



SOUTH WEST

Britain in Bloom - South West Summer Newsletter 2020



Bloom Groups meet the Challenge of COVID 19



Torquay Flower Beds



Liskeard



The Upcycled Garden, Melksham



Radstock



Hi Everyone,

Well the exceptional times in which we live have presented us all with many personal and social challenges with the on going pandemic.

We in South West in Bloom have been so heartened to see throughout the region you have all kept the horticultural and community gardening going, in many cases against a background of local authorities having to re prioritise away from horticulture in some cases.

The standards that you have achieved can only be described as exceptional with flowers, veg and tree planting on an impressive scale.

The South West in Bloom in partnership with Kay Clark and the RHS family intend to recognise your contributions and we will be awarding medals and certificates in recognition of the response bloom groups have had to Covid 19.

In addition South West in Bloom will also be awarding certificates based upon either your submissions or evidence based upon facebook or our team of judges observations seen whilst out and about in the region. (NOT ATTENDED JUDGING). No formal entry, or entry fee will be required. For example – I was driving through Paulton in July and observed some exceptional efforts of banners with knitted hanging baskets on them.

In addition in view of the exceptional circumstances this year I have asked our assessors and request that you yourselves draw our attention to any contributions of communities undertaking ‘bloom activity’ even though they have not entered in recent years or ever.



For example a long established entry Malmesbury, has not entered for a few years, but has made some stunning efforts in 2020. So please submit your efforts however small so as to enable us to distribute awards in recognition of your outstanding efforts.

You can send in your video's slide shows or just photos in to us. Video's can be sent Free by using the "WeTransfer" web site to our normal e mail address Southwestinbloom@aol.com.

R.H.S. Support

We continue to be supported by the RHS particularly Kay Clarke and no doubt you will have been contacted by Kay. It would be great if we could reciprocate in assisting promotion of the Society and the commitment to communities.

R.H.S. News

Out going President Sir Nicholas Bacon has now finished his term as President having led and overseen an exceptional period of capital investments at the new Garden at Bridgewater in Salford. Major investments at Hyde Hall, Wisley, Rosemoor and in a number of areas have also taken place.

I am sure you will all join me in extending our heartfelt thanks to Sir Nicholas for his work and support to Bloom.



New President

Keith Weed now takes over as RHS President. Keith has an International reputation in marketing with Unilever and has also now joined the board at Sainsburys.

Ruth Evans former head of Fundraising, Communities and Education has retired from the RHS and her role has been added to the brief of Dr Tim Upson (a Whitchurch, Bristol boy) who is Head of Horticulture in the RHS.

Hopefully this provides an opportunity to expand wider across RHS Horticulture and promote our industry. I do feel that the importance of community horticulture is seldom recognised by Government, DEFRA and MP's.

Anyone who has really looked at the situation during the pandemic cannot fail to recognise the value of growing plants. The effect of plants, green space and the environment on the lives of people in Lockdown and the social health and economic impact of gardening.

Localising and food production in our region may be one of the reasons we in the South West to date have not suffered the effects of Covid 19 unlike many other areas of the UK. Lets keep it up!

To summarise then, Thank you, for all those wonderful things you have done and will continue to do .

Look at the wonderful work of everyone on Facebook. You will see that community gardening is not only a solution to many a problem:-

It can feed our bodies

It can inspire us (particular children and the very old)

It can keep us healthy in body, mind and spirit.

Its time that Government recognised that all involved make the country a better place and the often maligned hanging baskets still have a role.

Stay safe and keep up your inspirational work.

Jon Wheatley

Chairman



Radstock

Hosta sieboldiana

Jasmine beesianum



Here are photos of a trial bed at the Sustainable Plant Project in Paignton taken early August. The bed was trimmed back in December to reduce windrock and then cut back again in early April. Apart from that nothing has been done to it.



Pictures of the annual flower mix that was planted around in Torquay by the council (Tor2) with spectacular results as can be seen here in the Italian Gardens.

RHS South West in Bloom
2020 Schools Painting Competition
“ Climate Change and Me “
The results will be shown in our Autumn Newsletter

Sidmouth in Bloom (SIB)

Sidmouth in Bloom has continued its work throughout the town since last September, ordering plants, sowing seed and designing the gardens it tends. SIB designed and ordered plants for our 3D features late in 2019. SIB's own planting was commenced early in February therefore, despite the pandemic lockdown and the ban from working in the parks for a couple of months, SIB was able to plant up in the town's Triangle its famous 3-D marine figures, our Rhynchosaurus and a raised bed display.



