

RHS Community Awards 2021 – Overview for Regions & Nations

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has created the need and opportunity to try something different instead of the Bloom UK Finals in 2021. The RHS Community Awards will enable us to celebrate the work that groups have been doing when we are unable to go out on tour.

We are sharing an FAQ document and draft guidance around the categories, which you can pass on to your groups. Please note that the contents of the draft guidance may be subject to change. We anticipate that any changes will be refinements of the language etc. as we move across to a digital system; the essence of the categories and information requested from entrants will remain broadly the same.

The FAQ document will be updated periodically with new questions to ensure it remains as relevant and useful as possible to everyone, so please do ask us plenty of questions!

We have extended the proposed timeline for nominating groups until the beginning of February 2021. We realise that timescales are tight and we can accept nominations from you after this date, but groups may miss-out on the initial communications from us.

2. Nominating Entrants

The RHS Community Awards will be open to a limited number of groups, and the selection of these groups will rest with the Regions & Nations.

To maintain a relatively simple, fair and familiar system we recommend offering the 2020 UK Finalists first refusal to participate. If these groups are not able to participate then Regions can invite alternative groups to take their place.

Each Region will be able to nominate up to five groups. (However, if all six of Scotland's 2020 Finalists want to participate then they are welcome to). Please note the normal Bloom categories, i.e. village, town etc. are not relevant in these Awards.

We will circulate details of how to share your nominations, along with the detailed criteria. We request that Regions please try to confirm which groups are entering by the 1st of February so that we can start communicating with them. Each group will be able to select a maximum of three categories to enter – they can make those decisions later in the year.

3. Categories

There are five key categories, each chosen because they reflect the activities groups have been doing this year but also because they have enduring relevance beyond the pandemic.

- I. **Nourishing Your Community:** Growing, sharing and enjoying food can be one the simplest ways to connect with people. This category focuses on how groups are using food growing as a tool to support their communities and bring people together.
- I. **Planting with Purpose:** Plants are amazing - they can play an important role in solving everyday problems and improving all of our lives. This category focuses on how groups are using plants and gardens in creative ways to address specific challenges in their communities.
- II. **Nature Friendly Gardening:** Every single outdoor space, including the very smallest, can be an important habitat for wildlife; and gardening in a nature-friendly way does

not mean compromising on quality. This category recognises the work groups are doing to make the spaces they care for wildlife-friendly.

- III. **Green Solutions:** Plants and trees have many positive impacts on the environment and people's wellbeing. How we grow and manage local green spaces can have a significant impact on issues like noise and air pollution, heatwaves and flooding, as well as climate change. This category recognises the work that groups are doing to create nature-based solutions to environmental challenges in their community.
- IV. **Cultivating Your Community:** Community gardening can strengthen communities and help build links between diverse groups of people. This category focuses on how groups are reaching out to include others from their community and enabling more people to enjoy the benefits of growing.

4. Process, Support & Timeline

The Awards programme will be entirely digital, with no in-person assessments. Groups will be able to submit digital evidence to support their entry such as photos, videos, text etc.

The RHS will lead a virtual event and provide resources to support the groups. These will include guidance around collating and submitting digital evidence, as well as a chance to speak with the judging panels.

Projects can be of any scale, and may include enhancements to existing or ongoing projects as well as new ones. Clear guidelines will be shared with the participating entrants, and the RHS Communities Team will be available to answer questions at any time.

Each assessment panel will comprise of Bloom UK Finals judges, RHS staff and subject experts. The panels will review all entries and identify the outstanding ones. Every entry will be recognised, and the results will be celebrated in early September. Please note we will not be holding a physical awards event.

Key Dates:

Action	Timeline
RHS to share final details of categories and updated FAQ	January 2021
Regions & Nations confirm names of participating groups	By 1 st February 2021
RHS to hold virtual event for groups, Q&A with panellists and workshops, share support resources	Early March 2021
Groups can start to submit digital applications online	March 2021
Deadline for groups to submit their entries online	By 25 July 2021
Panellists meet to deliberate and agree outstanding entries	W/c 9 August
RHS announces results	The beginning of September