

RHS Britain in Bloom Information Pack

Welcome

Dear (INSERT name),

RHS Britain in Bloom Information Pack

Thank you for your request for information about the RHS Britain in Bloom campaign. I am pleased to enclose a copy of the information pack with basic information about the campaign and how to get involved, in addition to the latest copy of *Growing Communities* – the RHS community gardening magazine.

Your next step to get started should be to contact your local Region/Nation in Bloom committee – (INSERT name of region). (INSERT name of co-ordinator) is the Co-ordinator and may be contacted by e-mail on (INSERT e-mail of co-ordinator) or by telephone on (INSERT phone of co-ordinator).

If you have any general questions please do not hesitate to contact the RHS communities team by e-mail on communities@rhs.org.uk or by telephone on 020 7821 3651.

Best regards,



Stephanie Eynon
Community Horticulture Manager

What is *RHS Britain in Bloom*?

The Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom campaign is one of the largest horticultural campaigns in Europe, involving over one thousand communities across the United Kingdom each year. Participating communities create lasting improvements to their local environment for the benefit of those that live, work and visit there, today and in the future.

Who can get involved?

Everyone! *RHS Britain in Bloom* is an inclusive campaign and any community, no matter how small or large, can get involved. To enter *RHS Britain in Bloom* you need to enter your whole community, not just part of it, and you enter into the category that corresponds to your size based on electoral roll. In *RHS Britain in Bloom*, the only exception to having to enter the whole community is the Urban Communities category*. For example, you could enter Bristol in the appropriate category or you could enter Clifton Village (Bristol) as an Urban Community.

Communities first participate in their region/nation "in Bloom" and from there they can be nominated to participate in the UK Finals. So the place to start is with your region/nation.

*For smaller community groups there is the *RHS It's Your Neighbourhood* programme.

Why RHS Britain in Bloom?

RHS Britain in Bloom is a unique campaign that enables participating communities to work across different areas and address a number of issues. It is the only campaign which takes this more integrated approach to community improvement and which uses horticulture as its foundation. Participating communities are asked to focus their initiatives around *RHS Britain in Bloom's* three core pillars of:

Horticultural Achievement

Environmental Responsibility

Community Participation

This means “in Bloom” communities tackle everything from litter, graffiti and anti-social behaviour through to conservation, sustainability and improving horticultural standards, and that’s not to mention the positive impact on sense of place, community spirit and pride.

What are the benefits?

Communities that participate in *RHS Britain in Bloom* benefit in a variety of ways but the most common benefits 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 local people

Long term improvement for the environment by addressing issues such as sustainability, resource management, conservation, litter, graffiti etc.

Reduction in anti-social behaviour

Positive effect on the local economy such as increased commercial enterprise and increased tourism

Regeneration of run down and/or disadvantaged areas

How does the campaign work?

The campaign runs all year round, and communities can participate for as long as they like. Participants begin in *RHS Britain in Bloom* by taking part in their region/nation's campaign and work towards potentially being nominated into the *RHS Britain in Bloom* UK Finals. There are 18 regions/nations running "in Bloom" campaigns and they are:

Anglia in Bloom

Beautiful Scotland

Cumbria in Bloom

East Midlands in Bloom

Floral Guernsey

Heart of England in Bloom

Isle of Man in Bloom

Jersey in Bloom

London in Bloom

Northumbria in Bloom

North West in Bloom

South in Bloom

South East in Bloom

South West in Bloom

Thames & Chilterns in Bloom

Translink Ulster in Bloom

Wales in Bloom

Yorkshire in Bloom

Please find below an explanation of the various levels of participation in *RHS Britain in Bloom* and following this there is a schematic representation to further illustrate how the campaign works.

Local Participation

Most participating communities organise a range of local events, projects and activities that involve local people, the Town or Parish Council (or other local authority), businesses,

RHS Britain in Bloom Information Pack

community groups and volunteers. These activities may include group litter picks, bulb planting days and projects with local schools. In addition, local competitions (i.e. best front garden, best shop/pub frontage etc.) might be used to motivate people to participate.

Regional/National Participation

All of the events and activities for local participation will then form an integral part of a community's entry in their region/nation's "in Bloom" campaign. Communities enter "in Bloom" in the appropriate category based on their confirmed/verifiable electoral roll. Although many regions/nations will have some additional categories the main *RHS Britain in Bloom* categories are:

Category	Electoral Roll
Small Village	300 and under
Village	301 – 1,000
Large Village	1,001 – 2,500
Small Town	2,501 - 6,000
Town	6,001 - 12,000
Coastal (12k and below)population to be confirmed	12,000 and below
Large Town / Small City (12-35K)	12,001 - 35,000
Coastal (12k and above)population to be confirmed	12,001 and above
Large Town / Small City (35-100K)	35,001 - 100,000
City	100,001 - 200,000
Large City	200,001 and over
Urban Community	Under 12,000

While the regions/nations are not all administered in the same way, they do have similar structures in place to enable them to receive entries from the categories as listed in the table above. Once registered for your region/nation's campaign, you will receive all the particulars of participation from them but one of the standard elements of participation is a visit from "in Bloom" judges which normally happens in June/July. Another standard feature of the regional/national campaigns is an awards ceremony to present the results of the judging and these usually take place between August and October, as dates will vary from region to region.

