



## PRESS RELEASE

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### CANAL & RIVER TRUST LAUNCHES INAUGURAL 'BOATS IN BLOOM' AWARDS

"It's blooming marvellous on the waterways" says the Canal & River Trust as it celebrates green-fingered boaters and waterside gardeners. The charity is launching its first-ever 'Boats in Bloom' awards to say thank you to the many people who bring the waterways to life with plants and flowers.

Starting in May, the Trust will be presenting colourful certificates to anyone whose boat or waterside planting is putting a smile on the face of passers-by. The charity is also calling on people to share photos of blossoming boats and waterways to create an online gallery to inspire and delight others.

There will also be a number of special prize categories for which people can nominate themselves or others. Nominations will run through to 31 July and will be whittled down to a shortlist by a judging panel. The shortlist will be published on the Trust's website and boaters and waterway and gardening-lovers will be able to vote for their favourites.

The special prize categories are:

#### Boats in Bloom

- Most flower filled boat
- Most edible growing boat
- Most imaginative use of space

#### Towpaths in Bloom

- Best towpath garden or open space
- Best towpath business in bloom
- Best wildlife friendly towpath or boating gardening initiative

Matthew Symonds, boating strategy and engagement manager at the Canal & River Trust, said: "Take a walk along any towpath and you'll be likely to come across a boat or a garden that lifts

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your spirits with its beautiful blooms. With Boats in Bloom we're saying thank you to all these gardeners who bring so much pleasure to other people.

"Plants don't just look pretty – a pot of herbs or a planter full of vegetables can be a sustainable lifestyle choice, while flowers provide food for bees and butterflies. In fact there are all sorts of ways gardens bring benefits for wildlife, even if they're on the move on the roof of a boat!

"We'd love to see how boaters and waterside gardeners are transforming the space around them. If you have a favourite boat or towpath garden, or are especially proud of your own, please let us know. We want Boats in Bloom to raise a smile, give people ideas and maybe inspire them to try a spot of gardening, or boating, themselves."

To find out more about Boats in Bloom please visit: [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/boatsinbloom](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/boatsinbloom)

Twitter: #boatsinbloom

## **ENDS**

### **For further media requests please contact:**

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### **Notes to editors**

#### **Timeline**

- Launch of Boats in Bloom campaign as part of National Gardening Week (10 – 16 April)
- Giving out Boats in Bloom certificates (1 May – 31 July)
- Nominations for Special Awards open (1 May – 31 July)
- Special Awards shortlist published – public vote open (7 – 29 August)
- Special awards winners announced (31 August)

### **Specialist judging panel members**

Julie Clark, gardening correspondent for Canal Boat Magazine

John Ellis, Canal & River Trust angling manager and award winning vegetable grower

Matthew Symonds, Canal & River Trust boating manager and keen gardener

Hilary Brooke, Member of North East Waterway Partnership, keen gardener and environmentalist

Mark Robinson, Canal & River Trust ecologist