



EAST MIDLANDS

EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM

GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES & ENTRANTS

If you are in the East Midlands Region, i.e. Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire or Rutland, you are eligible to participate in the campaign with East Midlands in Bloom (EMiB). An environmentally based competition for the whole of your district involving as much of the community as possible.

More information, all entry forms and guidelines can be downloaded from our website:
www.emib.org.uk

If you are a small group just taking the first steps to improving your local area please also read about the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' campaign which can also be accessed from our website
<https://emib.org.uk/its-your-neighbourhood/>

New Entrants can also request a free advisory visit to meet your community prior to entry from one of our Bloom Team so for more information, to express an interest or request a visit please contact the EMiB Secretary, Julie Walker, by phoning on 07925 565346 or sending an email to secretary@emib.org.uk

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INTRODUCTION

The Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) 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 and 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:

- A Horticultural Achievement**
- B Environmental Responsibility**
- C Community Participation.**

Participants are encouraged to promote these aspects throughout the year, culminating in the regional judging period which is always the first 2 weeks in July. The Judging is undertaken using a Standard Marking Sheets except for Urban communities and BIDS who have slightly modified marking sheets. This ensures consistency between entrants. The latest copies are available to download from our website.

This should encourage Communities to create lasting improvements to the local environment for the benefit of those that live, work and visit there – today and in the future. Communities can be involved for as long as they like.

Some of the benefits of Bloom Communities include :

- 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 and other such antisocial behaviour.
- 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.

ABOUT EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM (EMiB)

East Midlands in Bloom was established over 35 years ago.

It has a dedicated team of volunteers who are experienced in horticulture and working with communities.

They give their time voluntarily to provide support, advice and undertake judging.

Each year we have;

- In February, immediately following our AGM, there is a workshop/seminar, for anyone interested in learning more about the Bloom and sharing ideas.
- In September the Regional Presentation of Awards where representatives of all Bloom entrants are invited to receive their awards.
- There are twice-yearly emailed newsletters in December and May,
- Committee Meetings usually in June and November held on Zoom to discuss on any proposed changes to how EMiB is run.

Successful Bloom entrants may also be invited to represent EMiB in the UK Bloom National Finals.

HOW TO ENTER EMIB

- ❖ “in Bloom” is for your whole district so try and involve your community, councils & volunteers. For a local part of a community we would encourage you to look at an It’s your Neighbourhood entry. (see the front page)
- ❖ If you can also enter a Business Development Area (BID) or an Urban community (district within a City or Large Town)
- ❖ Simply complete and return an entry form on our website www.emib.org.uk at any time before the 31st March to be judged in July.
- ❖ In the table below is a list of Categories you can enter these are based on the electoral roll population sizes. You are allowed Judging Route Time and additional time for a 15 minute presentation and 15 minutes for Media/Publicity eg meet with the press for photos etc
- ❖ You will be contacted by a judge in April/May, to confirm a judging date in first two weeks of in July
- ❖ As an entrant you provide a judging route based on the time below, to show the best aspects of your entry.
- ❖ During the Presentation you can show a portfolio/diary of events and activities that take place during the year such as planting, community involvement, fundraising to improve your community.
- ❖ During August representatives of all “In Bloom” entries will be invited to attend the East Midlands in Bloom Presentation of Awards. This held annually in September at a venue in our region. This offers a chance to meet other entrants and celebrate your achievements.
- ❖ At the Bloom Awards, you will receive your marks and award certificates. Together with a report commending your efforts and highlighting some suggestions from the judges that you may (or may not!) wish to adopt to help improve your entry.
- ❖ Some entrants also receive Category Winners Trophies, Discretionary Awards and Floral Awards for displays seen by judges during the Judging.
- ❖ If you are still undecided whether to enter, remember you can contact us for a FREE advisory visit and your first time entry fee is free (except the BID category)