These 3D displays were able to be completed under Covid rules as SIB has a polytunnel in a field with lockable access limited to SIB only. The Town Council provided us with free face masks for use in public areas. The structures were well spaced outside the 2m distance and work could continue in volunteers own time. Under an exchange programme set up in 2019 Sidmouth's Elmer the elephant went to Regent's Park with its SIB planting scheme and the Royal Parks sent Tom the gardener to visit Sidmouth. This was arranged before lockdown but Tom, due to his size, could only be planted up in situ in late June. This year we re-introduced an old Town favourite "Fred the Peacock". His body was planted up in the polytunnel, but the original bedding for his tail display was to be plants to be supplied by EDDC

Streetscene. These were cancelled due to lockdown but SIB managed to supply enough plants. Alan Fowler from EDDC Streetscene kept us positive to keep going on with our work. A boat was installed at our request in the Triangle and that too got planted up using shade-loving plants as it is under trees.



For our work in public areas we were able to maintain social distancing by using ‘Health and Safety Tape’ and were able later to form a volunteer ‘pod’. Sidmouth Town Council asked us to help with an NHS tribute, so we painted an eight-foot diameter rainbow and used some perennials – grasses, chlorophytum and primulas to plant around it on the raised bed in the Triangle. This rainbow has since been relocated in a prominent position between the bus station shelters as we had in 2019 been commissioned to do a ‘25 years of Fairtrade’ theme on this site which is now in place.



The Town’s Sensory Garden continued to be improved with 3 new large raised beds installed. The Connaught Gardens “Edwardian” sunken beds for which we have been responsible for many years were planted, complete with their eight baskets, and surrounded with EDDC wild flower beds. Unfortunately, this area has been the only one in the Gardens with bedding plants. Our volun-

teers are pleased with the result and watering and weeding is carried out from 6 to 8 am to avoid park visitors. Our usual Town baskets, troughs and displays have all gone ahead as we decided not to cancel any of our orders. A lot of plants were raised from seed in a heated greenhouse for growing on in the polytunnel. Some areas in Blackmore Gardens were improved later than normal, but Anne’s Garden with its new cottage garden make-over is now looking great. The displays that normally were planted up by children were



carried out by SIB volunteers. We have remained positive as we, like other groups, depend totally on funding and sponsorship. We had some planned emergency carry over funds to cover our work in 2020 and have used major funding earmarked for 2020 RHS campaigns. We have not pushed residents or businesses for sponsorships due to lockdown issues. We are looking forward to 2021 and

trust that our work, despite difficulties, has continued to make Sidmouth look great for all people and contributes to their wellbeing.

President's Message

Along with Jon and Terry I add my good wishes and hope you are keeping safe and well. No one back in March would have predicted the enormous impact on all of our lives and economy due to Covid 19 Along with many of you I expect classed as in the vulnerable group, with a suppressed immune system, spending time in lockdown.

Fortunate in having a garden, like so many people it has been my saviour, with good weather, a chance to catch up on those jobs you tend to put off.



My Garden in the Spring



A bridge over my Wildlife Pond

For many of you times have been difficult with social distancing and many other regulations to deal with. But as always you rallied around with stories to me of groups out grass cutting on roundabouts, putting out hanging baskets and increased litter picks. This has been due in many cases to the reduced services our local Councils have been able to perform. Staff on furlough, only essential grass cutting, no bedding plants being grown or purchased, others delivering supplies to food banks etc.



With lockdown on the only seeds I had in the greenhouse was some blue cornflower and orange Calendula. I sowed these and planted them in my front border.

They worked out well and passers by commented that they really liked the combination

In Taunton they have produced the usual wide range of bedding plants for themselves and other authorities. This has lifted the spirits of many people since lockdown measures have been relaxed slightly in being able to go into our Parks and Gardens to see colourful displays, so well done to the gardeners.

I had some colourful displays in my own garden to help ease the effects of lockdown and the safety of staying at home.



