



MOSELEY IN BLOOM / JULY 2023

# the blooming news



While other countries across the world suffer from extremely hot weather conditions, we have already experienced the wettest July for many years. We went from a very dry June to a wet July but our gardens have thrived and are fully in bloom! Our Open Gardens event was amazing and our floral displays are looking fabulous. As we go into the summer holiday period, we know there will be lots going on in your gardens. Do let us know what you have planned and if you send us news, photos or information about other events we will share them in a future edition. You can email [doctorcarolmiller@gmail.com](mailto:doctorcarolmiller@gmail.com) and don't forget to tag us at [@moseleyinbloom](https://www.instagram.com/moseleyinbloom) in any of your social media. We look forward to hearing from you, Carol Miller and Kerry Jenkins, Joint Editors.

## Open Gardens 2023 - Sunday 25th June

Was it going to rain or not and, after the sweltering heat of last year, was it going to be too hot? These were the questions that were uppermost in the minds of the OG committee during the few days preceding Open Gardens this year. In the event we needn't have worried. Sunday June 25th dawned fine and, whilst it was a little warm, the temperature was unlikely to be a deterrent to visitors, and neither was the predicted rain which held off until 4.00pm. During the morning streamers indicating the bus route and which gardens were to be open appeared outside properties and openers were visited by committee members delivering cakes, samosas, teas and prosecco as well as the OG guides and floats and the all important tickets. Moseley was coming alive!

Whilst the official opening hours were between 11.00 and 5.00, the first visitors started to arrive around 10.30, keen to see their first chosen garden. Routes had been very carefully planned to ensure visits to a wide variety of gardens spread throughout Moseley, and with timings crucial to ensure arriving at a refreshment venue at strategic points of the day. Sadly, the traffic lights in the centre of Moseley had unexpectedly become '4 Way lights' just that morning leading to long queues when approaching them from any direction. This necessitated an emergency change to the bus route until 1.00pm but Andrew May and his Blooming Bus took all this in their stride and there was little overall disruption.

The gardens were, as always, delightful and, whilst it was good to visit some old friends and see how they have developed during the past few years, it was also lovely to see new gardens making their first appearance. Who can forget the dramatic front garden in Swanshurst Lane with its amazing watering system or the delightful meandering pathways through 121, the garden just a little further down the road? New community gardens were also included and we felt fortunate that we were able to visit the hidden spaces within Dowell's Close and Mark House, both places that we have passed so often without appreciating what they had to offer horticulturally.

One 'newbie' opener in School Road even agreed to host teas (very daring despite being supported by our amazing team of volunteers) and everyone loved exploring her productive garden and meeting the hens! We can't thank people enough for opening this year and hope that you will consider opening again in the future.

*Continued overleaf.*



Find Moseley in Bloom on Facebook and Twitter - [@moseleyinbloom](https://www.facebook.com/moseleyinbloom) and on Instagram - [@moseley\\_in\\_bloom](https://www.instagram.com/moseley_in_bloom) and more information is available on our website at <https://www.moseleyinbloom.org.uk/>

During the day visitors were entertained at the Coach House by the vibrant music of the Sheila Fawkes Café Orchestra. We were also delighted to host several artists from United Artists of South Birmingham who painted in some of our gardens. Visitors enjoyed watching artists at work and viewing the gardens from a different perspective, whilst the artists delighted in sharing their work with a new audience. Financially Open Gardens 2023 was a great success, with 806 paying visitors, the largest number ever for a single day of Open Gardens. The total takings were £10,920 and after deducting the costs of running the event of £1,250 the final amount raised was £9,670. This will allow us to fund five schools' projects in the next academic year and pay for around 50 of the 82 hanging baskets and railing flower boxes across Moseley. The remainder of the public floral displays cost will be raised by our business sponsorship scheme, pop-up plant sales and the Friends of MiB scheme.

Moseley in Bloom Open Gardens is very much a team effort and I really can not thank all of you enough. Openers, visitors, volunteers, cake bakers, raffle donators and ticket sellers and schools' contributors – you are all wonderful! Last of all the I must mention the wonderful Open Gardens Committee thank you, thank you, thank you for your hard work and support. I look forward to seeing everybody again next year for OG 2024!

Finally, if you enjoyed helping Moseley in Bloom through Open Gardens we encourage you to join our "Friends Of" scheme where, for just £20 a year, you can continue to support our work providing schools grants and public planting projects. Full details can be found at <https://moseleyinbloom.org.uk/friends/>

**Kate Stocks, Chair Moseley in Bloom Open Gardens**

### Investigating peat free compost...

Wendy Weston has been investigating the pros and cons of peat free compost and has written to us about her experience... "I've been very sceptical about peat free compost and, although I totally agree we urgently need to stop extracting peat, I didn't think the peat free compost available could be any good. It feels very coarse and is full of bits of wood that are not properly composted. The one on the right of the top image is Growmoor with peat and the other is Growmoor with no peat. (Purchased from Moseley Gifts and Gardens). I decided to test them out. I also tried the compost produced by Moseley Park (at £3 a bag). I planted lettuce seeds in all three and grew them under the same conditions. There seemed to be nothing to choose between them after two weeks, although various other interesting seedlings appeared in the Moseley Park compost. When I grew the seedlings on, again there was little difference between them - including that from Moseley Park. The biggest difference was when I planted Statice seeds. The outright winner was Moseley Park compost. Apparently Statice plants like sandy dry soil. I'm now feeling more optimistic about peat free compost. These experiments weren't done scientifically but as far as possible I grew them under identical conditions. And thanks to Niamh at Moseley Gifts and Gardens and the rangers at Moseley Park for their interest." Do let us know how you are you getting on with peat-free compost.



**Planting your Pants** - As a judge for the Heart of England in Bloom our Editor Carol visits lots of community gardens where amazing people achieve wonderful things sometimes transforming derelict sites into flourishing plots open to local people. She always learns a lot and get loads of ideas. Recently she visited Masefield Community Garden in Northfield where she found that children had taken part in the national campaign to 'Plant your Pants' helping to discover the health of our soil throughout England and Wales amid growing concern about the health of UK and global soils and after the launch of a new soil health enquiry led by the cross party Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee. The pants are dug up after about 8 weeks and the healthier the soil, the more disintegrated the pants will be! More information can be found at <https://www.countrytrust.org.uk/plantyourpants> including a soil health map.

### Advance Notice and Dates for your Diary!

**Pop up Plant Sale** - Our next Pop-up Plant Sale will be on Sunday 30 July at St Columba's Church B13 8DD from 2-4pm. Please bring spare plants and any 'garden paraphernalia' on the day to the sale or from the 24th July donations can be dropped off at 15 Thornley Close B13 9UQ. Please do spread the word!

**Moseley Business Awards 2023** - These awards will be judged later this Summer giving public recognition to businesses that are a credit to our village. Make sure that your premises are spick and span and litter-free, watch out for weeds and don't forget to water your plants. Also, don't forget you can still sign up for our Business Sponsorship Scheme. Go to our website for further information - [moseleyinbloom.org.uk/business-sponsorship/](https://moseleyinbloom.org.uk/business-sponsorship/)