

Ballymun Tidy Towns Committee

Best Garden 2009

Shortlist criteria

Note:

- These criteria are for use by people without an expertise in gardening, horticulture, etc.
- Front garden has to be included in the overall judging, although back garden can also be included.
- Please consider gardens that make a special contribution to biodiversity and nature, as there is also a special award for this area this year.

1. Design (10 Marks)

(i) Order/Balance/ Proportion

- ✓ Is there a sense of order to the garden?
- ✓ Is there a balance between hard and soft landscaping?
- ✓ Does the garden design meet the functional needs of the space, e.g. family garden, children/pet needs/ seating areas, shed/storage space etc.
- ✓ Is there a sense of proportion within the garden in relation to plants/ hard landscape features, use of focal points, Do you have a sense that the proportions work for this garden?

(ii) Harmony or unity

- ✓ Do the different parts to the garden work as a whole garden?
- ✓ Is there a sense of unity within the garden? e.g. repeated colour and plants, are the different parts of the garden linked in any way? (Sometimes achieved with repeat planting or using the same colour in two different areas).
- ✓ Is there a clear focal point in the garden e.g. specimen plant, hard landscape structure. Does this catch your eye? Does it work as a focal point?

(iii) Flow, Transition or Rhythm

- ✓ Does the flow of the design/plants draw your eye to follow the flow of the garden?
- ✓ Does the garden design draw you in to explore what's not immediately visible around the corner?
- ✓

Some interesting aspects to look for:

- Is it interesting/innovative/imaginative?
- Is there a focal point?
- Special features and ideas
- South facing seating areas
- Water features

2. Plant selection (10 Marks)

- Mix and diversity of planting (evergreen, deciduous, fruit & veg, etc)
- Good mix should be 1/5 annual, 3/5 perennial, and 1/5 fruits and veg
- ✓ Is there a wide selection of plant material?
- ✓ Are the plants used well together?
- ✓ Do the plants lend a sense of interest to the garden (colour/shape, texture)
- ✓ Do the plants compliment each other well in terms of proportion/colour/texture?

- ✓ Is there clever use of plants, e.g. climbers to cover bare walls, tall plants used to screen off areas (bins, oil tanks, storage area etc) Plants used as a feature? e.g. a tree
- ✓ Does the plant selection reflect year round interest? (Spring/summer/autumn/winter)
- ✓ Is there full use made of planting opportunities? e.g. hanging baskets, window boxes, container planting, climbers,

3. Environmental awareness (10)

- ✓ Home composter
- ✓ Water butt (collect rain water)
- ✓ Use of recycled material, sustainable material.
- ✓ Organic approaches to gardening e.g. companion planting (e.g. marigolds planted next to carrots) Use of beer traps /broken up eggshells for slugs and snails. No use of herbicides/pesticides
- ✓ Plants used to attract wildlife; shrubs, nectar plants e.g. Buddleja, lavender, Hebe, ivy etc
- ✓ Green house – evidence of producing own food?

4. Biodiversity awareness (10)

- ✓ Bird feeders/bird table
- ✓ Habitat boxes (bird/bat)
- ✓ Wild area (habitat for insects) e.g. nettles for butterflies.
- ✓ Water source for wildlife, even a birdbath, pond with shallow edges for animals to access and exit the water safely.
- ✓ Woodpile - area for insects to hibernate over the winter
- ✓ Native planting – trees/wildflowers/nectar patch (see examples above)

5. Care & maintenance (10)

- ✓ Well maintained and cared for garden
- ✓ Tidy appearance / no litter or over spill from wheelie bins