and use environmentally responsible products and practices wherever and whenever possible. It is the expectation that participants in East Midlands in Bloom will strive to provide a co-ordinated approach so that all environmental issues are resolved in harmony with each other.

The judges will be looking for local bloom groups to either initiate or actively engage with programmes/activities (as appropriate) which are working towards providing environmental enhancements and which might include:

- Establishing nature conservation and wildlife areas
- Cleaning up polluted sites and appropriate treatment/screening of derelict property or other eyesores
- Activities to reduce the demand placed on natural resources - e.g. source of water used for plants,
- use of peat, use of hardwood timber etc
- Maintaining and preserving natural habitat.
- Minimal use of pesticides and nitrate fertilisers and reducing or eliminating harmful effects on the environment
- Management and development of local heritage (including natural heritage)

## SECTION C Community

Community participation is crucial to the success and continuity of East Midlands in Bloom campaign and judges will consider community participation in all appropriate areas of the local campaign's initiatives. For example, they will consider whether the local campaign has engaged the community in responsible resource management or educated them about this important issue or whether they have tried to educate and engage the community with regards to local heritage sites. Although this section does outline the key areas of community participation, please bear this important core pillar in mind across all your Bloom activities and initiatives.

East Midlands in Bloom's positioning as a community improvement and environmentally responsible campaign means that the judges will want to see how entrants intend to continue to develop their programme. Judges will also be very interested to see that (where applicable) young people and schools have been involved and that care has been taken to make effective use of the educational opportunities which exist. Furthermore, East Midlands in Bloom is not just about spring and summer floral displays; it is about a year-round programme of activity to improve, enhance and maintain the environment around us and keep the community actively engaged in keeping things at their best.

*The judges will be looking for campaigns which:*

- Evidence thoughtful planning of how to maintain the improvements they make and how to develop in the future.
- Have an effective communication and education programme evidenced by the level of awareness and understanding in the community as well as by physical evidence such as informative signs and displays, press clippings, publicity materials etc.
- Evidence a broad base of community involvement across all ages, ethnic and/or religious backgrounds, and socio-economic groups with a particular effort to engage young people/schools/colleges as appropriate to their community.
- Have a year-round programme of activity to keep their community engaged and at its best throughout the year (not just spring/summer displays and activities).
- Have secured funding/sponsorship and/or support for their activities and the support of government, commercial, corporate, business sectors for their campaign.

## JUDGES MARKING SHEET

 <p><b>Standard Marking Sheet</b></p>	<b>Name of Entry</b>								
	<b>Judges</b>								
	<b>Date of Assessment</b>								
<b>Category:</b> Village / Large Village / Small Town / Town / Large Town / Small City / City / Small Coastal / Large Coastal. (Indicate appropriate category).									
<b>MAXIMUM OF 10 POINTS PER SUB SECTION</b>								<b>Total marks awarded in sections A, B &amp; C</b>	<b>Medal level awarded in sections A, B &amp; C</b>
<b>A Horticulture 40%</b>	<b>A1</b>		<b>A2</b>		<b>A3</b>		<b>A4</b>		
<b>B Environment 30%</b>	<b>B1</b>		<b>B2</b>		<b>B3</b>				
<b>C Community 30%</b>	<b>C1</b>		<b>C2</b>		<b>C3</b>				
<b>Total Score out of 100:</b>					<b>Overall Medal Awarded:</b>				
<b>Medal Guide: Gold, Excellent 85-100 Points; Silver Gilt, Very Good 75-84 Points; Silver, Good 60-74 Points; Bronze, Satisfactory 50-59 Points. 49 Points and below – certificate of Achievement.</b>									
<i><b>Introduction and Overall Impression:</b> (Please expand space as required to fit judging comments).</i>									

**Judges Feedback Section A – Horticulture:** *(Please expand space as required to fit judging comments).*

**Judges Feedback Section B – Environment:** *(Please expand space as required to fit judging comments).*

**Judges Feedback Section C – Community:** *(Please expand space as required to fit judging comments).*

**BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT AND URBAN COMMUNITY MARKING CRITERIA** (The judges marking sheet is the same as "East Midlands In Bloom" marking sheet on page 11). *Please note: This marking system and distribution of marks is slightly different to that of the "East Midlands In Bloom" marking sheets.*  
The points obtainable under each section are shown below.