Like many others the lockdown encouraged the growing of fruit and vegetables. This was my first attempt at growing the melon F1 Emir. Also some cucumber F1 Femspot, grown in my small greenhouse.

No doubt there are many similar examples out there so well done. The way we manage our groups and the Environment will change, lessons of good practise will emerge, and give us hope of a return to normality, and allow us all to do the things we love most in improving the quality of lives in our communities. Look after yourselves

Vic Verrier MBE
President RHS South West in Bloom

GLENDALE

Firstly we hope that everyone is bearing up during these extraordinary times and are healthy. Our priority over the last few months has been to support our teams and carry out our social duty in helping to stop the spread of Covid-19, protecting our communities and the NHS.



After a few days to re-organise our business and operations the majority of our teams we re-deployed onto essential work for our mainly local authority clients. Work streams were prioritised in supporting the most vulnerable in our communities as well as essential services. We had teams re-deployed onto refuse collection to support the huge increase in waste being generated with the majority of people working from home. We've supported meals on wheels deliveries and the military in the

delivery of food parcels to those shielding and unable to leave their homes. This coupled with the impact of our own staff self-isolating or shielding meant that for a few weeks, at least the horticulture took a back seat.

As restrictions allowed, parks were once again raised in the public eye with thousands more people using parks for exercise, fresh air and to improve mental health. Again our teams flexed with the needs of our communities to support increased litter collections, disinfection of play equipment and increased toilet cleaning etc. The public support has been fantastic, as were the volunteers and in bloomers who helped across our contracts to support maintenance tasks being missed. It is true that out of adversity comes strength and we have witnessed this across our communities within our parks and open spaces as well as in the social support we have extended to our neighbours and those in need.

We were determined to get our annual bedding displays in, this summer to offer some colour to the public using our parks and the Glendale Horticulture teams worked wonders in supporting us with sourcing plants and deliveries. Our teams at Torbay managed to complete a small token of gratitude to the NHS at the famous gateway to the English Riviera.



Plans are already in place to bounce back in 2021, with bedding designs being worked up and orders being raised with our Glendale Horticulture nurseries. In the meantime our teams will continue to support parks and open spaces across the southwest over the winter and throughout whatever comes next.

Glendale

Please stay safe and healthy and we'll see you all again in 2021.



The sensory garden in West Croft School, Bideford part of the garden where Glendale donated flowers, fruit and vegetables and helped the pupils with the planting. It was designed on drawings provided by the school children.

We've been 'cracking on' with bloom in Kingsbridge.

In June we were delighted to have been awarded the Queens Award for Volunteer Service in the Queens Birthday Honours which is an MBE for our group in recognition for the outstanding contribution to the community. It's also great that 'bloom' in the South West region has been duly recognised.



Despite the Covid 19 virus around us, the power of horticulture in our lives has been truly demonstrated this year. After the lockdown, the team were absolutely delighted to be back at work maintaining our displays again in safety, working to our social distancing guidelines.

The perennial planting throughout the town has really been spectacular with minimum maintenance

required which has allowed us to catch up as well as topping up and under planting our displays with our own grown plants.



Members have also been supporting the community with making face masks and grocery deliveries which has been very well received.



As with many towns, cities and villages we have unfortunately lost 3 shop businesses in our high street at this difficult time but have managed to put a good bloom display in one and a local artist has created attractive floral window art work in the others to help keep the town attractive.



Plans are already in place for some very special displays in 2021.
Graham Price
Chairman KIB

Bleadon in Bloom

Bleadon was able to continue to Bloom in 2020 even through the Covid Lock-down period. Our innovative “Tub Parent” scheme means that each tub or planting scheme is looked after by one household in the village. Each of the households were given plants and they went out and planted their specific area. A core team worked within social distancing regulations to take the plants out safely and to plant up the bigger areas.



We had teams working on the post office area which is next to the shop area and neither team even met. We all stayed in touch using Whatsapp and this allowed us to organise how to plant and what we were aiming to do.

The scheme was going to be about the Eternal Olympic Flame in the torch and we had spent time with growers and garden centres picking yellow, orange and red flowers to make up the scheme.

However, when the pandemic hit us many of our suppliers were unable to help. We were so lucky to be working with WestCroft Garden Centre in Berrow who stepped in valiantly and helped us add colour. Design leaders, Val Hart, Rose Benjamin, and Libby Boucher immediately changed each planting plan and we took on a new scheme “The NHS Rainbow”.

