



Stratford in Bloom - Growing Together



Hello everyone and welcome to our 2nd Newsletter.

This summer brought us lots of hot dry weather. People certainly enjoyed it, but for the gardeners, it meant a great deal of watering! But this did not deter our green-fingered Stratford residents who put so much energy and enthusiasm into their wonderful gardens.

Our hanging baskets and planters in town adorned the streets adding colour and vibrancy and were a haven for our pollinators. Unfortunately a number of our hanging baskets poles were hit by vehicles and now need repairing ready for next year's displays. All our displays were taken down just before Stratford MOP, but our winter planting on the barrier boxes around town are now in place.

We are working with Stratford BID with the 3 tiered planters in town to

add extra nature to our streets. We couldn't have done this without the help of our contractor Plantscape and funding from the Town Council.



Have a wonderful festive Christmas and see you next year.

Cohl Warren-Howles - Chair of Stratford in Bloom



FOSS - Friends of Stratford Station

A great uncle of mine had been a Station Master at Bewdley, family photos showed a very smart man in uniform standing amid the clean, neat Victorian station garden. Bright white stones, herbaceous blooms.

When we moved to Stratford all those years ago, I always had an idea that the station platforms could be more cared for so when I became a member of Stratford In Bloom I leapt at the

chance of Stratford Station becoming a SiB Community Project. Upshot I adopted the platform in 2017 with the support of SiB, amazing support from London Midland and Stratford Supports, work began. London Midland took down the overgrown Leylandii, cut up the old breeze blocks, laid weed barriers and poured on new gravel. Volunteers had Network Rail basic safety training to work on the platforms, so ready to go.

Covid disrupted our work but once over Friends of Shakespeare Line were on fire, encouraging all stations along the line from Stratford to Moor Street to form a Friends of Stratford Station and plant up all the platforms. All stations now have a Community group weeding, planting, litter picking their stations. The very active local group, Forest of Hearts are an essential support who are doing work on and around the Station. We are a friendly, supportive community. That is our history here in Stratford. I hope you like the results of our work. If you think you would like to give an hour or so a month to work on the station please get in touch with Councillor Jenny Fradgley and join our enthusiastic small band.

Deputy Chair Stratford in Bloom - Councillor Jenny Fradgley.

Stratford in Bloom Award Giving Evening

What a Blooming lovely evening it was at the Town Hall on the 29th September. The winners of the schools and nurseries challenge and the winners of the best front gardens, wildlife friendly, community and Bed and Breakfast's gardens, Business displays arrived to the captivating sound of the piano played by Peter Summers.



The evening started with the lovely words from our MP Manuela Perteghella, followed by a short talk by Judith Conroy Researcher in Sustainable Horticulture at Coventry University and Stratford in Bloom Committee member, on wildlife friendly flowers.

The awards were then presented by the Mayor, Councillor Dani Hunter.

As we all know, this summer has been lovely, but the sun has been merciless to our gardens. But Stratford in Bloom have been blown away by the winning gardens. Some that were judged were established gardens, some very new, all different but all an inspiration. It was such a pleasure to see the hard work and dedication that people put into their gardens both large and small. As a committee we had a very difficult time deciding on the winners. The schools and nurseries project challenge was equally difficult to decide, with the pupils using so much imagination and ingenuity.

A massive congratulations to everyone.

I would like to thank everyone who came to make it such a lovely evening, Manuella Perteghella for her kind words, Mayor Councillor Dani Hunter for presenting the awards, Peter Summers for his beautiful skills on the piano, Dan at Rookes for the refreshments, our contractor Plantscape for sponsorship, the Town Councillors for their hard work in carrying out the initial judging in the wards, the Town Council staff for use of the Town Hall, Rosalind Winter for organising our raffle and Mark Williamson for taking the photographs for Stratford Herald and everyone else who helped make it such an enjoyable evening.