		<b>10-9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7-6</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A1</b>	<b><u>Overall Impression</u></b> Taking account of all relevant factors, how strong is the impact of the entry in creating a memorable impression? Are the designs and materials used appropriate to their locations? Emphasis here is on coordination and overall quality.	High impact with <b>excellent</b> attention to detail delivering the desired results in an appropriate and consistent manner.	Most areas are high impact with <b>very good</b> attention to detail, although a few are inconsistent.	<b>Good</b> overall effect although not always balanced. Some areas make an impact others need to be more vibrant with better design.	Although generally <b>satisfactory</b> , more attention to detail is required in order to increase impact and improve consistency of design.
<b>A2</b>	<b><u>Maintenance of Planted Areas</u></b> Are the areas within the entry maintained to an appropriate standard including cultivation, weeding, feeding, pruning, grass maintenance, tree management and maintenance?	<b>Excellent</b> standards of cultivation. Very consistent throughout. Horticultural maintenance and general care is outstanding.	Standards are <b>very good</b> with few exceptions. Horticultural maintenance is managed very consistently.	Standards of horticultural maintenance are <b>good</b> and fairly consistent. There are a few exceptions where further attention is required.	Standards are generally <b>satisfactory</b> . However, the horticultural maintenance programme requires more attention to detail in some areas.
<b>A3</b>	<b><u>Seasonal Displays</u></b> Are plants used to enhance the visitor experience and celebrate seasonal or local annual events?	<b>Excellent</b> use of plants to enhance the visitor experience and celebrate seasonal or local annual events.	<b>Very good</b> use of plants to enhance the visitor experience and celebrate seasonal or local annual events.	<b>Good</b> use of plants to enhance the visitor experience and celebrate seasonal or local annual events, but further improvements could be made.	<b>Satisfactory</b> use of plants to enhance the visitor experience and celebrate seasonal or local annual events, but significant improvements could be made.
<b>A4</b>	<b><u>Plant Selection and Quality</u></b> Are the plants used in the planting schemes suited to their growing conditions and locations and is there year-round interest, including, where appropriate, use of vertical walls or roof gardens?	<b>Excellent</b> plant selection with extensive year-round interest. Very high quality and appropriate use of plants.	Plant selection is <b>very good</b> overall, with only a few exceptions and ample year-round interest.	Plant selection is generally <b>good</b> , but there is room for improvement in some areas in order to extend year-round interest.	Plant selection is <b>satisfactory</b> however it requires further consideration in order to extend the season and maintain interest.

		10-9	8	7-6	5
<b>B1</b>	<b><u>Local Identity</u></b>  Is there a sense of place, with appropriate acknowledgement of local heritage and its relevance for the community; e.g. art in the landscape, signage and interpretation etc? Consider the pride taken in hard landscape (including streets), open spaces (including grass areas and beaches if appropriate), street furniture maintenance, etc.	Extensive evidence of efforts to highlight/enhance local identity. An <b>excellent</b> impression made about what makes the area unique. Street furniture including litter bins and seating is in excellent condition.	Considerable evidence of efforts to highlight/enhance local identity. A <b>very good</b> impression made about what makes the area unique. Street furniture including litter bins and seating is in very good condition.	Some evidence of efforts to highlight/enhance local identity. A <b>good</b> impression made about what makes the area unique. Street furniture including litter bins and seating is in reasonably good condition.	Little evidence of efforts to highlight/enhance local identity. A <b>satisfactory</b> impression made about what makes the area unique. Street furniture including litter bins and seating is in variable condition.
<b>B2</b>	<b><u>Built Environment</u></b>  Consider management and maintenance of commercial and residential stock, vacant properties and plots, building and development controls including the appropriate screening and associated interim enhancements of development sites.	The built environment is managed to an <b>excellent</b> standard, with high quality controls on existing and future developments in place.	The built environment is managed to a <b>very good</b> standard with adequate controls of existing and future development sites in place.	The built environment is managed to a <b>good</b> standard with reasonable attempts at control of existing and future development sites in place.	The built environment is managed to a generally <b>satisfactory</b> standard however there are concerns that measures are not in place to manage existing and future developments.
<b>B3</b>	<b><u>Environmental Quality and Resources</u></b>  What has been done to minimise the use of resources, e.g. water, chemicals, pesticides and to implement solutions like recycling, etc.  To include cleanliness, absence of litter, street weeds, graffiti vandalism, flyposting/temporary signage, chewing gum, and effective dog fouling control measures.	Extensive evidence of resource management initiatives. All areas are cleaned to an <b>excellent</b> standard. There is effective control of street weeds, no graffiti vandalism or flyposting.	Considerable evidence of resource management initiatives. All areas are cleaned to a <b>very good</b> standard. There is very good control of street weeds, little graffiti vandalism and flyposting.	Some evidence of resource management initiatives. All areas are cleaned to a <b>good</b> standard. There is generally good control of street weeds, but evidence of some graffiti vandalism and flyposting.	Little evidence of resource management initiatives. All areas are cleaned to a generally <b>satisfactory</b> standard. There is a lack of control of street weeds, and evidence of considerable graffiti vandalism and flyposting.

