



RHS Community Awards 2024 FAQ – Version 1, Updated 19 February 2024

This document aims to answer the most frequently asked questions and will be updated as required. Please contact the RHS Communities Team if you need additional information.

Background Information	
Q1.	Why is the RHS trialling new Community Awards in 2024?
Q1A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These awards have been developed to recognise a wide range of Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood groups who excel in a specific area. <p>They celebrate the work that groups are doing in the context of our changing world, around the most pressing issues, including biodiversity collapse, the increasing importance of a connection to nature for wellbeing and the changing climate.</p> <p>Through these awards, we will be able to identify examples of best practice, success, or innovation and tell their stories to inspire other people.</p>
Q2.	How can groups enter the new awards?
Q2A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nominations for the Community Awards programme are being organised by the individual Bloom Regions & Nations. • Groups cannot directly enter the awards, only the Bloom Regions & Nations and their assessors can decide which groups will be entered. • If a group believes it excels in one of the new categories, they should draw this to the attention of their Bloom or IYN assessor when they visit in the summer.
Q3.	Is there a limit on how many groups can participate?
Q3A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, each Bloom Region or Nation can only nominate one single group/entry into each of five categories. • A maximum of 85 entries will be considered overall.
Q4.	Do groups need to be registered with their Bloom Region & Nation to be eligible to participate?
Q4A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, groups need to be registered with their local Bloom Region & Nation and assessed for Bloom or IYN in order to be considered.
Q5.	Is there a cost to enter the competition?
Q5A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, groups will not have to pay a fee to enter the new awards.
Q6.	Can Britain in Bloom UK Finalists be considered for the new Community Awards?
Q6A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, any Bloom or It's Your Neighbourhood group, including Bloom UK Finalists can be entered into the awards.
Q7.	Does it matter which category a group enters regionally/normally?



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Q7A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, it does not matter whether you are a Bloom or IYN group, or what category you enter normally, E.g. 'Town', 'Village' etc. as these will not be taken into consideration. From our experience of running previous awards, we know that groups of any size or background have an equal chance of doing well. The panel will be looking at the quality of projects and their outcomes, in relation to the resources available to each group.
Q8.	What support will be available for these new Awards?
Q8A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A guidance document for the Bloom Regions & Nations and their assessors will provide details of the nomination and submission process. An online event in the spring will introduce the awards and enable groups or regional assessors to ask questions. The RHS Communities team will also be available to answer questions at any time.
Q9.	What is the timeline for the awards in 2024?
Q9A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June – August: regional assessment; 1st September 2024: deadline for submissions by the Bloom Regions & Nations to the RHS Mid-September: panels meet October: Celebration event
Q10.	Should groups seek appropriate permission before commencing a project?
Q10A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, if a group is undertaking a project that requires landowner permission or other permissions, e.g. from the council, please ensure you obtain appropriate permission before commencing any work. If you are uncertain what permission might be required, please check with all relevant parties, e.g. landowners or local council.
Q11.	What happens at the end of the trial?
Q11A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RHS will evaluate the trial and seek feedback from stakeholders before deciding whether to continue, amend or stop the awards.
The Categories	
Q12.	How many categories are there and how many can each group be nominated for?
Q12A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are five categories, and each group can only be considered for one single category in any given year.
Q13.	What are the categories?
Q13A.	<p>Please see the individual criteria for full details, but in outline the five categories are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RHS Community Engagement Award:



Community gardening is a great way for people to connect with others and improve where they live and can provide people without gardens with access to green spaces. The whole community benefits from improved public spaces that people can take pride in, a healthier, greener environment, safer streets and healthier people.

This award recognises the efforts that groups are making to engage their wider communities, creating positive and long-lasting benefits.

- **RHS Gardening with Young People Award:**

Gardening with young people is a great way to spark interest in the natural world. For children it can serve as the first window into the fascinating workings of our planet, discovering where our food comes from and learning about how gardening can help nature to thrive. Whilst for other young people it can support their health and wellbeing, and looking after the environment is a known motivator for younger generations.

This award recognises the efforts of a group in engaging with, supporting, and inspiring, the younger members of the community to participate in gardening. For the purpose of this award, 'young people' is defined as those aged 24 and under.

- **RHS Gardening for Health & Wellbeing Award:**

Gardens and gardening make people feel better and anyone anywhere can enjoy their healing power. It is increasingly acknowledged that gardens and green spaces are associated with better physical, social and mental health. As the population ages and healthcare costs spiral, social prescribing and preventative healthcare will take on renewed importance. There is an opportunity for gardening to play a central role in improving our nation's mental health and wellbeing.