Dave Sharman and Kirsten Hemingway continued with the plans for a new cross planter at the church for the 75th anniversary celebrations and they achieved this by leaving the right amount of time between their visits. “It was a well-co-ordinated team effort” said Kirsten Hemingway, the organiser of Bleadon in Bloom. The tubs actually had two burst of colour this year as we planted bulbs for the 75th anniversary as well and they came up and looked beautiful just in time.

Bruce Poole, Parish Clerk agreed, *“The innovative tub parent scheme saved our plans this year, we are lucky to have such a committed team of Bloomers, who really care about the look of our village, they even managed to extend the scheme and installed a new tractor tyre planter in a new part of the village. The Parish Council sends thanks to each of the people who took the time to plant their area or donate items to put plants in, the village looks lovely.”*

Our plant mix was:



Asters for Bees

Ten Week stocks for early flowers and perfume

Nicotiana for height and fragrance
Petunias for large flowers, ranging from pastels to strong blues.

Lobelia for trailing colour in sun or partial shade

Cineraria for longevity, good height and contrast with bold colours

Marigolds for long-flowering, bright blooms. Good for pollinators

Geraniums for strong visual impact and drought tolerance

Canna Lilies for bold foliage and vibrant colours

Salvias for long lasting colour, heat tolerance

We had 45 tubs this year in the village, and we calculated that we could add around 5 displays to brighten up areas and join the theme together across the whole Parish.



Our Bleadon acting together group has been working on maintaining our local rhynes and set up an initiative to help the community to understand the importance of our Water Voles, protect this endangered species from predators.



To help our village wildlife we decided to add some owl boxes in the village as we had not been hearing so many of them and felt that there was a lack of spaces for owls to nest in the parish.

With the wood donated, a local carpenter, made five boxes for the village, two little owl boxes, two tawny owl boxes and a Barn Owl box .

[Can we help you meet the challenges of summer 2020?](#)

Patience Atkinson-Gregory of Amberol anticipates some different challenges for Britain in Bloom groups during the summer and autumn seasons in 2020.

With businesses, public places and the leisure industry slowly opening up, eager In Bloomers are getting out and about again. And what a positive difference it makes to our high streets, parks and open spaces.



However, many of you are facing the double challenge of keeping plants and flowers blooming during summer 2020 alongside the demands of social distancing. And who knows what the unpredictable British weather will throw at us this year after one of the driest spring times on record?

At Amberol we believe very firmly in the importance of the work that In Bloomers do: green spaces, flowers and gardening are all proven to have significant mental and physical health benefits, both for those involved in the planting and those who observe the amazing results of your hard work.

In fact, the value of gardening has been recognised by the NHS and is part of their [social prescribing programme](#), designed to raise awareness around the benefits of integrating within communities.

Britain needs In Bloom now more than ever

In the current crisis, we all need and appreciate public places and spaces more than ever, particularly those who don't have access to their own outdoor space. With everyone going through difficult times, seeing plants and flowers in bloom when out and about is such a welcome mood-booster.

That's why we enjoy supporting the Britain in Bloom regions. And this summer in particular, there are ways that we can help.

Because they are self-watering, Amberol's planters offer a way making it easier to observe social distancing by reducing the need for watering trips to once or twice a week, even in hot, dry spells. Because each planter has a water reservoir under the soil, the water doesn't evaporate, meaning that plants can access water as needed, conserving water and ensuring optimal growth.

We are increasingly being contacted by organisations looking to use different ranges of our floor standing planters to create walkways and funnelling in areas with high footfall as an alternative to traditional fencing. These floral barriers certainly make an effective and attractive alternative to bollards and railings. Parade, Promenade and Oval planters have proved particularly popular choices.



Whether you use our products or not, you may find some inspiration in our newly published [‘Inspired Plant Ups’](#) guide. Free to download on our website, the booklet contains examples of different displays planted up by In Bloom groups across Britain as well as displays from Belgium.

There are some great examples and colourful photos of stunning displays. So why not take a look and see if it gets your creativity flowing?