		10-9	8	7-6	5
<b>C1</b>	<p><b><u>Year Round Activity and Future Commitment</u></b></p> <p>Documented evidence of forward planning and year-round activities, initiatives or events. Highlighting where these activities are adding value and demonstrating the strengths or uniqueness of the entry.</p>	<p><b>Excellent</b> evidence of activities taking place throughout the year and of advanced planning. The annual programme of activities is exceptional.</p>	<p><b>Very good</b> evidence of activities taking place throughout the year and of advanced planning giving this entry a real strength.</p>	<p><b>Good</b> evidence of activities taking place throughout the year and of advanced planning.</p>	<p><b>Satisfactory</b> evidence of activities taking place throughout the year and of advanced planning, but some areas of improvement needed.</p>
<b>C2</b>	<p><b><u>Communication and Awareness</u></b></p> <p>Use of suitable interpretation, enabling learning and a greater understanding of purpose. Engagement with schools, young people or other groups. Promotion within the immediate area through local and regional communications. Appropriate communications and media involvement evidenced.</p>	<p><b>Excellent</b> use of signage and interpretation, and evidence of involvement in public awareness and educational programmes. Communications and appropriate media involvement are extremely well evidenced.</p>	<p><b>Very good</b> use of signage and interpretation, and evidence of involvement in public awareness and educational programmes. Communications and appropriate media involvement are very well evidenced.</p>	<p><b>Good</b> use of signage and interpretation, and evidence of involvement in public awareness and educational programmes. Communications and appropriate media involvement are well evidenced. A few missed opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Satisfactory</b> use of signage and interpretation, and evidence of involvement in public awareness and educational programmes. Limited evidence of communications and appropriate media involvement, there is room for improvement.</p>
<b>C3</b>	<p><b><u>Support and Funding</u></b></p> <p>Has the entry made every effort to engage the support of a wide variety of local groups and organisations? Participation should be representative of the local community. Evidence of fundraising and on-going support from a range of businesses and organisations appropriate to the size of the entry, making it viable and able to continue moving forward. Is there sufficient evaluation and evidence of the impact of various initiatives?</p>	<p>The range of groups and organisations engaged are an <b>excellent</b> representation of the wider community. Excellent levels of the funding to ensure the viability of the entry. Support in all areas is sustainable and outstanding.</p>	<p>The range of groups and organisations engaged are a <b>very good</b> representation of the wider community. Very good levels of funding to ensure the viability of the entry. Support in all areas is very good and will be sustainable over time.</p>	<p>The range of groups and organisations engaged are a <b>good</b> representation of the wider community. Good levels of funding to ensure the viability of the entry. Support in all areas is good and, with effort, will be sustainable over time.</p>	<p>The range of groups and organisations engaged are a <b>satisfactory</b> representation of the wider community. Satisfactory levels of funding to ensure the viability of the entry. Support in all areas is satisfactory and fairly sustainable over time.</p>

## Judges/entrants notes

- The new style report and assessment form has rebalanced the existing scoring system to 40:30:30 reflecting the greater importance of the environment and the (business) community.
- The form has expandable sections under overall impression and Judges' feedback allowing the judges to provide comprehensive and meaningful comments as much as they deem necessary.
- There is a new section under A to assess the use of plant material to celebrate seasonal or local annual events, this may include the use of seasonal planting, baskets, containers or evidence of planting used at Christmas/Easter or other events.
- **These items are applicable to entrants to the 'Business Improvement District (BID) / Town Centre or City Centre' category only:**
  - The BID/ Town Centre or City Centre category is a "one size fits all" but there needs to be an allowance made within the judging process to take into account the scale of endeavour, for instance some BID may be quite small in comparison to a large City Centre. The scale of endeavour takes into account not only the size of the entry but the geographic, and regenerative effect of what has been achieved against what can often be a difficult and challenging baseline.
  - Whilst the geographic size of most BID can be quite easily defined, the boundaries of Town and City centres are harder to establish. The maximum radius for BID/Town Centre or City Centre shall be 0.5 miles from a self-determined point giving a maximum one mile diameter. The size of the entry will determine the judging time, and shall be no more than 2 hours plus the standard 15 min presentation and press. The entry must determine the exact centre and radius and submit this on a map in their portfolio.
  - A larger Town Centre or City Centre entry can include a number of smaller BIDs, and a larger BID entry can also comprise of several smaller BIDs.

For Business Improvement District (BID) / Town Centre or City Centre entries the presentation and portfolio should include an annual development plan reporting against a baseline, where the entry has come from and how much has been achieved.

Please note that this information and entry forms can be downloaded from our website: [www.emib.org.uk](http://www.emib.org.uk)

## EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM DISCRETIONARY AWARDS

The following Discretionary Awards are awarded to the “In Bloom” entry by the judges where they feel it is merited each year. No application form is necessary.

<p><b>East Midlands in Bloom Award for Horticultural Excellence within Parks.</b>  <i>Awarded for: Planting and maintenance of flower beds and green spaces within public parks.</i></p>
<p><b>East Midlands in Bloom Award for Best Wildflower and Conservation Area.</b>  <i>Awarded for: Efforts made to provide a wildflower and conservation area and effectiveness of the area. Appropriate management of these areas.</i></p>
<p><b>East Midlands in Bloom Award for the Most Improved Entrant (sponsored by Taylors Bulbs)</b></p>
<p><b>East Midlands in Bloom Award for the Least Littered Environment</b>  <i>Awarded for: Upkeep and cleanliness of areas, general tidiness, lack of litter, graffiti, and vandalism.</i></p>
<p><b>East Midlands in Bloom Committee Award – awarded if merited by the judging panel</b></p>
<p><b>East Midlands in Bloom Award for Best New Permanent Landscape</b>  <i>Awarded for: A newly landscaped area not seen by the judges in previous years.</i></p>
<p><b>The Doug Stacey Young Person Award</b>  <i>Given for: The award is given to a young person who has shown independent initiative to supporting the in bloom campaign in any one of the three pillars – please mention this person to the judges.</i></p>
<p><b>Best Entrance Display – Given to an entranceway to a town/village/city who may or may not be currently taking part in Bloom (seen on the judges travels anywhere in the East Midlands)</b></p>

## EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM SPECIAL AWARDS

Below are four additional Special Awards that “In Bloom” entrants can register for. Please let us know which award/s you intend to enter even if you do not know your nomination/s by the closing date.