CATEGORIES AND JUDGING TIMES

Category	Population (Electoral Roll Number)	Judging Route Time	Judging Route Time + 15min Presentation + 15 min Media/Publicity Photos
Small Village	Up to 300	1 hour	1 hour 30min
Village	301 to 1,000	1 hour	1 hour 30min
Large Village	1,001 to 2,500	1 hour 30 minutes	2 hours
Small Town	2,501 to 6,000	2 hours	2 hours 30 min
Town	6,001 to 12,000	2 hours 30 minutes	3 hours
Large Town	12,001 to 35,000	3 hours	3 hours 30min
Small City	35,001 to 100,000	3 hours 30 minutes	4 hours
City	100,000 +	4 hours	4 Hours 30min
Urban Community	Up to 25,000	2 hours	2 Hours 30 min
Small Coastal Town	Up to 12,000	2 hours 30 minutes	3 Hours
Large Coastal Town	12,000 +	3 hours	3Hours 30min
Business Improvement District (BID)	N/A	Max 2 hours	2hours 30min

An urban community must be an identifiable community within a larger conurbation (an urban ‘village or town’). It has its own sense of identity and own local “in Bloom” group. It does not need to have its own Council, or be able to stand alone, but it will have its own identity.

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 recreational opportunities including some of the following: café or restaurant; shop; toilet; public transport; supervision; first aid. Coastal resorts are areas also have substantial visitor accommodation and tourism as an integral part of the local economy.

A Business Improvement District (BID) must be an officially recognized Business Improvement District. This is a defined area within which businesses pay an additional tax (or levy) in order to fund projects within the district's boundaries. BID entrants also have slightly different judging criteria so please contact us for further details.

FEES

Our entry fees are listed on our web site. (Remember for New Entrants in their first year it is free)

FLORAL AWARDS

There are 3 'Floral Award' which Bloom Groups may wish to nominate an entry. These are Frank Constable MBE Best Front Garden, Best Hotel /Pub Garden or Display and Best Retail/Commercial Premises. The entry form is on page two of the main entry form. Each Floral entry has an additional 15 minutes allocated for judging so please ensure any entries are notified at the time of the main application.

DISCRETIONARY AWARDS

There are several regional and national discretionary awards. Full details of these are on our website. These are nominated by judges; however, you may wish to point something out to your judge especially if it is something they may not see on the tour eg input from young children.

BLOOM AWARDS

Categories will be marked against the current marking criteria, copies are available on our website. There are three marking sheets Standard Entry, Urban Community and BIDS. Each Bloom Entry will receive one of the following awards.

Awards	Entry Total 100 maximum Marks	Section A - Horticulture 40 maximum Marks	Sections B and C, Environment and Community 30 maximum Marks each
GOLD (Outstanding)	100 ↔ 85	40 ↔ 34	30 ↔ 26
SILVER GILT (Very Good)	84 ↔ 75	33 ↔ 30	25 ↔ 23
SILVER (Good)	74 ↔ 60	29 ↔ 24	22 ↔ 18
BRONZE (Satisfactory)	59 ↔ 50	23 ↔ 20	17 ↔ 15
CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT (Fair)	Less than 49	Less than 19	Less than 14

No results will be released until after the Presentation of Awards and all the results will be available on our website following this date.

How you organize your entry is entirely up to you. However, with many collective years of experience we would like to share some ideas that may help your to achieve the best for your entry.

PREPARING FOR JUDGING & THE TOUR

After you have been contacted by a judge in April/May, and agreed a date and time for judging.

Please provide details where to meet with a postcode, nearest parking place for the judges vehicles and mobile contact telephone number(s) in case of any delays/ emergencies on the day. Ensure judges know in advance of any Floral Entries you may wish to include and whether they will be seen during the tour or separately.

Our judges are usually paired up but on occasion you may have a single judge.