And finally, Britain in Bloom is all about community; getting to know new people, supporting each other and sharing ideas. That’s why we have set up our [Buzz in Bloom Facebook group](#). It’s a members-only site where people can exchange advice, tips and news. It’s a useful way of keeping in touch with like-minded people who share a passion for enhancing their environment and their community. Just search for Buzz in Bloom on Facebook or connect via our website.



And of course, we are always happy to offer advice and support where we can, so if you have any questions about how we can help during these difficult times, please get in touch [by emailing sales@amberol.co.uk](mailto:sales@amberol.co.uk),

calling 01773 830 930
or visiting us at
www.amberol.co.uk



Melksham in Bloom

We have seen the Waitrose Upcycled Garden entering our IYN scheme for a number of years with great success. Jo Bayliss the creator of the garden has also won many local prizes.

Jo said “*My inspiration for the 2020 Rainbow garden came from seeing all of the Rainbows displayed during lockdown thanking the NHS and Keyworkers for all their hard work during the COVID 19 Pandemic*”.

This had extra importance as Jo’s eldest daughter was working in a COVID 19 assessment ward and her youngest daughter working with her in Waitrose and partners.



Planting the garden with brightly coloured blooms in the colour of the rainbow and creating rainbows from upcycled items has generated many positive comments. They often say the garden has brightened their days while on their daily walk and made them smile.

There has been many visitors of all ages stop and count the number of rainbows and see if Jo has managed to sneak in another rainbow.

Jo has found creating the garden a joy in these challenging times.

Exmouth in Bloom

Exmouth was chosen to represent the South West in the National Britain in Bloom competition in 2020. The Bloom group requested of East Devon District Council if they could plant a showcase bed opposite the Ocean. Permission was granted and the bloom group chose to plant the bed as a Union Jack Flag in tribute to 75 years since VE and VJ days, plus supporting the British Olympic team .

Work started in January with Graham Bell from the team drawing up a working plan and the group discussed types of plants and numbers. The cancelling of the 2020 Britain in Bloom competition and the postponement on the Olympics because of COVID 19 came as a blow to the team and their plans for 2020. However as some restrictions were released and it became possible to comply with the COVID 19 conditions the Bloom group decided they could still go ahead and plant the Union Flag. The Outstanding result can be seen. Well done Exmouth in Bloom.



Royal Horticultural Society

Celebrating Bloom and IYN Groups in 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought challenge, hardship and tragedy to many people this year. However, in the face of adversity, many have also demonstrated courage, creativity, ingenuity and an amazing sense of community. The RHS and South West in Bloom want to recognise and celebrate the amazing things that Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) groups have been doing to help the wider community through this pandemic.

In order to prioritise people's health and wellbeing, the Britain in Bloom UK Finals, IYN, and most of the regional Bloom competitions were cancelled this year. At the outset most community gardening activity was also halted or severely restricted, although some volunteers have managed to carry out activities in a socially distanced and innovative virtual ways.

We asked groups to tell us what they have or have not been able to do. Some have used their skills and networks to inspire, motivate or support their local communities through the pandemic. Others may have not been able to carry out any physical activities, but their communities have still benefited from the strong networks that had been built up over many years through Bloom & IYN.

The RHS and South West in Bloom will recognise the achievements of each group with a certificate this year, which will be sent direct to groups in September. Every group will be recognised even if they have



not been able to carry out any activity in 2020. The brilliant stories that groups have told us will be used to inspire others through this challenging time. For any enquiries regarding the 2020 certificate scheme Please contact communities@rhs.org.uk

RHS Rosemoor - Now open Please pre book.

Newquay

Newquay was very quiet during lockdown as most of our 6 strong team were either working, looking after family, volunteering to help town residents or themselves, sheltering. The team were in contact with each other to discuss new projects and on how to continue with Newquay's Annual Garden Competition. (Which, I must say has been a success with most entries being new this year!)

As restrictions lessened, we made a concerted effort in the town's rose garden, which was seriously overgrown. Social distancing was easy when you have your own rose bed to work in. It also raised our profile massively, as people started exercising around the park and noticed the work we had done. We now have a team of 14 volunteers. Result!!

