



Draft Guidance on RHS Community Awards Categories

1. Introduction

We would like to welcome groups to the RHS Community Awards in 2021. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, this programme is running instead of the Britain in Bloom UK Finals.

The 2021 Awards consists of five categories, each chosen because they reflect the activities many groups have been doing in the last 12 months, and because they have enduring relevance beyond the pandemic. Each participating group can enter a maximum of three of these categories.

The Awards programme will be entirely digital, and groups will be asked to submit evidence of their work in written form, photos or short videos. Full details of how to enter digitally will be made available to participating groups in February 2021.

Support for participating groups in the form of online resources and a live digital event will be provided in the New Year.

Please see the 'Frequently Asked Questions' document for further details about the Awards process in 2021. However, groups should also feel free to approach the RHS Communities Team at any time with questions or concerns.

Please note that the contents of this draft guidance may be subject to change. However, while there may be some small changes to the language used, we expect the essence of the categories and information requested of entrants to remain the same.

2. Your Story

We want to hear your stories about the work you have been doing, in your local communities. Projects can be of any size or scale and should be appropriate for your community. They can be new projects, ongoing projects or enhancements to existing projects. They should however be initiated or maintained by your group.

When reviewing projects the assessment panels will take circumstances such as the lockdown into account, so please make sure that you are following the local Government(s) guidelines at all times.

Please also ensure that you obtain the relevant permission for any work you undertake. If you are unsure what is needed then please speak to local stakeholders and partners, such as your local council before undertaking any new work.

In 2021 we will ask you to tell us the story of your work, using written text, photographs or short videos. This section outlines the key elements the assessment panel will want to hear about. The same questions will be asked in each of the categories.



Tell Us Your Story!	
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you do this project/work, what need or opportunity inspired it?
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities did you do? • Were they initiated or maintained by your group?
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who was involved in this work, and who has benefited from it?
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened as a result of this project/work? • How did this compare with your original aims?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has this project made a difference to the local environment or community? • Were any of these impacts something that would not have happened if the project/work had not taken place? • If applicable, how are any results being measured and the information shared?
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did the activity take place; is it a new, existing or on-going project? • Will the effects be short or long term, and if long term are they sustainable?



3. The Five Categories

For each category, we have provided a description and some examples of the type of activities groups could be doing.

Please note that these examples are not an exhaustive list and panellists will not be expecting groups to be carrying out any of these specific activities.

Please simply use them as a guide and inspiration to help you creatively interpret the category for your unique work within your community.

Category 1: Nourishing Your Community	
Description:	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.
Examples of Potential Activity: Please note this is a non-exhaustive list for inspiration only. Please tell us your story about the activities that have been appropriate in your own community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing or sharing food with your community – this could include anything that can be eaten such as fruit, vegetables, herbs or even edible flowers; • Making creative use of alternative growing areas of any size, these might include unlikely plots, previously neglected land, pop up allotments, community vegetable beds, orchards, vertical spaces, containers or even window boxes; • Maximising growing options by using recycled or repurposed materials for projects, e.g. old bins, upcycled tins or making raised beds or compost areas with unwanted wood pallets; • Using food growing as an activity to bring people together and make new connections in your community; • Encouraging and enabling people who would not usually have been involved in growing food or plants; • Engaging people that reflect your wider community, perhaps in terms of age, culture, interest or even food preferences; • Working collaboratively to support other local organisations, e.g. to make food accessible, fun, or educational; • Raising awareness about food growing in creative and interesting ways, and explaining your activity to your wider community.



