

YORKSHIRE The Creation of Public Parks

This briefly sets out how and why public parks were established, the local story will be different in every town but, 180 years later we seem again to be recognising the immense value of parks and open spaces. Public health was the driver for the establishment of parks and open spaces.

In the 1830s and 1840s it was observed that the average height of the population was decreasing, but the economy continued to grow. Height is a sensitive indicator of the welfare of the population, and has normally risen in line with people's income. The reality was that England had become the most urbanized country on earth; with no transport it was necessary for people to live adjacent to their work. This resulted in very poor living conditions along with overcrowding and no sanitary systems.

Reformers either for the good of the population or to improve productivity, realized living conditions had to improve. In respect of parks in 1833 the House of Commons established a Select committee to consider *'the best means of securing Open Spaces in the vicinity of populous towns, as Public Walks and Places of Exercise, calculated to promote the Health and Comfort of the Inhabitants'*

They concluded that open spaces *'reserved for the amusement of humbler classes, would assist to wean them from low and debasing pleasures Drinking houses, dog fights and boxing matches'*

In 1841 Parliament made a grant of £7.2 million (to-days prices) which was used between 1842 and 1856 to subsidise parks in towns.



The largest sum was spent in Manchester and Bradford.

(ref An Economic History of the English garden, R Floud)

Pictures: Roberts Park, Saltaire, Bradford, Courtesy of Leslie Brook Chair Friends of Roberts Park.

Hello!

Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers out there who are helping their communities to keep growing and keep going.

Despite the restrictions and still following social distancing rules, many Business, Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood groups have been doing amazing things to help their communities manage through the pandemic. We've heard incredible stories of people distributing plants and compost, growing food to feed their communities, creating gardens (of hope) keeping communities looking beautiful and connected. It is truly inspirational and we thank you for everything you are doing to 'Keep Yorkshire Blooming'.

Please do keep sending us your stories, experiences, or any activities happening within your communities.

John

Co-Ordinator
YiB





Signs of Summer Are Everywhere



– which means there's plenty to do in the garden or community, such as staking, taking cuttings and importantly making sure all our plantings are well watered. As climate change presents us with the challenges of gardening with less water, choosing plants to suit our growing conditions becomes paramount. As our summers get drier and water becomes ever more precious, drought-tolerant plants are becoming increasingly important in many gardens. Here's a selection of 10 star performers that are award winning plants for dry conditions.

Roses without the water bill - Rock roses are loved for



their ability to reveal fresh new flowers daily throughout summer. **Cistus x pulverulentus 'Sunset'** this colourful cistus (or rock rose) is high on the list of drought-tolerant evergreens. Selection 'Sunset' is one of the best and also one of easiest to find at nurseries and garden centres. Tending to spread with slightly grey-green wavy leaves, the magenta-tinted flowers have a cluster of golden anthers in the centre. 60cm (2ft).

Dramatic display - Yucca 'Colour Guard' adds texture and drama whether grown in containers or flowerbeds



Yucca filamentosa 'Colour Guard' forms a stemless, evergreen rosette and features slender foliage with a broad yellow central stripe running the length of each leaf. The result is dramatic and

enhanced by a tower of large white bell-shaped flowers in July and August. It is good to plant on dry slopes, given full sun. Rosette length 75cm (30in), flower spike length 1.5m (5ft).

Fremontodendron 'California Glory' makes an impactful



wall shrub, thriving in dry sites. 'California Glory' is derived from a cross between a Californian and a Mexican species. It is the classic evergreen for a sunny south-facing wall and known for its ability to

cope with dry soil in such a difficult position. Its flamboyant 6cm (2½in) yellow flowers often open from May until October. Plants can be cut back in spring to control their size. 3m (10ft).

Free-flowering French delight - The Sahuc rock rose is evergreen, drought-tolerant and free-flowering. x Halimocistus sahuicii is a hybrid, this time between two noticeably drought resistant Mediterranean shrubs, Cistus and Halimium. It was



discovered growing wild in France almost 100 years ago; the result is a low, unexpectedly hardy, narrow-leaved, spreading evergreen with a long succession of golden-centred, pure white flowers from May to

September. 50cm (20in)

Fresh-look foliage – The chartreuse leaf colour of Helichrysum 'Limelight' brightens up beds and hanging basket displays. Helichrysum petiolare 'Limelight' is an invaluable plant for its



drought tolerance. Mostly used in containers, its spreading habit and soft chartreuse foliage gives it big appeal. Needs dry conditions to get through the winter: 45cm (18in).

Aiming high - The tree lupin looks great against a south-facing wall



Lupinus arboreus is originally from the Californian sand dunes – so it can certainly cope with dry soil. This broad, mound-forming evergreen features neatly lobed leaves which make an attractive backdrop for the 25cm (10in)

spikes of fragrant, two-tone yellow flowers. Though short-lived, this plant usually self-sows, especially in gravel, for on-going displays. 1m (3ft).

Handsome spires - Perovskia 'Blue Spire' looks



beautiful flowering in summer and with ghost-white stems in winter Perovskia 'Blue Spire' has upright stems lined with prettily divided silvery foliage. The numerous

plumes of violet-blue flowers which open from August onwards and the plant's ability to grow in a range of dry soils without complaint explain its popularity. 1.2m (4ft).

A sweep of gold - Spanish broom bears bright yellow



flowers contrasting with vivid green stems **Spartium junceum** (Spanish broom) bears many fragrant, bright yellow flowers from August into autumn. Though deciduous, its bright

green stems give it an unexpectedly colourful winter look. Thrives in poor conditions. 2m (6½ft).