- Look at the judging criteria and plan your route to ensure the judges see examples of each one.
- Repetition and concentration on any one section will not gain you extra marks no matter how good it is. Consider bringing groups together if they cover similar activities.
- Check the route out on the days before judging. Get a friend to go with you as a 'fresh pair of eyes'.
- Please make allowances for discussion with key people, and busy times of the day. Be realistic on just how much you want to include.
- Remember that everything seen on the tour is marked and once the time starts you cannot ask the judge to disregard a poor area or stop and start the allocated time.
- Please offer the judges comfort facilities on their arrival they may have driven some distance from home.
- Have a copy of the planned itinerary for the judges at the start together with who they will meet and their role. (Ensure names are spelt correctly as judges often refer to people in the report and want names to be correct)
- If possible provide a map of the whole district with the route marked on.
- Introduce the judges to everyone at each site – Badges will help remember all the names.
- In Hot or Wet weather - have a drink and umbrellas available for judges.
- We would recommend only two people accompany the judges on the tour ~ it is surprising how long it takes to get in and out of a vehicle!
- Make sure that judges can clearly see out of the windows and can hear any commentary.
- Vintage vehicles/horse and cart/barges/miniature trains and more have been used, whilst great fun, are they practical on all occasions?
- Ideally have a dedicated driver responsible for the vehicle.
- At the presentation consider the use of a short video or slide show; say 5/6 minutes long at the start of the visit, whilst having coffee – this can show winter work or pre-visit activities.
- 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.
- 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.
- Do not overload the judges with lots of leaflets and posters. They will often take photos of storyboards etc so they can refer to them when assessing your final mark
- 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.

PORTFOLIO / DIARY

Our Judges visit during the first two weeks of July so we only see a small fraction of what has been achieved during the last 12 months. Whilst not essential, a portfolio/diary is an ideal way to illustrate this. It provides an aide to the Judges refreshing their memories of their visit and on occasion it contains nuggets of information you forgot to mention.

This important record can also be distributed to show your supporters, members of your community, funders and sponsors your achievements.

This can help form part of your presentation and can be given to the Judge in a paper or (emailed) electronic version. It may be shared before judging if you wish.

You may wish to include:

- Introduction and your committee
- Anything that hasn't already been covered during your judging route or you have no available time to visit.
- You can include photographic records of all the things that have been done during the year together with any relevant scanned copies of original documents.
- Concentrate on at least one item from each section, i.e. Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility, and Community Participation.
- Local competitions Open Gardens, Fundraising
- Examples of initiatives to combat litter and graffiti etc.
- Evidence of encouraging involvement of the community such as Planting, Litter removal, Refurbishing Features (With supporting Before, During and After Photos)
- New Projects and Initiatives
- Your Environmental approach of the competition conservation biodiversity recycling and managing resources. (Water, Composting and Energy)
- Autumn Winter and Spring Displays
- How you promote the Bloom social media, meetings, website..
- Use selected press cuttings to show what publicity has been achieved.
- Future Plans, Funding, Goods in kind and Grants
- List of Supporters, Partner Organisations and Sponsors.

A few criteria on what we ask for:

- ✓ Not be larger than A4. A maximum of 20 pages. If you are printing this could be double-sided and so no more than 10 physical pieces of paper
- ✓ You can create the portfolio in any appropriate software eg Microsoft Word or PowerPoint, Apple Notes etc but ensure any electronic copies are in a commonly acceptable format eg pdf
- ✓ The preferred font size is 12 point.
- ✓ Keep it simple, clear, and concise.
- ✓ Apart from the 'before' photo, all photos should be less than 2 years old and label each photo.
- ✓ Ensure you have permission for use of photos that clearly identify an individual especially with children or vulnerable adults.
- ✓ The portfolio doesn't have to be professionally designed; there are **no** marks for portfolio presentation. However, the content should demonstrate your community's efforts to create improvements to your local environment.

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

Any surplus portfolios collected by our Judges are distributed to other groups at our Awards Presentation and this helps inspire new entrants.

YOUR PRESENTATION

You have 15 minutes allocated in addition to your judging time to provide the Judges with a presentation.

It is usually helpful to undertake this at the start to set the scene but can take place during the judging.

The Mayor or civic dignitary may like to give a short welcome (good photo opportunity!)

You can showcase areas and projects the Judges may see during their visit with those before, during and after photos.

You could include a project which may not be able to be visited due to time or distance. The items listed in the Portfolio/ Diary Section should provide you with ideas.

You could highlight particular sections of the Portfolio (but little is achieved if you go through it page by page), have Display or Story Boards, show physical items such as posters or leaflets or use some of the digital photographs to give a presentation on a laptop, monitor or screen.

If the presentation differs to the portfolio please supply either an electronic copy or some extra paper copies of your notes.

Some groups have also produced a short video and have them available Free on Social Media and Video Sites. Ensure appropriate links are provided for judges.