Category 2:	Planting With Purpose
Description:	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.
<p>Examples of Potential Activity:</p> <p>Please note this is a non-exhaustive list for inspiration only.</p> <p>Please tell us your story about the activities that have been appropriate in your own community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting the wider community and involving them in the identification, co-design or development of projects, e.g. working with a specific groups, such as young people to develop a space that they can feel responsible for or have ownership over; • Using planting to attract or engage a specific audience, e.g. to reinvigorate an area with visitors or increase footfall in retail shopping areas or high streets; • Repurposing underused areas and bringing them back into community use, e.g. areas that have become derelict or undesirable; • Developing spaces for people who have specific needs, e.g. access or sensory needs; • Using plants to bring people together to understand, explore and celebrate each other's heritage or cultures; • Planting to prevent certain activities, e.g. to reduce antisocial behaviours in known hotspots.
Category 3:	Nature Friendly Gardening
Description:	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.
<p>Examples of Potential Activity:</p> <p>Please note this is a non-exhaustive list for inspiration only.</p> <p>Please tell us your story about the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting an abundant and diverse range of plant-species to attract a greater variety of insects and wildlife, e.g. choosing a range of shapes, colours sizes and fragrances that flower and fruit throughout the year; • Creating, restoring or maintaining appropriate habitats to support wildlife, e.g. specific features such as ponds or 'dead' hedges, or the connection of several habitats to make 'pollinator pathways'; • Demonstrating sustainable practices and use of materials, such as reducing mowing and leaving grass long in some areas, which can have a positive impact on wildlife;



<p>activities that have been appropriate in your own community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating consideration for nature across all your activities rather than just restricting wildlife-friendly practices to a specific project or area; • Being sensitive to the environment when using any form of ‘pest’ or ‘weed’ control, and prioritising the least impactful measures; • Enabling people from your wider community to observe, enjoy, support or learn about nature and wildlife through your activities; • Measuring your own success in supporting nature and wildlife, and contributing to appropriate national monitoring schemes e.g. a specific species survey or audit.
<p>Category 4:</p>	<p>Green Solutions</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Examples of Potential Activity:</p> <p>Please note this is a non-exhaustive list for inspiration only.</p> <p>Please tell us your story about the activities that have been appropriate in your own community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switching from seasonal and annual planting to perennial and more sustainable schemes; • Reducing your own environmental impacts, e.g. avoiding peat and pesticides, reducing the use of plastics and creating an action plan to reduce more, etc. • Noticing local seasonal changes and acting in response to them, e.g. creating shade or a living roof at bus stop, or turning a grass area into a wetland; • Planting to reduce air pollution, particularly along the edges of streets, e.g. by planting trees, hedges or green walls and selecting rough and hairy plants to trap particles; • Planting to tackle excess water and reduce flooding, e.g. planting to intercept or absorb rainwater, create rain gardens, or slow water run-off to reduce pressure on drains; • Planting to reduce temperatures, particularly in urban environments, e.g. planting trees for shade or creating cooling green walls; • Making sustainable and plant-based choices for recreational activities, e.g. by creating natural children’s play areas or green gyms, or introducing cycle pathways, etc.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using creative communications to help other people in your community understand the connections between plants, trees and issues like climate change.
Category 5:	Cultivating Your Community
Description:	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.
<p>Examples of Potential Activity:</p> <p>Please note this is a non-exhaustive list for inspiration only.</p> <p>Please tell us your story about the activities that have been appropriate in your own community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using plants and growing to bring people together in creative ways and develop new connections in your community; Creating opportunities for others in your community to learn or develop their growing skills, gain knowledge or experience, or even celebrate their own growing achievements; Creating a variety of accessible opportunities for people to volunteer or get involved with your group e.g. options that involve skills other than growing, or are flexible in timing, etc. Aiming to be inclusive and representative of your wider community, e.g. by enabling a diverse range of people to actively participate in and benefit from your work, including where appropriate marginalised, disadvantaged or isolated groups; Celebrating local heritage or culture so that your work reflects the wider community's sense identity; Making your group's work sustainable in the future, e.g. by involving younger generations of people or fundraising for support; Creatively using tools, including technology and communications, to connect and engage with different audiences.

4. Further Information

Please read our FAQ document, which we will be updating as the year progresses and our digital systems go live.

However, if you require further information about any aspect of the Awards, please do contact the RHS team on: Email: communities@rhs.org.uk, or Telephone: 07751 5961543