



2026 Britain in Bloom Judges' Highlights & Discretionary Awards finalists' guidance

1. Judges' Highlights

- Last year we successfully introduced an alternative way for our judges to recognise groups for their outstanding achievements.
- You can read about some of the amazing Judges' Highlights from last year on the RHS website <https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/britain-in-bloom/britain-in-bloom-highlights>
- We are no longer running 'themed' or 'competitive' discretionary awards where a winner is selected from nominated groups as we had done previously.
- Instead, we are asking our Bloom UK Final judges to shine a 'spotlight' on and celebrate the work of a group in their judging category as **Judges' Highlights** without constraining this to themed areas or selecting a 'winner' as we think all nominated highlights are deserving of equal recognition.
- By doing things differently we hope to gather more examples of good practice, create interesting case studies and inspire others from the highlights that will also promote the values of Bloom.

How the Judges' Highlights will work

- As 'highlights' **these are not competitive awards** that will be assessed or judged.
- We recommend that you draw the judges' attention to any aspects of your entry that could merit your work, activities or projects being recognised for Judges' Highlights.
- You can do this in your portfolio (if you are submitting one) and during the judging visit.
- Each pair of judges can nominate one finalist from each category as their Judges' Highlights. If there are more than five entries in a category, the pair of judges may nominate two finalists as their Judges' Highlights. Nomination is at the judges' discretion, and they will only do so when they have seen something noteworthy or outstanding.

What might groups be nominated for as Judges' Highlights?

- The Judges' Highlights should champion activities and practices that are helping to create stronger, more resilient communities, through gardening.
- The highlights can encourage community gardening that improves the natural environment, educates people of all ages, involves new people to gardening and bolsters the resilience of the places where we live.
- They can be as specific as the implementation of a successful water saving feature, model good practice such as involving local businesses with the Bloom group's fundraising campaign or demonstrate great ideas such as using the arts to bring people to gardening.
- Highlights can be a specific project such as a school's engagement with gardening or specific activity such as providing training opportunities to volunteers so that it improves their gardening skills and results in retaining volunteers for the Bloom group.
- Whatever the highlight may be, it will be important for groups to demonstrate the beneficial impact of their work to the judges. Therefore, if planting a new wildflower meadow has increased biodiversity, this should be recorded as evidence for the judges to see.

How will the Judges' Highlights be recognised?

- All nominated groups will receive RHS exposure and recognition for why they have been highlighted.



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- This may include: RHS website article or showcase; RHS social media or newsletter story; RHS case-study and spotlighting through filming or photography – we will work with the groups on how best to celebrate their highlights.
- We will look at ways of incorporating the Judges' Highlights into the Bloom UK Finals Awards Ceremony by presenting showreels or summarising the achievements of each nominated group similar to a 'mini exhibition' at the event.
- Finalists that have been recognised as Judges' Highlights will be made aware of this before the Bloom UK Finals Awards ceremony.

2. Community Champions Discretionary Awards (non-competitive)

- Presented to individuals who demonstrate exceptional commitment and dedication to the Britain in Bloom cause in their community. This is a volunteer who has gone over and above to make their Bloom campaign a success.

3. Young Champions Discretionary Awards (non-competitive)

- Presented to individuals who demonstrate exceptional commitment and dedication to the Britain in Bloom cause in their community. This is a volunteer who has gone over and above to make their Bloom campaign a success.
- Young Champions must be 21 years or younger at the time of their nomination. The age of the nominee must be confirmed in the nomination for the Young Champions award.
- Since both the Community Champions and Young Champions Discretionary Awards recognises individual commitment and contribution it is awarded to all nominees as a recognition award rather than a competitive award.
- Each pair of judges can nominate one Community Champion and one Young Champion from one Bloom Group in their category.
- If there are more than five entries in a category, the pair of judges may nominate two Community Champions and two Young Champions from two different Bloom groups in their category. Nomination is at the judges' discretion.