Scented summer flowers Miss Muffet is a free-



flowering lavender that attracts beneficial insects to the garden **Lavandula angustifolia Miss Muffet** is reliable, neat and compact, with narrow greyish-green leaves. The

impressively prolific spikes of violet-blue flowers sit low over the foliage in summer. This English lavender makes fine low edging that has a powerful aroma. 30cm (12in).

Year-round flowering - The double flowers of Ulex europaeus 'Flore Pleno' make a bigger impact than



those of wild gorse. 'Flore Pleno' is a fine choice of gorse. They say 'kissing's out of season when gorse is out of bloom'. Yes, it flowers in just about every month of the

year, with its main display in spring, but the rich yellow flowers of this form are double – so each lasts longer than usual to enhance the display. Grow in acid soil with all-day sunshine for the greatest success. 1.2m (4ft).





News from around the Region



RHS Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood Awards 2020

The RHS made the difficult decision to suspend Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood for 2020, which is in keeping with its other decisions. Following Government advice during this pandemic, the health and wellbeing of assessors, volunteers and communities had to be prioritised. We do hope that every group will want to participate again in 2021. Despite the restrictions and still following social distancing rules, many Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood groups have been doing amazing things to help their communities manage through the pandemic. Although the main BIB / IYN campaigns have been cancelled for 2020, the RHS and Yorkshire in Bloom still want to recognise and celebrate your achievements during lockdown.

In the near future, the RHS will send out a short questionnaire to all our groups (who participated last year or registered for the first time this year), to understand whether you been able to carry out any socially distanced activities. Groups will be recognised with certificates from the RHS & Yorkshire in Bloom.

Kay Clark
RHS Community Development Manager



"We have been busy in Sandringham Park at Wetherby, and children have been painting us more fairy homes for the park. This has given them something to do whilst at home and they can see them in

the park whenever they take their daily exercise."

Kazia Knight Chair Friends of Sandringham Park



It is with great sadness that we report the loss of a former Chairman and long standing trustee of Yorkshire in Bloom, Alderman Mr Frank Robinson. (Pictured on the right here)

Frank was a true inspiration and mentor to many of our Yorkshire in Bloom groups as well as being chairman of Calverley in Bloom. With a lifelong dedication to Yorkshire in Bloom, "Frank was a very kind man, witty and dedicated to the community. " - A true enthusiast, a true 'bloomer', A True Gentleman.



Lockdown Activities....



Telephone box in Allerton Bywater transformed into **'Gertie's Knit & Natter'**, sent in by Gail Vickers, Allerton in Bloom.

Spofforth Summer Solstice Challenge – 19th-21st June

Scarecrow, Picture & Sculpture trail. Since all other fundraising and social activities had been curtailed we decided to continue with the trail in what was to of been a weekend of festivities. Over 500 visitors admired the entries all exhibited and visible from the footpath and roadside. With social distancing parameters in place, visitors could follow the trail around the village admiring all the excellent and inspiring entries based on Book Titles, and voting on which they would like to see be the prize winners. Blessed with good weather, the event was a huge success and helped cement the community in these times.



The boy in the striped pygamas – Winning entry





Yorkshire's Great Houses, Castles & Gardens

HOW BEESTON IN BLOOM WON A VIRTUAL GOLD MEDAL

When Beeston in Bloom held it's AGM on 2 March (BC – Before Coronavirus) little did we know what was about to happen. Plans were made and working parties arranged in preparation for our spring judging. A newly formed Wednesday garden club had worked hard in Cross Flatts Park in remarkably good weather and the



Millennium Garden was well prepared. However, the instruction that we had to stay at home and not gather in groups of more than 2 people, put paid to all of the best laid plans. The members already had a WhatsApp group, and this quickly turned into a lifeline of jokes, videos and chat – even for those identified as key workers confined to working at home. Everyone was arranging virtual meetings, parties, and pub quizzes all designed to keeping spirits high. I'd cleaned, painted and done as much gardening at home that I could. I was looking for something to do.

I knew how disappointed our group was that their hard work wasn't going to be judged, so I came up with the idea of doing a virtual tour. All the evidence is there on Facebook for everyone to see, with commentary, photos and positive comments.



I'd also put together a PowerPoint presentation for the judges that was a record of all our activities in 2019. Surely that was worthy of some recognition?



Adapting the format that the Yorkshire in Bloom judges use I scored our virtual route. I realise that I am more than slightly biased, but who can blame me for being generous? We normally have to wait weeks for the results, but my way was instant – GOLD MEDAL – and

I have the certificate to prove it!

I accepted the award at a very simple ceremony – not the usual 3 course meal at York racecourse – but by raising a glass of wine in my kitchen. We have no idea when things will start to get back to anything like normal, but we will be doing our best to keep our displays going.

Yorkshire in Bloom won't be coming in July but I'll happily step in with another virtual tour.

It may even lead to a real life plaque!

Supplied by Linda Stanley, Secretary Beeston in Bloom



Many of Yorkshire's Great Houses, Castles & Gardens have started a phased reopening to the public since early June. This primarily includes the reopening of gardens and grounds, toilet facilities and takeaway food facilities.

There are 42 attractions in the collection and it is wonderful to see visitors being welcomed back to some of the most stunning places in the region. In light of the most recent government announcement playgrounds and other outside attractions will start to reopen which will certainly be a welcome move for families as children can once again get out and about to blow off some steam.

The key to planning a visit is to check the booking arrangements online as all differ but on the main, attractions are asking visitors to pre-book online so they can stagger arrival times and ensure a safe and pleasurable experience for everyone. Many have FAQs on their websites which is very useful when planning a day out.

For ideas of great days out this summer, visit www.castlesandgardens.co.uk.



Colourful Summer Displays at Country Style Foods Leeds



Work continues on the 'Fairy Glen' & Playground at Green Moor Sheffield



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