



East Midlands in Bloom RHS IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD campaign

RHS It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) 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 two people) 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 a written report, 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” sponsored by **EMiB**.

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
- The opportunity to purchase affordable insurance cover

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 regional organisers, East Midlands in Bloom.

Why enter?

Potential benefits include:

- **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 our secretary Julie Walker 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

"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 **31st May**. Late submissions will be entered into the following year's campaign.

Assessments take place throughout June, July and August by prior appointment.

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.

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 Tel: 0207 821 3651

www.rhs.org.uk/communities

In all instances, please feel free to contact East Midlands in Bloom:

secretary@emib.org.uk