Name of Award	Closing Date for forms
<b>A The Frank Constable MBE Award for Best Residential Garden (page 18)</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>B East Midlands in Bloom Award for Best Hotel/Pub Garden or Display (page 19)</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>C East Midlands in Bloom Award for Best Retail/Commercial Premises (page 19)</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>East Midlands in Bloom Award for best School Garden (page 19)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> May

If you intend to enter categories A, B or C but do not know who your nominations are likely to be before the closing date (perhaps you run your own local competition), please still let us know which categories you **intend** to enter by **30<sup>th</sup> April** or at the same time you submit your Bloom entry form. You can let us have the full details of your nominations later when your judge contacts you. This ensures judges allocate **adequate time** for your ‘In Bloom’ entry when they make the judging arrangements. If this is not done, judges may not be able to judge the award nominations or award a certificate. Please also inform us if you need to **withdraw** an entry **before** your “In Bloom” judging date.

**The Best School Garden Special Award** requires submission of a separate entry form (see page 19) and “In Bloom” entrants and their selected school/s are requested to read the [information pack](#). All forms and information can be found on our website.

## A: The Frank Constable MBE Award for Best Residential Garden

*This award was introduced in 2001 and is sponsored by the Constable family in memory of our late President, Frank Constable MBE, who sadly passed away in February 2014. The nomination **must** be linked to an "In Bloom" entry.*

### Details of the award

- **Name of Award:** The Frank Constable Award for Best Residential Garden
- **Form of Award:** An engraved carriage clock together with a certificate.
- **Judging:** The EMIB entrant will nominate one 'best garden' from their community to be inspected by the EMIB judges during their judging tour in July. Judges will award marks out of 20 using additional photographic evidence to determine the overall winner.
- **Previous winners** cannot win the award again or receive the carriage clock, although they can re-enter each year and receive a certificate.
- **Previously winning garden can be entered and win if the property has changed ownership.**

### Rules:

- Judges should be shown the 'In Bloom' entry's single nominated 'best garden' on the annual judging tour.
- Please use the Special Awards form available from our website and make sure you register your intention to enter before the closing date even if you do not know who your nomination will be at this date.
- Side and rear gardens may be entered if they are **clearly visible** to the public from a public highway or footpath.
- Please ensure the owners of the garden are aware that their garden will be visited on the pre-arranged date, so that judges can have access.
- If the garden nominated is off the normal judging route, it will be possible to make arrangements with the judges for this to be inspected separately at the beginning, middle or end of the judging tour. Please inform the judges what your choice is **before** the start of the judging tour.
- Please supply the judges with (a) photograph/s, clearly named of the nominated garden for use in the final judging process.
- A maximum of 15 minutes is allowed in addition to that of your 'In Bloom' judging time.
- If the entire 15 minutes is not used, the remainder **cannot** be added on to your 'In Bloom' judging time.
- East Midlands in Bloom reserve the right to use photographs of the entry for publication purposes.

### Marking criteria

- **Visibility.** The garden should be visible to the public and make a positive contribution to the street scene. Account will be taken of the degree of pleasure given by the garden to the wider community.
- **Design.** Includes how creatively the available space has been used and the combination of plant form, texture and colour. Displays will be assessed to see if the layout and plants chosen are sufficiently varied to offer interest and colour throughout the year. Account will be taken of the effort and imagination used to overcome site constraints and obstacles.
- **Maintenance Standards.** Looks for overall impact, standards of grassed areas, edging, dead heading etc.

## B: Best Pub/Hotel Garden or Display Special Award *and* C: Best Retail/Commercial Premises Special Award

*These awards were introduced in 2007 and they are an integral part of the East Midlands in Bloom campaign. Applicants are invited to submit their **single** best entry in any or all Special Awards as part of an "In Bloom". To check if there is a local "In Bloom" entry, please contact the Secretary at East Midlands in Bloom. The closing date is **April 30<sup>th</sup>** every year.*

### Rules:

- An "In Bloom" entrant is only allowed to nominate one in each category of Special Award.
- Please use the Special Awards form available from our website and make sure you register your intention to enter before the closing date of 30th April, even if you do not know your nomination/s by this date.

