



RHS IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

RHS It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) is a scheme for volunteer-led community gardening groups which are focused on cleaning up and greening up their local area. It provides groups with the chance to get involved in the wider RHS Britain in Bloom initiative. There is no charge to participate.

How does it work?

The wonderful thing about It's Your Neighbourhood is that no two projects are the same - each group chooses its activity based on the needs of the local community. Participants are asked to carry out their projects with a focus on the three core IYN pillars:

- Community Participation
- Environmental Responsibility
- Gardening Achievement

Those taking part get free horticultural advice from the RHS as well as an annual visit from an It's Your Neighbourhood assessor. The visit gives useful feedback, helping groups to develop their activities year on year.

The annual visits are arranged by the [Regions and Nations in Bloom](#) and generally take place throughout June and July. Assessors evaluate what each group has achieved - and how much more could be done given the unique circumstances - using the IYN assessment form (saved in the [online hub](#)).

Unlike Britain in Bloom, IYN is not competitive and the assessors should be welcomed as mentors – not as judges - who can provide constructive feedback. Following the assessors' visit, certificates of achievement are presented to all participating groups at annual award ceremonies organised by the Regions/ Nations in Bloom (see left).

What do groups do?

This entirely depends on the group's needs, the local situation and what will benefit the environment and the community. A few examples of the kind of things RHS It's Your Neighbourhood groups have done in the past are:

- Restoring a churchyard
- Converting a derelict area into useable green space
- Improving and maintaining the green spaces on a residential estate
- Transforming a residential back alley into a community garden (often reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour in the process)
- Adopting a square, roundabout or an unloved patch of land and renovating it
- Encouraging residents to spruce up their front gardens, running window tub or hanging basket workshops or providing free plants to get people started
- Forming a friends group to fundraise and care for a local park or garden
- Uniting local retailers to transform a high street or shopping area
- Supporting a school garden or engaging pupils in planting projects in the wider community.

What are the benefits?

There are many benefits to participating in the campaign; the most frequently cited are:

- Cleaner and greener surroundings
- A stronger sense of community, developed through creating positive interaction between neighbours
- Safer environments
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- Increased local pride as people take ownership of the improvements made to the area
- Positive effects on the local economy, such as increased commercial enterprise and in some cases, tourism.
- More environmental awareness, whether through recycling schemes, energy conservation, reducing litter or improving/adding green spaces
- Greater cross-community contact, building and improving relationships with the local authority.

Who can get involved?

RHS 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:

- Hands on and involved in community gardening
- Benefiting the community
- Volunteer-led
- Sustainable over time
- Owned by the community with the community taking responsibility for the work.

Some examples of typical RHS It's Your Neighbourhood groups are:

- A residents' group/ association
- A Friends group connected to a local green space, park or garden
- A group of neighbours
- A gardening group in a hospital, residential home or school
- A youth club or scouts, brownies or girl guides group
- A community allotment group.

[Read case studies](#) about some of the groups taking part. The report [Britain in Bloom: transforming local communities \(2011\)](#) also highlights how groups benefit from taking part in the scheme.

“For the teenagers involved, it's been excellent. It's not often that they have the chance to make a splash of colour on their local environment.”

Mary Holligan, Queen Street IYN

What are the IYN awards?

In the RHS It's Your Neighbourhood campaign there are five levels of achievement:

Level	Description	Points
Level 1	Establishing	0-35
Level 2	Improving	36-52
Level 3	Developing	53-68
Level 4	Thriving	69-85
Level 5	Outstanding	86-100

Groups are visited annually and feedback is given using the IYN assessment form.

Groups who have done consistently well over time may be nominated to receive the RHS It's Your Neighbourhood National Certificate of Distinction.

Pupils from Grove Academy sow a wildflower meadow on a disused patch of land. The youngsters formed the Queen Street IYN group in Broughty Ferry, Dundee.



Who do we contact with questions?

Your first point of contact with questions should be your Region/ Nation (see below) Alternatively please contact RHS Community Horticulture: 020 7821 3022/ communities@rhs.org.uk

The 16 Regional/ National IYN coordinators:

[Anglia in Bloom](#)

[Beautiful Scotland](#)

[Cumbria in Bloom](#)

[East Midlands in Bloom](#)

[Floral Guernsey](#)

[Heart of England in Bloom](#)

[Jersey in Bloom](#)

[London in Bloom](#)

[Northumbria in Bloom](#)

[North West in Bloom](#)

[South & South East in Bloom](#)

[South West in Bloom](#)

[Thames & Chilterns in Bloom](#)

[Translink Ulster in Bloom](#)

[Wales in Bloom](#)

[Yorkshire in Bloom](#)

The Royal Horticultural Society is the UK's leading gardening charity, dedicated to advancing horticulture and promoting gardening.

Our community campaigns support thousands of groups in creating greener and more interconnected communities. For more information, please visit: rhs.org.uk/communities