

Great Yorkshire Show 2016 (GB)

Wow! 'Best Show Garden' achieved by Leeds & District Allotment Gardeners Federation .

Earlier this year the LDAGF were judged along with other Horticultural Societies and Associations and were awarded a 'Premier Gold' certificate for the allotment garden they created at the 'Harrogate Spring Flower Show', quite an achievement in itself.

The team however went on to apply to the Great Yorkshire Show to enter an allotment garden as a 'Show Garden'.

This was a completely new venture as the Federation have never entered in this category before or created an allotment garden outdoors with all the problems of weather, wildlife and bugs.

Having submitted a last minute brief and sketch the fun began. The changes which would have to be made to create a show garden were discussed and designed to incorporate many useful innovations; innovations which can easily and very cheaply be created and also possibly be adapted, to aid the growing of fruit and vegetables and but still maintain features suitable to comply with the criteria for a show garden.

We have been very lucky to have the use of part of a large unheated greenhouse at Leeds City Council, Red Hall Nurseries but even this became too hot for the plants in June and also a pesky young magpie kept nipping off our new shoots. So, an additional large netted growing area had to be created on an extremely wet day; we got soaked. Many of the plants from the earlier show got beyond their best and many more had to be grown (all our plants are home grown) in fact most of the stands fabric is reused materials.

The team started creating the new features of the allotment show garden which was mostly ready a week before the show. Just as well because we started building the allotment garden on a Wednesday almost a week before the show.

A large van was hired to ship the plants to the showground on the Friday as most volunteers were only available to help at the weekend.

From this point on, the stand had to be totally netted every night to keep the rabbits out. By Monday the allotment garden was mostly complete, there was just the information aspect of the garden in two integral gazebos' (which completed a circular tour around the garden) and a few fiddley bits to finish.

Tuesday morning arrived and show gardens had to be ready for judging for 7am and for a 7.30am opening to the public, which meant a 5.30am start each day of the show, yawn!!!.

Bacon butties all round whilst waiting for the judges, and finally they arrived. You can't stand close by when the garden is being judged, you strain your eyes and ears trying to see the judges expressions and a snippet of the odd word. No such luck and off they went.

A little later a show official arrived and presented us with a 'Gold Medal' certificate, what a feeling of pride and elation overcomes you but as he left he said quietly I want someone at the show stage at 10.45 sharp for another surprise. What would it be? Three of the team went to see.

It turned out to be a wonderful surprise, a huge silver rose bowl and a 'Champions' certificate for the best 'Show Garden' what an achievement for a voluntary organisation at the huge and prestigious 'Great Yorkshire Show' and presented by none other than Carol Klein. It almost brought tears to my eyes and I nearly threw my bowler in the air.

A wonderful show followed with lots and lots of compliments and many visitors left the garden to implement the innovations seen on our allotment garden. A proud team and a very proud Publicity Officer, Phil Gomersall.