Like the tour, plan the timing of this presentation. If someone talks for too long it can mean the whole tour is running late!

MEDIA AND PUBLICITY

You have 15 minutes allocated in addition to your judging time for Press & Publicity.

Publicity is about how you promote your campaign and potentially get others involved.

Frequently at the end of the tour, this traditionally would have been the time to introduce the local press radio or newspaper. These days these organisations may not have the presence to join you in person so take the opportunity to showcase all the activities you take to share your work with the wider public. This may be social media, website, leaflets etc

FUNDING & SPONSORSHIP

Volunteers are free, everything else costs! Regrettably most work will involve some sort of cost so fundraising is an important part of what you do.

Here are a few thoughts and ideas

- Sponsorship is often the first thought, where a business simply gives you money because they support your cause. Regrettably current financial constraints make this less likely so ask yourself, 'What does the sponsor get for their money?' How can my offer encourage more support?
- Display their name on promotional material, including the portfolio.
- Offer sponsorship of a floral display or a section of a competition. This is especially appropriate if it aligns to their business.
- Materials or equipment can be sponsorship in kind especially on a local project that gains wide publicity.
- There may be a local lottery for 'good causes'. Your council could be a good place to start for guidance
- Any printing could be supported by a printer with their name on
- Transport for the judging tour, consider magnetic signs that can go on the vehicle showing the support.

- Look out for local charities that may give grants. Established entrants can apply for a grant from EMiB

- Traditional tombola's, book stalls and plant sales still have a place, especially if part of a part of a promotional stall
- Involve your Mayor or civic dignitary or local councillor, they may be able to help locate sources of funding. This can also help with publicity.

Whatever support you get don't forget to mention your supporters at every opportunity

SOME WINNING TIPS

- ✓ Why not arrange to visit another Bloom entry near you. They can show you what they have achieved and can be an excellent source of ideas. All the entrants have their results and reports on our website and many have their own web pages and social media sites.
- ✓ Take photographs as soon as you decide to enter. Record your achievements: With Before, During and After pictures to show progress with litter picks, pond clearance and community involvement
- ✓ Co-operation between the local authorities, public bodies, private business groups and individuals is of utmost importance in this competition. Each organisation has the ability to allocate resources, land, labour and finance to make an impact on your community. By working together joint aims can be achieved and a more pleasant environment to live. Our Judges will allocate marks for activities by each of these groups so it is important that they all contribute.
- ✓ You may decide to hold regular meetings to discuss progress, future ideas and how you could develop projects. Many areas already have a Neighbourhood Forum.
- ✓ If it can be seen on the judges' tour it is considered as part of the entry so don't forget side streets. It is not just flowers that the judges are looking at; the absence of litter, weeds in gutters, dog fouling and graffiti etc is a necessity.
- ✓ The condition of park benches, notice boards, fences, signs litterbins etc., should be good. They should be well maintained and the areas around them weed free.
- ✓ Why not get other local social services involved, brightening up old people's homes, day centres and hospitals?
- ✓ 1st appearance counts, the entrance to your locality can set an impression of your area so don't forget entrance signs and roads. If you have them, car parks, railway stations, bus stations and stops are important first port of call for visitors.
- ✓ You could run competitions or provide incentives for local businesses, hotels, shops and offices? As well as encouraging them to brighten up their premises, some may even sponsor flower displays!
- ✓ Get the support of your local press - as well as publicising your efforts, they can help maintain enthusiasm and gain more supporters.
- ✓ 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.

ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Information can be found on our [East Midlands in Bloom \(emib.org.uk\)](http://emib.org.uk)

The Royal Horticultural Society webpages has further information and advice about the Bloom, It offers lots of practical information, about gardening, conservation and the environment. There are also case studies from other groups and communities. There is also a Communities newsletter

[Britain in Bloom / RHS Gardening](#)

If you would like to receive additional information in the post or via e-mail please email britaininbloom@rhs.org.uk or Communities@rhs.org.uk T el: 0207 821 3651

Full details of the bloom campaign and case studies from previous participants are available on the RHS website on www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom

Everyone can enter this campaign!

East Midlands in Bloom is an inclusive campaign and any community – no matter how small or large – can get involved. If you are unsure please contact us.