This award recognises the efforts of a group in creating a community garden that maximises the health benefits for those taking part and their wider community.

- **RHS Sustainable Gardening Award:**

Gardens are an increasingly important part of the natural environment. Gardening for the environment can all help tackle both the causes and effects of climate change. By making community gardens as green as possible, groups can reduce their own carbon footprint and provide vital habitats for wildlife.

This award recognises the commitment of a group to sustainable environmental practices in horticulture and supporting wildlife through gardening.

- **RHS Gardening for Wildlife Award:**

Nature is in crisis, across the UK species and their habitats are in severe decline. Groups can help reverse this destruction in gardens and



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	<p>community green spaces around the country, by protecting and improving conditions for pollinators and other wildlife.</p> <p>Every single outdoor space can be an important habitat for wildlife; and gardening in a nature-friendly way does not mean compromising on quality. This award recognises the work groups are doing to make the spaces they care for wildlife-friendly.</p>
Q14.	Why are the categories different to the usual Bloom criteria?
Q14A.	<p>Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood groups can be recognised through these awards. Each of the categories focuses on a specific topic, whereas the Bloom and IYN criteria covers all three pillars of horticulture/gardening, community and environment.</p> <p>We hope that through these awards we can identify and celebrate groups who excel in one specific area and enable others to learn about or replicate their success.</p> <p>In our experience, many groups have been even more proud to be recognised for these types of specific awards than they have been to get a Bloom Gold or IYN Outstanding award.</p>
Nominations and Assessment Processes	
Q15.	How do groups enter the Awards?
Q15A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups cannot enter the Awards directly, instead they need to be nominated to represent their region. • Bloom regional assessors will identify the Bloom or IYN group in their Region that they feel best meet the criteria in each category in any given year. • The assessors visiting groups will summarise what they have seen in text and evidence it with images and send their nominations to their regional committees. • The Bloom regional committees will select the top regional entry in each category and submit them to the RHS. • The RHS will review all the entries, and panel will decide on the national winner for each category.
Q16.	Will RHS Judges visit the nominated groups?
Q16A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, the regional assessors will visit the groups as part of their normal Bloom or IYN assessment and make recommendations on who should be nominated and provide the evidence for their decision. • The decisions about regional winners, and subsequent decisions on national winners will all be made remotely by panels of assessors, so the regional assessors evidence is crucial. • This is a tried and tested system that has been used for the RHS Britain in Bloom UK Finals discretionary awards for many years.
Q17.	Are the assessors just looking for new or large-scale projects?



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Q17A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, projects can be of any size or scale. • Assessors may identify ongoing projects or enhancements to existing projects, as well as new ones. • However all projects should be initiated and/or maintained by the group.
Q18.	Will the assessment panel take adverse conditions into account when assessing entries?
Q18A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panel will also take extreme weather and other conditions into account when assessing entries.
Q19.	Who sits on the final assessment panel?
Q19A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panellists are a mixture of Bloom Federation representatives, Bloom UK Finals Judges, RHS staff and subject experts. • The RHS will vet panellists to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.
Recognition & Celebration	
Q20.	Will every regional winner be recognised in some way?
Q20A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, every regional winner, i.e. every group selected to represent their region in a category for the national competition, will be awarded a certificate from the RHS.
Q21.	Will there be an overall national winner in each category?
Q21A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, there will be an overall national winner in each of the five categories. • Representatives from each of the five winning groups will be invited to the RHS Britain in Bloom UK Finals Awards Ceremony, on the 21 October in Manchester to be presented with an award.
Q22.	When will the results be announced?
Q22A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results for the overall winners in each category will be announced at the RHS Britain in Bloom UK Finals Awards Ceremony, on the 21 October, and will be published on the RHS website, • The RHS will notify winning groups of their success, under strict embargo, at an earlier date so that they can attend the awards in person.
Q23.	Will there be feedback for entries?
Q23A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will explore options for feedback for the groups representing their region at a national level, but not or all nominees.
Q24.	Will our work feature in case studies and news stories?
Q24A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, we hope to feature stories about the entrants in both RHS publications and the press. • The RHS will seek appropriate permissions from groups and assessors to use any images supplied.



Further Information

Q25.

How can I find out more information?

Q25A.

Please direct any queries to the RHS Communities Team:

- Email: communities@rhs.org.uk or Telephone: 07955 438 389