



Press & PR

The RHS Britain in Bloom press and PR team works throughout the year to raise the profile of the campaign in the media. This includes our announcement of the UK finalists, the judging tour and the results as well as placing case studies and features highlighting the impacts of the campaign. While the RHS team focuses on the national media, as finalists you have the opportunity to use your involvement in the UK finals to gain coverage in your local media.

Editorial coverage is great third party endorsement; journalists help the public form their opinions and can motivate people to get involved. The more frequent and interesting the media coverage about your Bloom activities, the more people will be encouraged to support you.

The RHS press and PR team is available throughout the year to support finalists' PR activities – please read the tips below and contact us should you have any queries or need any assistance.

Top tips for a good story

A story can come from many angles and you need to think creatively:

- What makes your entry different to the others participating in Britain in Bloom?
- Are any new sectors of the community contributing to your entry?
- Are you tackling issues such as composting and water-wise gardening in a new or interesting way?
- Is this the first time your entry has reached the UK finals?

Think beyond the physical side of your entry; the press are often interested in the human angle. Has volunteering with your group helped someone back into work or restored their confidence? Are there any big personalities behind your success?

Other media hooks you might draw upon include:

- Has your campaign transformed an area (i.e. before and after story)?
- Have you restored or re-introduced natural habitat / wildlife areas?
- Do you include rare, exotic or unusual plants in your displays?
- Do you have a notable celebrity or personality linked to your entry?

Top tips on writing a press release

- Be accurate and informative – get someone else to proof it for typos!
- Don't waffle; the ideal press release is one side of A4.
- A punchy, eye-catching title will capture attention.
- Key information should come in the first paragraph: what is happening? Why? Where? When? Who is involved? Many press releases don't get read below the opening paragraph so make sure you sum it up here.



- Include a quote or testimonial from yourself, a sponsor, a local dignitary, a volunteer or celebrity.
- Make sure your contact details are in the “Notes to Editors” at the end of the release, should the journalist have any follow up queries.
- If you can supply an image to illustrate your story, mention that in the “Notes to Editors”. Often a good picture will get a story featured.
- Always write “Press Release” across the top of the page and include the date together with any logo. Include the date to be released (for example “For Immediate Release”, or “Embargoed until 30 September 2016”).

What will the RHS do?

The RHS press and PR team will use the information provided in the finalists’ questionnaires as a starting point for finding stories for the media, so we may contact you directly for more information about particular parts of your entry. Please keep us up-to-date with your activities and successes throughout the year. The RHS Press and PR team is also happy to help you with advice and assistance about your own media relations activities.

What can you do?

Do your own PR

Whether contacting your local newspaper or a national magazine, look at the section you’re aiming your story at (news, features, listings), note the names of the journalists who are writing stories on similar subjects and send your press release directly to them. Follow this up with a phone call a few days later to check if they would like any further information.

Regional radio and newspapers:

Regional media outlets are always looking for local stories. Human-interest features and stories showing benefit to the local community are usually a firm favourite, and they will also want to know about any awards you win for your work. Try to offer an accompanying photograph with your press release, though a newspaper may wish to visit your project and take its own pictures. Try to maintain good relationships with local print and broadcast journalists and keep them in touch with your upcoming projects and events.

Specialist and other media:

Think beyond the local paper; are there any regional gardening magazines, tourism newsletters, county-wide glossy magazines, council news updates? If you have an idea for a feature, call the features editor and run it by them. Please note: the editorial schedule that magazines work to can be as much as three months in advance for monthly publications and even longer for quarterlies.

Events

When you are organising an event, it is worth scheduling in a photo call for the press. This is a pre-arranged time when your key volunteers and VIPs will be available in a specific place for press photographs. Pictures might be taken of the group starting to dig a new garden, planting a tree, or cutting the ribbon to open your local plant swap, whatever fits your event best. For more advice about what to consider when setting up good images, please see the Finalist Hub <https://www.rhs.org.uk/forbloomfinalists>



Include the details of your photo call at the foot of your press release, confirming location and time, who will be present and what they will be doing. When inviting journalists/ photographers to your event, it's a good idea to have a one-page factsheet about your group's work available for them to take away.