

Moseley, still in Bloom

Following the warm weather that encouraged us all to get into our gardens, we seem to have returned to winter and the poor seedlings are shivering and not growing. However, warmer temperatures are coming again and garden centres are set to open. There will be queues and everyone will be relieved to be able to buy summer bedding plants as usual to put in the ground just at the right time. Sadly, Birmingham City Council Parks and Nurseries won't be able to plant and put up hanging baskets for us this year but there may be opportunities for floral displays in other forms. Most exciting of all is the news about our annual Open Gardens - see below.

Calling Moseley Gardeners to help create a virtual Open Gardens event!

As you will know, we have had to cancel the traditional end of June Open Gardens event. However, we have come up with the idea of having an online **Virtual Open Gardens** and are now inviting anyone in Moseley to make a short video tour of their garden or allotment, and send it to us. We will be broadcasting the films on a dedicated YouTube channel on Saturday 27th June and we want to make this feel like a real community event. If we get enough films then we may have a second collection open on Sunday 28th too.

We especially encourage those who have not previously been able to open their gardens, for whatever reason, to consider making a video – now is your chance to take part in this great event. All you need is a smartphone or tablet and to get out in your garden and start filming. If you don't have expertise in editing video footage we can do this for you.

Please see www.MoseleyInBloom.org.uk/open-gardens for more information or send your questions or offers to film to opengardens@moseleyinbloom.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kate Stocks, Jonathan Smith and the Open Gardens 2020 team





Have you been noticing front gardens on your walks? Some are already displaying posters. How many have you spotted?

After reading last week's piece about the Meteor Ford project, Jill Adams wrote in saying, 'We used to pick, and eat, the Moseley in Bloom beans and I'm still growing nasturtiums from the seeds I gathered there'. After the Moseley in Bloom work stopped, the Farmers' Market and other groups contributed to hoardings to go round the site. People will remember the lovely trees made by street artist 'Aerosol Ali'. Those remaining can still be seen at the back of M&S car park. Well remembered Jill - and thank you for reading our Newsletter so carefully!



The mystery of the missing blossom

People who plant fruit trees may be interested to hear of Catherine Rock's experience with her new trees.

Our garden is north-facing, and - typically for a Moseley terrace - quite long and narrow. Fruit trees generally thrive here, perhaps because they can reach to get enough light whereas smaller plants and bushes can struggle.

To complement an established and reliably-cropping Spartan apple tree and two espaliered pollinators, the varieties of which we forgot to note when we bought them!, early last year we added two fruit trees on dwarf rootstock - a Howgate Wonder cooking apple and a Cambridge Greengage plum.

Both trees looked healthy enough throughout 2019 and into this year. But, as Spring advanced and the blossom burst on the Spartan, the pollinators and our very pretty Conference Pear, there was no sign of buds on the plum and the Howgate Wonder. Both were in leaf and growing well enough. The question was: would they ever flower?

Perplexed, we turned to the experts for help. We had bought the trees from Walcot Organics in Pershore, and fortunately we were able to contact them by phone. They reassured us that the young trees were basically putting their energy into growing rather than flowering, and that it was

advisable to prune, in late April, at least one large shoot per tree to contain them. So, no blossom this year but at least we know why and hopefully 2021 will bear fruit!

In the photograph the apple tree is at the back on the right and the plum in the foreground. Still closer to the front is curly kale, left in over winter. The bees love the yellow flowers so it is left in for a while.



A little more history from Moseley in Bloom archives

Following an introduction by Deborah Taylor, in 2013 Moseley in Bloom volunteers were invited to Mapledene Care Home in St Agnes Road. Overgrown laurel and holly had hidden many delightful features of the old garden, which made the grounds inaccessible to the residents. The MiB project aimed to create more opportunities for residents to engage in gardening and enjoy the wonderful area. Young volunteers from the Challenge Network helped Mapledene's groundsman to clear paths and gradually the original vistas became apparent. A veritable 'Secret Garden' emerged, complete with a trompe l'oeil of a door within a bower covered in ivy.

Existing wild fruit trees were tamed to a manageable height and other varieties were planted to form a small orchard for the residents and kitchens to enjoy. Raised beds were made from chests of drawers, enabling planting of salad greens. Vegetable seeds were started off inside and runner beans and courgettes were planted in beds. Attractive flowering shrubs were also planted.

The families of residents love the large garden that continues to develop, thanks to the enthusiasm and energy of staff. The Mapledene garden has twice been opened for the Open Gardens Weekend and two years ago it provided an ideal venue for our famous Open Gardens Teas. Mapledene has also entered the Heart of England in Bloom It's Your Neighbourhood scheme several times and has, several times been awarded 'Outstanding'.



If you have any horticultural or environmental stories or news to tell, please send to Carol Miller doctorcarolmiller@gmail.com