- A maximum of 15 minutes each for categories A, B & C is allowed in addition to your normal "In Bloom" judging time, and may be judged before, during or after your 'In Bloom' judging tour. Judges must be informed when this will be before the start of the tour.
- If the entire 15 minutes is not used, the remainder **cannot** be added on to the 'In Bloom' judging time.
- The "In Bloom" entrant must communicate with the nominated proprietor/owner of the Special Award entry so that they are made aware of the judging date and time which will have been confirmed with their judges in May. Judges reserve the right to disallow an entry if the proprietor is not informed of their visit.
- The entry must be permanent and original.
- EMIB Judges reserve the right to disqualify entrants who submit outside of the criteria and their decision is final.
- East Midlands in Bloom reserve the right to use photographs of the entry for publication purposes.

## Best School Garden Special Award

This award encourages entries to ask local schools to enter this award. Schools that are not in a Bloom entry area can also enter independently. In all cases there is a limit to the number of schools allowed each year which is as follows:

**Small Village, Village & Large Village** - one school

**Small Town, Town, Large Town, Urban Community and Coastal** - two schools

**Small City, City** - three schools

Please consider that the earlier a school is approached, the more time it has to prepare entry into this Award. Individual entries should first find out if there is a local "In Bloom" group and if they have already entered a school. This can be done by contacting us at East Midlands in Bloom.

The Special Award for Best School Garden requires submission of a **separate\*** entry form and "In Bloom" entrants and their selected school/s must also read the **information pack\***, specially written to help them.

The closing date for this award is 31<sup>st</sup> May.

In addition to the award for the Overall Best School Garden in East Midlands in Bloom, these extra awards were introduced in 2012 to recognise the best gardens and gardening activities in the following sub categories:

**Best Fruit and Vegetable Gardening**

**Best Gardening for Wildlife**

**Best Ornamental Gardening**

The Best School Garden will be judged by different judge/s on a different date and/or time from that of the main "In Bloom" judging and will take place in the third and fourth week of June. The same school can also be entered as part of a "Bloom" main judging route (a short visit only), but please ensure the head teacher is made aware of the **date and time** you intend to visit the school, well before the visit. Judges reserve the right to disqualify a BSGSA entry if the relevant contact person at the school is not informed of their visit beforehand.

**Thirty minutes** are allocated for the judging and all schools will receive a report and certificate (usually forwarded by the "In Bloom" representative) following the Presentation of Awards in mid September. Results are confidential before that date. Representatives from the winning schools will be invited to the Awards Presentation in September.

\*All forms are available to download from our website.

We also encourage schools to arrange a local children's art and/or digital photography competition.

*To see details of the RHS Campaign for School Gardening please go to page 25.*

## RESULTS & AWARDS

Each Entry will receive one of the following awards which will be presented to each "in Bloom" entrant at the Presentation of Awards in September. No results will be released until then. All results will be available on our website following this date.

Maximum points awarded:	100 overall maximum	40 maximum in Section A - Horticulture	30 maximum in each of Sections B and C, Environment and Community
<b>GOLD</b>  <b>Outstanding</b>	100 ↑ ↓ 85	40 ↑ ↓ 34	30 ↑ ↓ 26
<b>SILVER GILT</b>  <b>Very Good</b>	84 ↑ ↓ 75	33 ↑ ↓ 30	25 ↑ ↓ 23
<b>SILVER</b>  <b>Good</b>	74 ↑ ↓ 60	29 ↑ ↓ 24	22 ↑ ↓ 18
<b>BRONZE</b>  <b>Satisfactory</b>	59 ↑ ↓ 50	23 ↑ ↓ 20	17 ↑ ↓ 15
<b>CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT</b>  <b>Fair</b>	49 ↑ ↓ 1	19 ↑ ↓ 1	14 ↑ ↓ 1

The awards system ensures that all entrants receive a grading, allowing them to benchmark against others in their category. All categories will be marked against the judging criteria to determine an award level. Due to the high percentage of marks required to gain gold, very few are awarded. Britain in Bloom and the RHS use this method of marking for the national competition and their flower shows.

## PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

During August representatives of all "In Bloom" entries will be invited to attend the East Midlands in Bloom Presentation of Awards. The Awards are held annually in September at a pre-agreed venue. Entrants will receive their certificates, trophies (where appropriate), and other certificates (Special Awards & Best School Garden Awards where appropriate).

**New Venue suggestions are always welcomed from our entrants! Please contact us.**

### Some Winning Tips

Co-operation between the local authority, public sector, private groups and individuals is of utmost importance in this competition. Judges will allocate marks for activity by each of these groups so it is important that they all contribute.