UK Finals Participation

Each year the regions/nations are able to nominate successful entries to represent them in the *RHS Britain in Bloom* UK Finals the following year, alongside other communities from all across the UK. The *RHS Britain in Bloom* UK Finals is run by the Royal Horticultural Society.

RHS Britain in Bloom Information Pack

The *RHS Britain in Bloom* judging takes place in the first two weeks in August and the results are announced at a prestigious awards ceremony in September each year. The categories for the *RHS Britain in Bloom* UK Finals are as listed in the above table.

Champion of Champions

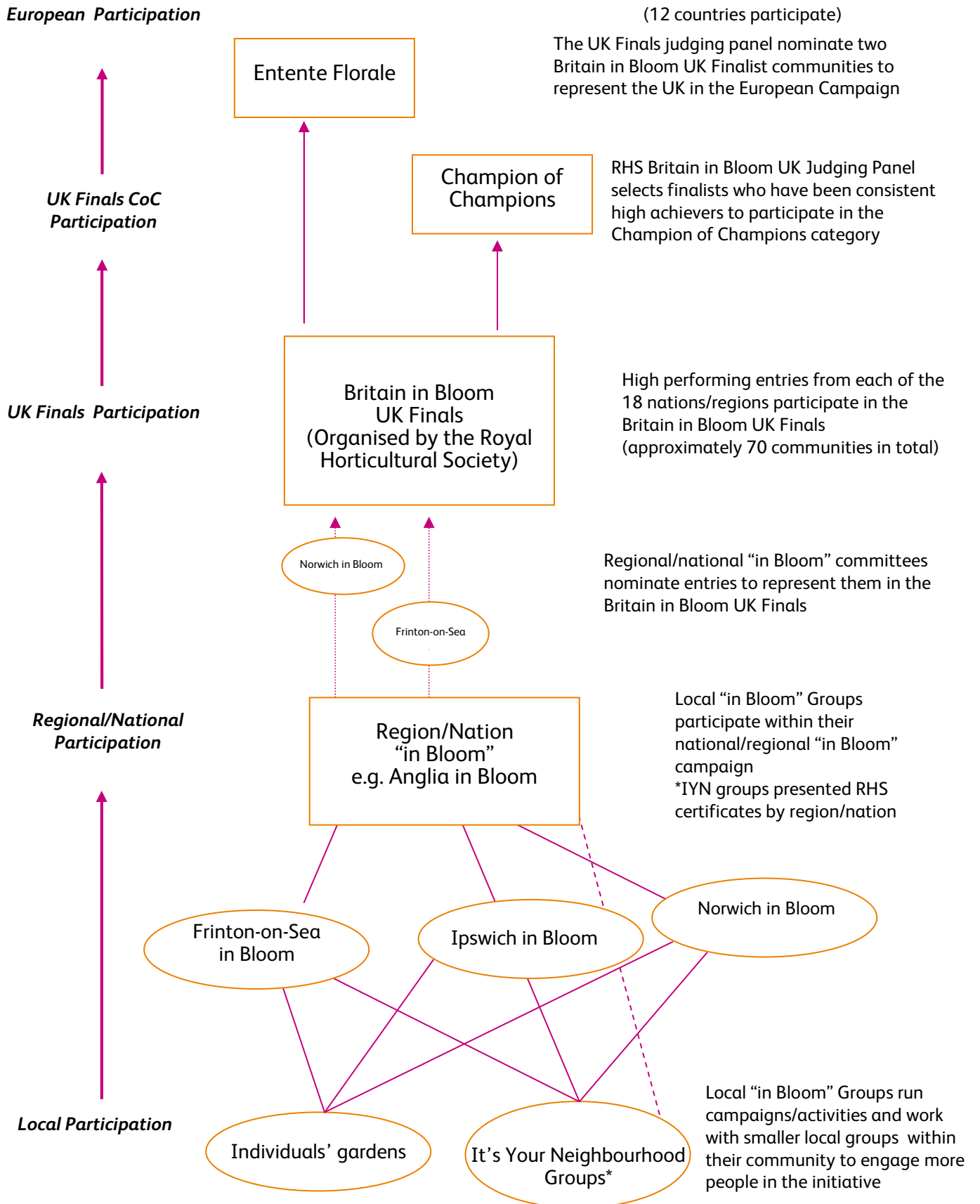
In addition to the categories listed above, UK Finalist entries that have consistently achieved a Gold Award may be invited by the UK Judging Panel to compete in the exceptional category, Champion of Champions, as part of the UK Finals.

