



Canal &
River Trust

PRESS RELEASE

24 May 2017

TAKE TO THE TOWPATHS AND FIND YOUR FAVOURITE BLOOMING BOAT THIS SUMMER

The Canal & River Trust is calling on people in England & Wales to take to the towpath this summer and nominate their favourite flower-filled boats as part of the first-ever national 'Boats in Bloom' awards.

Quirky, stunning, eccentric, beautiful and edible: just some of the words to describe the blooming boats on the nation's waterways. The waterway charity is celebrating green-fingered boaters and waterside gardeners and needs local help to find the most spectacular boats across the country.

Nominations for special prizes – including most edible boat, most flower-filled boat, and most inventive use of space, alongside categories for waterside gardens – will run through to 31 July. They'll be whittled down to a shortlist by a judging panel of boating and gardening experts which will be put up for public vote to determine the nation's most spectacular blooming boats.

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

The charity's lock keepers and other staff and volunteers, who look after 2,000 miles of waterways across England and Wales, are also presenting colourful certificates to anyone whose boat or waterside planting is putting a smile on the faces of passers-by.

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address: First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

To find out more about Boats in Bloom please visit: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/boatsinbloom

Twitter: #boatsinbloom

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Notes to editors

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites. We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk @CanalRiverTrust @crtcomms

Timeline

- 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 August – 29 August)
- Special awards winners announced (31 August)

Special prize categories

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 gardening initiative