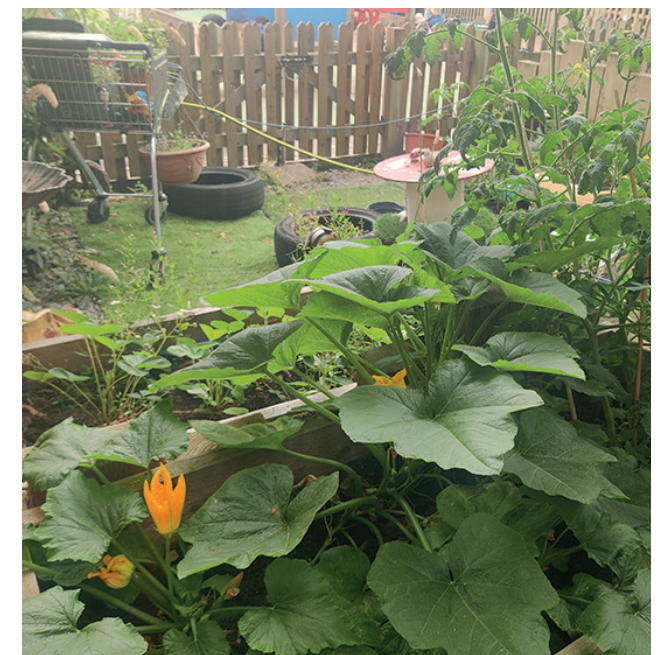
We are a small committee of volunteers that love to make Stratford a vibrant, colourful and wildlife friendly place to live. We are always on the lookout for volunteers.

Schools Challenge Results 2025

School and Nursery Challenge

This delightful project is aimed at increasing awareness in young people of the "green" environment. Starting in Nurseries, supporting the teaching staff, our aims are to introduce awareness of insects, birds, bees and appropriate plants and vegetables while using upcycled items and relatively little money while "playing".

As the children get older, helping them to think about composting, collecting seeds and cuttings to enable propagation for the following year. This usually results in a pretty display of pollinating plants and the joys of vegetables and fruit. This year was more challenging than usual with our very hot, dry, long summer.



We had 2 new primary schools join us this year. All the schools and nurseries (led by staff) produced delightful results even though they have variable and very different environments to deal with.

The entries this year were of such a high standard that we found judging very difficult. Well done to all.

Many photos can be seen on the SiB website.

Sue England - Stratford in Bloom Secretary.

What is the best plant for winter?



Creating a space that bursts with colour throughout the colder months can be a delightful challenge. By carefully selecting the right plants, you can enjoy vibrant blooms

and lush foliage from autumn through to spring.

What is the best plant for winter? Well, here at Plantscape, we have a few favourites. Creating a space that bursts with colour throughout the colder months can be a delightful challenge. By carefully selecting the right plants, you can enjoy vibrant blooms and lush foliage from autumn through to spring.

Use free-standing planters, barrier baskets, floral towers or hanging baskets to contain a texturally interesting mixture of evergreen shrubs, herbs and hardy flowering plants which give way in spring to flowering bulbs.

Pansies

FACT: Pansies are known for their “faces,” which are markings that resemble a human face. They come in a wide range of colours and patterns.

WHY THEY'RE GOOD: Pansies are incredibly hardy and can bloom in cooler temperatures, making them perfect for autumn and early spring gardens.

Cyclamen

FACT: Cyclamen grow from tubers and are native to the Mediterranean region. They have unique, upswept petals and heart-shaped leaves.

WHY THEY'RE GOOD: Cyclamen bloom in late autumn and winter, providing vibrant colour when many other plants are dormant.

Primrose

FACT: Primroses are one of the first flowers to bloom in spring, often appearing as early as December in mild climates.

WHY THEY'RE GOOD: Their early blooming period and bright, cheerful flowers make them ideal for adding colour to late winter and early spring gardens.

Heather

FACT: Heather is an evergreen plant that can live for up to 40 years. It is known for turning hillsides purple in late summer and autumn.

WHY THEY'RE GOOD: Heather's evergreen nature and late summer to autumn blooms provide consistent colour and structure to gardens throughout the colder months.

Alan McGregor - Plantscape

Looking Forward

Winter is the perfect time to reflect on the year that has passed and decide what you would like to grow or change in your garden for the year ahead. Looking through the window at your dormant garden will help you identify any gaps and while the weather rages outside, you can check out seed catalogues, books and the wealth on information found online to help with your plans:

- Think about growing more plants from seed. This is generally a more cost-effective and sustainable way to fill your garden, and the choice of seeds available is a lot broader than the range of plants found at the garden centre.



Judith Conroy, Researcher in Sustainable Horticulture

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Fancy getting involved? We are on the look out for like-minded green fingered people to join us.

Drop us an email to
sueengland@btinternet.com

Facebook - Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom
www.stratfordinbloom.org.uk