

Guidance Notes on Planting and Care of Floral Displays

Preparation

- Remove all weeds and remains of old annuals (including all roots) in the container or bed.
- To keep the displays neat, please do not be tempted to keep any plants from the past season such as cinerarias.
- Any bulbs should normally be left in place, but you will be advised if they are to be removed.
- Fork over the soil (carefully if there are bulbs), apply a good scattering of fertiliser (blood, fish and bone) evenly over the surface and fork or rake in. The fertiliser can be obtained from Burgh Beautiful's Clarendon base at the same time as the plants are collected.
- Add compost as a 'soil improver' only if the soil level is depleted or the growing medium is exhausted through excessive root growth, etc – normally, there is no need to completely renew compost. The compost should also be collected from Clarendon.

Layout and Spacing of Plants

- Reference should be made to the Planting Plan and/or photographs relevant to the display concerned (usually provided with the plant list accompanying the plant supply) for instructions on the planting layout.
- It is always a good idea to lay out the plants first before planting, to help ensure even spacing.
- In the case of large beds, these can be divided into equal proportions (say a quarter of the edging or a tenth of the whole bed) in advance of laying out the same proportion of plants to give an idea of how the spacing will work out.
- The planting level should be the same as in the plant tray or pot.

Watering

- All plants should be watered in, immediately after planting.
- In dry weather, it is a good idea to moisten the soil before planting as well.
- *Planters and containers* (except in the railway station) will be watered approximately fortnightly by Alan Agnew during the summer months, except during excessively wet weather, **but this should not be relied upon as the sole means of watering**. In the early stages, during dry spells and after there has been a lot of growth, volunteers should frequently check the soil to ensure that it does not become too dry. If planters are allowed to dry out, the plants will not recover!
- In dry weather, *flowerbeds* will be watered at least once by Alan Agnew, but again this should not be relied upon at any time. If you feel that the scale of the problem is such that professional watering services are definitely required, please contact the Planting Coordinator as per contact details below.
- In certain cases, permission has been given to use nearby taps to obtain water, but, in most cases, you will need to transport water in large milk bottles or other containers to the displays.
- If you are going on holiday, please make arrangements with other volunteers and/or friends to ensure adequate watering.

Additional Feeding

- It is not usually necessary to supplement the initial dose of fertiliser in flowerbeds, but, for planters and barrels, the supplementary application of a liquid feed (eg Miracle Gro) is advised to get the best results, fortnightly throughout July and August. Volunteers should buy this themselves and, if they wish, reclaim the cost from Burgh Beautiful using the appropriate form.
- If you find that you have forgotten to add fertiliser to your displays before planting, please start the fortnightly use of liquid feed one week after planting.

Dead-Heading and Weeding

- Most of the plants used by Burgh Beautiful have been deliberately chosen not to require dead-heading.
- However, spent flowers should be removed from cosmos and, to some extent geraniums, in both cases on a weekly basis, to ensure continuation of flowering throughout the season.

- The stems under spent cosmos blooms should be cut back to a point where no fresh or developing flowers are above it.
- Large-flowered begonias automatically drop finished flowers, but these should be picked up where required for visual appearance and/or to combat the spread of disease.

Central 'Dot Plants'

- Most planters and some flowerbeds have one or more 'dot plants' to give height in the centre. When replacement plants are needed, they will be usually be provided at the general planting time for summer or winter/spring plants.
- If dot plants are stolen or vandalised, it is always worth trying to find them by looking around the immediate neighbourhood and/or putting them back in place but, if this is unsuccessful, please refer this to the Planting Coordinator.

Edging of Grass

- The grass edges and surrounding grass of all flowerbeds in the town centre, from West Port to Low Port, plus Learmonth Gardens are maintained by Alan Agnew, our contractor.
- The grass edges of beds elsewhere have to be maintained by Burgh Beautiful or else the Council will apply weedkiller to define the edge.
- These edges should, ideally, be formed initially by use of a half-moon turf cutter and thereafter maintained using edging shears or a strimmer. Please contact the Planting Coordinator if you require advice on this.

Damage to Displays

- Unfortunately, our displays suffer occasional damage from, in order of frequency, off-lead dogs, children and weekend evening revellers.
- These can often be repaired by relocating plants from less obvious locations elsewhere in the display or if some spares have been kept at home or at the Clarendon base (the latter only if early in the season).
- Severe damage should be reported to the Secretary and/or the Planting Coordinator.
- Keep a lookout for fungal infections which happen occasionally when the weather is unusually damp or cool, most often affecting cosmos or begonias. Early treatment with an anti-fungal spray such as Bayer Garden Fungus Fighter may eradicate or contain the effects – this should be bought and the cost reclaimed from Burgh Beautiful using the appropriate form. More than a few plants should only be removed if the problem is severe and this should be brought to the attention of the Planting Coordinator.

Tidiness and Cleanliness

- Volunteers are encouraged to keep the immediate surroundings of their displays clean and tidy, removing accumulations of leaves, weeds and litter.
- Planters should be cleaned at last once a year, and this is advised just after summer planting.

Removal and Disposal of Plants at End of Season

- All annuals should be removed from displays at the end of the season, together with any weeds or litter – and the beds, planters or barrels should be raked or hand-forked over neatly.
- For features planted all year, summer displays should be cleared in mid-October and winter/spring displays at the end of May, before replanting. Summer-only displays may be retained until the first frosts or after they begin to look untidy.
- All plant refuse should be conveyed to the green refuse skip at the Council waste facility, Braehead Road.

Removal or Significant Changes to Floral Displays

- Volunteers have the opportunity to comment on, and suggest changes to, their floral displays.
- For the following summer, the consultation takes place in September/October, and for winter/spring, the preceding May.
- Any proposals to make significant changes to floral displays, or remove them, **MUST** be referred for the approval of the Planting Coordinator who will, if necessary, refer the matter to the Burgh Beautiful Committee for a decision.

Contacts

Ron Smith, Planting Coordinator – plantingcoordinator@lbt.scot

Jean Long, Secretary – bbl@lbt.scot

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