- Do take photographs as soon as you decide to enter.
- The judges are in a position to award marks to take account of for displays at other times of the year, i.e. spring bulbs and autumn colour so they need to see photographs of this display.
- Show your long-term commitment by keeping a record of your achievements: litter picks, pond clearance and community involvement to show your efforts.
- It is not just flowers that the judges are looking at; the absence of litter, dog fouling and graffiti is a necessity.
- The condition of park benches, notice boards, fences etc., should be good. They should be well maintained and the areas around them weed free.
- Litter bins should be carefully sited, regularly emptied and kept clean.
- Why not get the local social services involved, brightening up old people's homes, day centres and hospitals?
- Car parks, railway stations, bus stations and stops are important - the first port of call for visitors. Make them welcome!
- Why not run competitions or provide incentives for local businesses, hotels, shops and offices? As well as brightening up their premises, some may sponsor flower displays!
- Get the support of your local press - as well as publicising your efforts they can help maintain enthusiasm.
- Initiate new projects that brighten up your environment. How about planting a garden for the blind, encouraging wildlife to your community in your choice of plants, using wild flowers in your displays, starting a butterfly garden at your local school, planting a hedge maze? Originality could earn your marks from the judges as well as benefiting your community.
- Above all, this competition is not about how much money you spend! If you work together and enjoy yourselves your enthusiasm will shine through. The judges are looking for pride in your surroundings, cleanliness and team effort.

### Putting the finishing touches to your Judging Itinerary

You will be contacted by a judge (in May/June), and allocated a date and time for judging. Please **confirm in writing** to the judge concerned that this date and time is acceptable to you, and wherever possible, include a directional map. Do make sure that the judges (*they are usually paired up, but occasionally there may be an additional designated judge*) know where they are to meet you. Please also provide a mobile contact telephone number in case of any emergencies on the day (*e.g. traffic hold ups etc.*).

Make sure any Special Award entries have been noted (*by sending your Special Awards entry form in before the end of April*) so that judges know to allow a little extra time. If you wish to provide any refreshments (*entirely optional*), please make this known to the judges, so they can allow time for this.

- Make sure car parking facilities are available for your judges.
- Remember that the judges may not enter your Town/Village by the main route.
- Be relaxed - this helps to relax everyone.
- Introduce the judges to everyone – but don't expect them to remember all the names (*name badges could be used*). A list of their names and who/what they represent would also be helpful.
- Do offer the judges comfort facilities on their arrival (remember they may have just driven 70 or 80 miles).
- If the judges visit in the morning, then a drink of tea or coffee would be most welcome.
- Wet weather - have umbrellas available, if necessary; have an alternative route planned.
- Do have a copy of the itinerary for the judges at the start - don't give it to them after the visit.
- Do plan the Itinerary - if for any reason you have to change the itinerary, do tell the judges.

- Take each section of the judging criteria and try to ensure the judges see examples in each one. Repetition and concentration on any one section will not gain you extra marks no matter how good it is.
- Consider the use of a short video; say 5/6 minutes long at the start of the visit, whilst having coffee - show winter work or pre-visit activities.
- Don't turn your video into a full length feature film.
- Do check the route out on the day of judging and remove any litter left from the previous night, if possible.
- If you can cover your route alone in 1 hour, it is very likely that on the day of judging it will take twice as long. Please make allowances for discussion with key people, and busy times of the day.
- Don't expect the judges to judge for more than the allocated time for your category. However, extra time can be allowed for any unforeseen circumstances or press activity - this will be at the judges' discretion.
- Do have transport arranged - do know who is going with who if more than one vehicle is going to be used.
- Make sure that judges can clearly see out of the windows and can hear any commentary.
- If you intend for the judges to meet with someone who is not a Committee Member e.g. a garden competition winner, or local schoolchildren, please make sure they know you are coming and how long you will be spending with them, so they are not disappointed if you need to rush the judges along.
- If you are planning a reception for the judges after the visit to meet with the people involved or prize winners of your competitions, then please advise the judges beforehand to enable them to plan their day. Their schedule is very tight but if they know what is planned beforehand then they will be very pleased to spend the time with you.
- Do remember the judges enjoy meeting the people involved with your entry into the 'In Bloom' Competition.
- Do give the judges time and space to take in what they are seeing and being told - otherwise they may just miss that vital element that would have given you that extra point you needed to be a winner.
- Do remember if you are judged in the afternoon that the judges will probably have judged that morning. If the judges require more time they will say so.
- Be prepared to give the judges a few minutes on their own.
- Don't spring any surprise receptions on the judges.
- Don't cram too much into the visit and most of all ...

**...Don't be put off, enjoy the day, it's *your* day!**

## A DIARY/PORTFOLIO – not required but can be very useful!

During July each year the East Midlands in Bloom judges visit many places from large cities to small villages. The specified time spent by the judges at each location means they only see a small fraction of what has been achieved over the past 12 months or so. You may wish to prepare a portfolio/diary which can clearly illustrate what you have achieved during the rest of the year, throughout the other seasons, and across all sections. For example:

- Local competitions
- Involvement of the community
- Improvements made over the past year and encompassing the wider environmental approach of the competition as well
- Keep a photographic record of all the things that have been done during the year - even committee meetings
- Use selected press cuttings to show what publicity has been achieved.
- The judges will be impressed with before and after photographs of earlier plantings, projects and records of achievements in collecting litter, improving public places and waterways and generally cleaning up the environment.

If you do prepare a portfolio or diary it needs to embrace a wide range of subjects, be kept simple and easy to read. It has often been said that the most effective reports are those which are restricted to one side of an A4 sheet. Remember - '*A Picture Paints A Thousand Words*' but, also remember to add that important caption!