European Participation

Each year two entries from the *RHS Britain in Bloom* UK Finals are invited by the *RHS Britain in Bloom* UK Judging Panel to represent the UK in Entente Florale Europe, the European horticultural campaign, alongside communities from 11 other European countries.

On the following page you will find a schematic representation of the campaign which may help to illustrate exactly how it works.

RHS Britain in Bloom Organisational Chart



What do *RHS Britain in Bloom* groups/communities do?

Participating communities are asked to focus their initiatives around *RHS Britain in Bloom*'s three core pillars of:

Horticultural Achievement

Environmental Responsibility

Community Participation

In this way "in Bloom" communities address a wide range of issues, including litter, graffiti and anti-social behaviour, through to conservation, sustainability and improving horticultural standards in their local area. The positive impact of these activities on sense of place, as well as community spirit and pride, should not be underestimated.

One of the greatest strengths of *RHS Britain in Bloom* is that there is local control of the campaign and each community will focus on relevant initiatives according to their own needs and objectives. This means that the types of projects local "in Bloom" campaigns are responsible for will vary tremendously but some examples of the things the local groups take responsibility for are:

Park cleanliness and community engagement projects

School/youth projects (i.e. school garden, environmental projects, wildlife garden, bug hotels, wildlife surveys, bird/bat boxes etc.)

Bulb and tree planting

Cleaning up (litter picks, cleaning/renewing street furniture and signage, anti-litter awareness campaigns, clearing fly-tipping/fly-posting sites, clearing derelict sites)

Greening up (regenerating unused areas into useable green space, introducing more green space/plants, caring for previously neglected green space)

Managing feature floral displays in the community

Creating wildflower meadows

Caring for conservation areas

Educating the community about environmental initiatives and issues

Introducing environmental initiatives (community recycling of green waste, reducing the use of natural resources, balancing seasonal and permanent planting, reintroducing native plants etc.)

This list is by no means exhaustive, it is merely to give you a flavour of the types of projects that local "in Bloom" groups may take on and what it doesn't mention is that the vast majority of these projects will be carried out with the help of volunteers from the community – after all community participation is one of the core pillars of *RHS Britain in Bloom*!

How do we get started?

Step 1 Form an action group or committee

This could just start with you, however the best results are achieved when an enthusiastic local action or “in Bloom” committee is formed to organise the local campaign. An action group/committee can encourage participation across a wide sector of the community, attract support and sponsorship, and keep an eye on standards and progress. When forming your action group/committee you should consider involving your local Town or Parish Councillors or relevant civil servants, volunteer organisations, local businesses, residents, schools and local gardening clubs.

Step 2 Put together an action plan.

This will help you decide what projects you want to do, how your initiatives can make a difference to the local environment and your community, and how you will go about implementing your plan and maintaining the projects/improvements.

Step 3 Let your local community know what is happening and ask them for support.

There are a number of ways to start the process of raising local awareness and support but this should be ongoing to maintain momentum as your local campaign grows and develops. Some things to consider, to get you started are:

Make a big announcement! Consider sending an announcement to your local paper, sending out a leaflet to all homes in the area, giving a talk to existing community or residents’ groups and to local schools, including some information in your place of worship or school newsletter, and putting up posters in your local shops, supermarkets, libraries, leisure and community centres, in places of worship and village halls and on other notice boards.

Seek the community’s input/opinions. Allowing people to have a voice in the things that affect them is a great way to get their support!

Ask local traders, pubs, hotels and other businesses to get involved.

Inform your Town/Parish council or other local authority. If they’re not already represented on your action group/committee, let your local authority know about your intentions and ask them how they might get involved.

This will also help to promote an understanding of everyone’s responsibilities for our environment and the plants and animals within it. Remember there are numerous ways that the local community can be encouraged and join in with your campaign.

Step 4 Register with your region/nation.

Once you have completed steps 1-3 you are ready register, so contact your regional/national co-ordinator for a registration form. Contact details are provided within this support pack.

Step 5 Develop a fundraising plan.

Once you have registered you will need to consider how you are going to fund all the projects you identified in step 2. There are a number of ways you can raise support for your local campaign including:

- Organising your own fundraising events, such as open garden days, raffles and car boot sales

- Securing sponsorship or benefits in kind from local businesses

- Applying for grants

- Approaching the local authority, etc.

A section on funding is provided later in this support pack.