A project we had discussed for the town was 'rewilding' so the best person I knew to contact was Richard Budge in Truro. We had a few conversations about the how's and where's and during one of our phone calls, I mentioned to Richard that we had just been informed by the Town Council that there were to be NO hanging baskets as they hadn't been sourced before lockdown. I'm sure I don't need me to elucidate on any of the thoughts and comments from the Bloom team so I won't. (but they were many) Richard casually added 'Give me a few days and I'll see what I can do' A few days later he called me to tell me that he had spoken to Liam Shoesmith and they could let Newquay borrow nearly 50 hanging baskets, all planted up!! All Newquay has to do was to arrange collection.



Needless to say, they were very gratefully received by the town's people of Newquay and particularly by the Town council and BID. They are now adorning our town and the visitors are none the wiser as to how we got them.

This is what bloom is about. This was about people talking to each other and helping each other. The competition is a lovely 'extra' but the main benefit of bloom is being able to make a difference to other people, helping, of community involvement. Community participation has to be as important as looking after the environment. Next time I see Richard and Liam I will be giving them a huge virtual hug, with a big thank you from Newquay. I'm so proud to be part of an organisation that just wants to please with only a thank you in return .

Kingskerswell Action Group

When I was looking for some articles for this summer Newsletter, judge Richard Taylor suggested the Kingskerswell action Group who were due to be a new entry in South West in Bloom in 2020. On contacting Roger Jones, the main contact, he was on holiday at Burham on Sea, not far away from Hutton, so we agreed to meet at my house, and maintaining social distancing we discussed their action group.

We were all disappointed when the Bloom competitions were cancelled this year, but Kingskerswell who were all excited at the prospect of their first year in Bloom, were hit that bit harder.

The group was formed several years ago, when residents started by Litter picking, generally tidying the areas and clearing some of the roads. When the St Austell bypass was opened, this made a major change to the village as the traffic to Torquay no longer passed through the village. The group, which has about 50 active members, then got a thirst for doing more to improve the area, especially along what had been the main road to Torquay. The first year they planted 4,000 daffodil bulbs, increasing to 18,000 in the second year. This quickly developed into creating 20 beds, mainly with shrubs, along the roadside, all of these being sponsored. Six more beds are to be created during this year.



This is not the extent of the work of the group, where 18 months ago they moved into clearing, planting new shrubs and maintaining the car park in the centre of the village. There was a high profile area in the village, owned by Devon County Council, where they could only cut infrequently and was tending to be waste ground. This area was generally used by dog walkers and had steep and dangerous entrances.

This has now become Coles lane Gardens, where with the introduction of new paths and a series of features had developed into a real asset for the village.



They have now installed a number of small gardens, it started with the fairy garden, then the noam garden , scarecrows and at present they are developing a pet garden.



Rotary clubs around the UK have a scheme of planting purple crocus for the [purple4polio](#) campaign and Newton Abbot and Torquay branches have each given Kingskerswell action group 8,000 bulbs to be planted this autumn, ensuring that the Government guidelines for COVID 19 are followed. The group now looks forward to taking part in 2021 SW in Bloom..



SOUTH WEST

Glendale

**Terry Porter
Acting Temporary Secretary,
15a Moorcroft Road
Hutton
Weston super Mare
BS24 9RW**

We are still in very challenging and uncertain times with government responses to COVID 19 almost changing daily.

At present it is difficult to foresee what 2021 will bring for Bloom, but I hope that by November/December we will be in a better position to plan a way forward.

Many of you entered for 2020 and it is my intention unless anyone wants to change to role those entries forward to 2021. I also have all the ticket bookings for the 2020 Seminar, and assuming we can hold it in March next year I will be sending new tickets for 2021

I hope that many of you will be sending in videos or photos of your activities while meeting the challenges of COVID 19. It is intended to feature some of these on our web site or in our Autumn Newsletter.

You can send in your videos, slide shows or photos in to us. Video's can be sent Free by using the "WeTransfer" web site to our normal e mail address Southwestinbloom@aol.com.

Please send photos to the same e mail address.

Important Dates for 2020/21

Spring Seminar, Beer Provisionally March 18th 2021

Presentation. Winter Gardens Pavillion, WSM 7th October 2021

Our South West in Bloom Facebook Page is also a great way for groups to showcase the work they have been doing- if your group has a facebook page, we would love for you to join ours.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/South-West-In-Bloom/193263914018665>

Web Site www.southwestinbloom.org.uk