When it comes to completing that all important marking sheet, the diary/portfolio can be an aide memoir for judges. In other words, after a long and tiring day of judging, (often more than one entry per day) it helps to jog the judges' memory of what they have been told and seen earlier.

Do not give the judges your only copy of the portfolio, as its return cannot be guaranteed.

If you would like your portfolio returned, please inform judges and let them know whether you need it before the Presentation of Awards. Judges should bring your portfolio for you to collect at this event, but please give them a reminder beforehand!

### The advice is:

- Start collecting materials as soon as you decide to enter the competition.
- Make it a pictorial record.
- Include a copy of the itinerary used on the day of judging.
- Be original
- Keep it simple and easy to read. The recommendation is a **maximum** of 10 A4 pages (20 sides; and it does not need to be elaborately designed).

**If you do compile a portfolio** it should be thought of as a diary or record of the tasks and events that have taken place **over the past twelve months**. This could include all-year-round photographs and, wherever possible, before and after shots. *(Please note that all photographs should be dated and relatively recent i.e. not taken more than two years ago).*

### The content could include:

- A brief introduction/resume about your entry, including the names and roles of your committee members.
- Anything that hasn't already been covered during your judging route or press and publicity period. Concentrate on at least one item from each section, i.e. Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility, and Community Participation. Sometimes marks can be picked up here if things have been omitted during the judging route.
- Year-round effort and work undertaken in areas not included in the judging tour (for example, evidence through the use of photographs, of people actually getting involved in the planting of winter/spring displays and at other times of the year).
- How your 'In Bloom' entry is funded (for example, any fundraising event such as a coffee morning, plant sales, raffle etc. It's also good to see photos!) Also any grants that you may have obtained.
- How you promote your 'In Bloom' campaign (maybe you have a display in an empty shop window, for example, or posters to let your area know about the campaign and when the judges will be coming; any litter picks etc.)
- Press coverage is all-important but please don't just fill the portfolio with press cuttings; why not find some display boards and use them to showcase your 'In Bloom' activity. These can then be examined during the judges' comfort break and save you valuable space in your portfolio/diary.
- An illustration of your achievements to date and an outline of your goals for the future.

### Additional portfolio ideas for larger category entries:

- An outline of your policy and strategy plans; these might include or outline key objectives and approach for the 12-month period alongside longer-term aims for Bloom delivery. Ensure these include any partnerships and community participation plans, education aims and preparations for future development.
- Examples of how you conserve and manage your natural resources.
- Examples of initiatives to combat litter and graffiti etc.
- Demonstrate how you get the wider community involved.
- Indicate how you encourage recycling, e.g. through composting etc.

### Recommendations (for all categories)

- Not larger than A4.
- Not more than 10 pages (20 sides).
- Please do not include important documents. Portfolios are either kept for reference and/or to give examples to other and/or new entrants.
- Please remember that the size of font you use for your text can make a big difference to the number of words you get onto the page, e.g.
- East Midlands in Bloom = 12 point
- East Midlands in Bloom = 11 point
- East Midlands in Bloom = 10 point

Don't however, go too small, the Judges do after all need to be able to read the document.

The preferred font size is 12 point.

- The portfolio doesn't have to be professionally designed; there are **no** marks for portfolio presentation. Do however, keep it simple and clear, and concentrate on content detail which demonstrates your community's efforts to create improvements to your local environment.

## East Midlands in Bloom RHS IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD campaign

RHS It's Your Neighbourhood is a unique scheme for volunteer led community gardening projects/groups which are focused on cleaning up and greening up their local area, whether that is the estate where they live or the back alley they share or the local community centre's outdoor space.

This is the non-competitive category of the Bloom Campaign and is ideal for any group taking the first steps towards community improvements. Any group (defined as more than one person!) eager to make a difference to their local environment, whether a few neighbours keen to tackle local litter, or a larger action group determined to turn-around a problem 'grot spot' or eyesore can enter.

East Midlands in Bloom are delighted with the standards achieved by our neighbourhood entrants since this category was introduced in our region in 2006.

**Getting involved is very easy, in fact, you only need two things:**

1. A group (two or more people!)
2. An idea for a project which involves horticulture.

*Once you have these things, you are ready to get started!*

It's Your Neighbourhood is all about bringing members of the community together to make a positive change to the place they live, work or spend their leisure time. Groups participating in the campaign are asked to focus on its three core pillars of:

- Community Participation (40% of marks)
- Environmental Responsibility (30% of marks)
- Gardening Achievement (30% of marks)

While participating groups are not judged against each other, they are visited by environmental and horticultural "In Bloom" experts, who provide valuable feedback and helpful advice on how to develop current activities and encourage ongoing improvements.

Based on the assessment visit, each community will receive an RHS certificate of achievement reflecting the extent to which participants have met the It's Your Neighbourhood aims as encompassed in the three core pillars.

