

RHS Communities November update

Communities in action



Britain in Bloom UK Finals:
The results are in!

We're delighted to share that Stonehouse in Bloom won Overall Winner at the 2026 Britain in Bloom UK Finals, held at Rochdale Town Hall. The Gloucestershire group also topped the Small Town category with Gold in horticultural excellence, environmental care and community engagement. A huge congratulations to all 44 finalists - we're extremely proud to support all Britain in Bloom entries as they continue to bring people together, boost wellbeing and support nature across the UK.

See the 2026 results



How Stonehouse is growing a town-wide arboretum

Ahead of National Tree Week, discover how Stonehouse in Bloom not only became Britain in Bloom 2026's overall winners, but also earned a Judges' Highlight for their woodland strategy. Their one-of-a-kind approach aims to transform the town into a community arboretum, home to thousands of young and historic trees, including the iconic Globe Willow, Park Oak and Hiroshima Ginkgo. Recognised as 'best practice' by Defra, the project is now inspiring similar schemes nationwide.

Take a look around Stonehouse



Community Champions

At this year's Britain in Bloom UK Finals awards ceremony, 12 Community Champions were recognised for their dedication to go above and beyond for their Bloom campaign.

Explore highlights from the Finals

Climate action in your community

Clever ways to make every drop count



Water management involves far more than just water butts. With hotter, drier weather becoming usual, water-saving expert Janet Manning shares practical ways community gardens and allotments can store more water, build drought resilience and reduce reliance on mains supplies. Plus, watch our step-by-step video where RHS Community Horticulture Specialist Rosie Carr shows how to create a self-watering rain garden planter to help reduce flooding risks.

Discover expert water-saving ideas

How planting choices can future-proof your community green space



As our climate changes, choosing the right plants to withstand extreme weather in your community garden has never been more important, and our RHS Plants for People and Planet Programme is here to help. Using scientific research and expertise, our new Plants for Water Resilience collection features over 300 plants best suited to dry, wet, flooded and combination conditions - supporting lower-maintenance green spaces in the long term.

Browse Plants for Water Resilience

Supporting nature and biodiversity together

Wildlife Wonders Plant of the Month: Guelder rose



Full of autumn bounty and beauty, ***Viburnum opulus*** is the winter larder birds will thank you for. Your group can enjoy three seasons from just one of these bushy, deciduous shrubs, with its dark green lobed leaves tinting purplish-red in autumn. Now's the perfect time to plant a guelder rose, so find out how and why to find a spot for our November Wildlife Wonder plant in your outdoor community space.

Why you should plant guelder rose

Wild About Gardens:
There are more moths to see!



As autumn gives way to winter, species like the red-green carpet, December moth and mottled umber can still be spotted, bringing excitement to the darker evenings. But what can you do? Leave seedheads, fallen leaves and undisturbed corners for shelter, and explore the What's Flying Tonight website or record sightings on iNaturalist to help build our understanding of these fascinating pollinators.

Pledge your support to moths

Seasonal inspiration and top tips for November



November to-do list

- Help each other raise containers onto pot feet to prevent waterlogging
- Plant tulip bulbs with your group for a colourful spring display next year
- Don't burn woody waste - compost it or recycle into dead hedges or log piles
- Start winter rose pruning early to prevent wind-rock
- Put out bird food and watch the winter birds flock to your community garden

See your November gardening tasks

Growing for wellbeing



New NHS Wellbeing Garden opens

On 20 October 2026, we officially opened the redesigned Fountain Garden at The Royal Oldham Hospital - bringing nature and wellbeing to the forefront of the much-loved centrepiece and cherished place of remembrance.

Discover the transformation



The plant that elevates wellbeing

With an intoxicating fragrance and beautiful cover, growing star jasmine gives plenty of pleasure. BBC Gardeners' World presenter and Head Gardener at Dorney Court's Crocus, Ashley Edwards, explains the many reasons why this plant is a real ally for your wellbeing - including expert advice on how to grow and care for it too.

Read Ashley's take on star jasmine



A new youth-led blueprint

Following the successful RHS Wellbeing Garden Blueprint launch in March 2026, we're addressing the lack of outdoor space experienced among many youth organisations and the young people they support. Drawing on 12 years of research and practice, we're pleased to be developing the new RHS Wellbeing Garden Blueprint: Youth-led Gardens.

Learn about our new guide

Get involved and make a difference



National Tree Week: Free trees

Is your community garden accessible to the public in England, Scotland or Wales? Is your group willing to take on the planting and care of saplings? You could be eligible to apply for the Woodland Trust's Free Trees scheme.

Request a pack



Afield's Nature Communities fund

Afield is supporting community-led nature projects in a select group of London boroughs with a two-year grant of up to £60,000. Projects or ideas should be rooted in place, seeking to restore or create ecological richness.

Read the application guidelines

Passionate about the power of community gardening for places? Tell the House of Lords

The House of Lords Built Environment Committee has launched an **inquiry into the maintenance of public green spaces**. As community gardeners, your experiences can influence the conversation - the more voices that are heard, the better.

We'll be submitting a full response to the inquiry, and we'd love to hear your experiences so we can best reflect them. How could public spaces be designed and maintained to maximise quality of life? What impact can good and bad public spaces have on communities?

Share your thoughts, with reference to **these questions**, by **Tuesday 10 November** to **communities@rhs.org.uk**, or submit your own response to the Committee **here**.

Help shape future newsletters

Tell us what you thought of this edition:

I loved it

It needs improvement

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