

Malmesbury in Bloom turns over a new leaf with rejuvenated competition

The annual Malmesbury in Bloom competition is having a new look this year, with additional categories and the introduction of a sunflower growing competition for children and young people.

As well as the usual favourites, two new garden categories have been added to encourage children and budding gardeners to take part: a competition for young gardeners (aged eight to 18) and another for newer gardens under three years old.

For the first time Malmesbury in Bloom - which is being launched on May 23, in conjunction with St Aldhelm's Fayre weekend, and the EAT festival on May 24 – will also be opened up to gardens in the surrounding area and villages. The closing date for all entries is July 1, with judging taking place during the week beginning July 20.

The sunflower growing competition, to see whose grows the tallest, has three age categories: 5 and under, 10 and under, and 11 to 16-year-olds. It replaces the art competition, which has been run in previous years.

This competition is being launched on June 6, when seeds can be collected from Malmesbury Market Cross. Following the launch, seeds can be collected from the Town Hall. Seeds and compost are being donated by Malmesbury Garden Centre, and the closing date for entries is August 6.

Chair for Malmesbury In Bloom and St Aldhelm's Fayre is Malmesbury Town Councillor, Helean Hughes. She said the idea behind the garden and sunflower growing competitions was to get more people involved.

“We really want to inspire and encourage the next generation of gardeners,” said Cllr Hughes. “By introducing the sunflower challenge and new garden categories, we’re opening the door for

everyone to have a go, regardless of their age, experience level or garden maturity. It's not just about the most manicured lawn and borders; it's about celebrating the joy of growing something from scratch and bringing a splash of colour to our beautiful town and its surrounding villages.

“We're very grateful to everyone involved in organising Malmesbury in Bloom and the new sunflower competition, particularly our sponsors. We have two new sponsors this year: Toy Expert (Young Gardener) and The Malmesbury Wine Shop Company (New Garden).”

The full list of categories for Malmesbury in Bloom is: large garden; window boxes, hanging baskets and containers; courtyards, patios and small gardens; street, road or area; businesses; new garden (three years and under); vegetable patch/allotment; sustainable gardener; super gardener; overall winner; young gardener (eight to 18-year-olds); gardens beyond Malmesbury; and wildflower garden.

The winners of both competitions will be announced at a celebration evening on September 11 at the Town Hall.