There are **five levels** of achievement in **It's Your Neighbourhood**:

**Establishing, Improving, Advancing, Thriving and Outstanding** – and groups who have done consistently well over time may be nominated to receive the one off It's Your Neighbourhood National Certificate of Distinction. Larger consistently "Outstanding" entrants will be asked to consider entering the "In Bloom" campaign if appropriate.

At East Midlands in Bloom we also have a trophy for the "Most Inspiring IYN Entry".

It's Your Neighbourhood is open to groups of all sizes and with a variety of projects, as long as they are focused on cleaning up and greening their local area and as long as they are:

- A group
- Hands on
- Involved in community gardening
- Representative of the community and/or getting input from the community
- Benefitting the community
- Volunteer-led
- Sustainable over time
- Owned by the community and with the community responsible for the work.

Some examples of **It's Your Neighbourhood** groups are:

- A residents' group/association
- A "friends of" or Church group
- A youth group
- A gated alley area.

All **It's Your Neighbourhood** groups receive the following support from the **RHS & East Midlands in Bloom**:

- A special link to the RHS website with helpful guidance and information
- The chance to draw on the experiences of other local communities through a strong Britain in Bloom network
- Access to a network of 3,000 local gardening clubs and horticultural societies offering support and expertise
- Product offers from selected suppliers
- A quarterly community gardening review magazine - "Grass Roots"
- Special access to expert RHS advisors' individual advice
- Access to a vast array of information and helpful tools on the RHS website:
  - The Plant Selector (helping you choose appropriate plants for your area)
  - The Plant Finder (everything you need to know about a plant including how to care for it and where to buy it)
  - Month by Month guide to what to do in the garden
  - Guide to organic and sustainable gardening
  - Guide to composting
  - Guide to wildlife gardening.

In addition, **It's Your Neighbourhood** groups have access to valuable support from their region/nation organisers. What are the benefits?

- **Cleaner and greener surroundings**
- Developing a **sense of community** and creating positive interaction between community members.
- **Safer** environments for the enjoyment of local people.
- **Reduction in anti-social behaviour.**
- **Increased civic pride** as local people take ownership of the improvements to the area.
- **Positive effect on the local economy** such as increased commercial enterprise
- **Helping the environment** through recycling, energy conservation, reducing litter, improving/adding green spaces and other sustainable practices
- Greater **community contact**/relationship with the local authority.

For further details please contact Elaine Atkinson or visit our website where you can download participants' guidelines and see an assessment sheet.

More information including case studies from previous participants is also available on the RHS website:

[www.rhs.org.uk/communities](http://www.rhs.org.uk/communities)

"It's Your Neighbourhood" entrants will be able to obtain free access to valuable information and advice from the RHS website, once registration with East Midlands in Bloom is made. We welcome return entries each year, but it is essential to re- register each year by posting or emailing the entry form to us.

The **CLOSING DATE** for registration into the East Midlands in Bloom RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' campaign is **30<sup>th</sup> April**. In certain cases, late exceptions may be possible. Very late submissions will be entered into the following year's campaign.

**East Midlands in Bloom RHS It's Your Neighbourhood Awards** will be held at various local and regional events which will be announced later in the year. Please look out for them on our website or contact us by email or telephone. We are always looking for volunteer IYN assessors - please get in touch if you are interested.

This is a campaign organised by the RHS for young people to develop their understanding and appreciation of plants and the diversity of the plant kingdom, and to enjoy the physical, emotional and therapeutic benefits of gardening.

The RHS Campaign for School Gardening works by helping schools and youth groups to take positive action to transform an area in their school grounds or the wider community into a garden, and by encouraging teachers to use the 'outdoor classroom' to deliver the National Curriculum in a more flexible and imaginative way and give children first hand experiences of good citizenship.

Gardening offers huge potential for teaching the National Curriculum – not just science but subjects ranging from geography, art and design and history through to maths, PSHE and citizenship. Education has always been central to the RHS's charitable mission and it recently launched a 'Vision for Learning' which outlines plans to inform and inspire people about plants and growing – particularly those who don't usually have access to either.

For more information please go to: [www.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening](http://www.rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening)

or make contact via e-mail: [schoolgardening@rhs.org.uk](mailto:schoolgardening@rhs.org.uk)

or write to School and Family Learning, RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The RHS produces a helpful range of literature about biodiversity including an information leaflet entitled 'Gardens and biodiversity'. There is also a range of Conservation and Environment leaflets on subjects relating to biodiversity such as:

- Wildflowers in the garden
- Wildlife in gardens
- Invasive non-native species
- Wild & endangered plants in cultivation
- CITES (Convention on International Trade in endangered species of wild flora and fauna)
- Bringing plants in from abroad

To contact the National Britain in Bloom team please contact the RHS Community Horticulture team:

[Communities@rhs.org.uk](mailto:Communities@rhs.org.uk) Tel: 0207 821 3651

[www.rhs.org.uk/communities@rhs](http://www.rhs.org.uk/communities@rhs).

**In all instances please feel free to contact East Midlands in Bloom Secretary:  
[secretary@emib.org.uk](mailto:secretary@emib.org.uk)**

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## NOTES