



Couple win award for exotic garden

By Tom Walker & Louise Wikstrom

When an East Finchley couple decided to transform their driveway into an exotic garden they didn't know how much they would be rewarded for their hard work.

Paul Harrington, 59, and Patsy Joseph, 36, won the Plantsman award as part of the Daily Mail's National Garden Competition 2005. The couple, both birdkeepers at London Zoo, were awarded the prize for the front garden of their bungalow off Church Lane. They won free tickets for the Hampton Court Flower Show, where they were presented with a plaque.

Down under in East Finchley

Paul describes the garden as "a cross between a cottage garden and a Mediterranean one".

"The plant I'm most proud of is the acacia pravissima [Ovens Wattle]. It's an Australian tree that flowers early in the year, with very nice, yellow blossom."

The garden is filled with greenery that usually grows only in the Southern Hemisphere, but seems to be doing just fine in Finchley. The plants have sur-

vived for four years now, and are getting bigger all the time.

The Plantsman award is given for an especially interesting collection of plants, as well as particular skill and passion for plants. Judges were impressed by the eclectic mix of plant-life, and the garden made it through to the final eleven in the main competition.

Paul says, "The front garden took a long time to set up, and it still needs looking after. Something I love about gardens is that as things grow they change - it's never the same."

Their next project is to finish off the work they have started on their back garden, which already has an interesting selection of plants, as well as a pond. The gardens attract all sorts of wildlife, including birds, terrapins, dragonflies and frogs. When the garden is done they plan to open it to the public, with a small entrance fee that will go to charity.



Tristan Green, winner of 'Barnet in Bloom'. Photo by Sheila Armstrong

Prize-winning local garden

By Sheila Armstrong

Tristan Green, residential caretaker on the Grange Estate, won second prize in the Barnet in Bloom Competition 2005 (Residential category) for the garden in front of the block where he lives - Cleveland House. Even though he works for Barnet Homes he entered as an individual because he wanted to improve the block he lives in.

When *THE ARCHER* visited him Barnet Homes had scaffolded the block ready for refurbishment but his attractive mixture of annuals and perennials in several beds was still on show.

He hopes that winning the prize will encourage more funding for planting in front of other blocks on the estate, which is currently undergoing major improvements.

Tristan, an ex-soldier and with City and Guilds qualifications in many of the building trades, is enthusiastic about his job and about the improvements on the Grange. The estate will soon have a community room, funded by both Barnet and the Police and as part of Local Agenda 21 there is an on-going programme of tree planting.

Painting the gardens grey

By Paul Chapman

Yes, mowing the lawn and cutting the hedge are not always our top priority but many ARCHER readers will have their front garden and we all benefit from the green space of gardens in our neighbourhood.

But now front gardens are at increased risk because of their potential as a parking space. There are no substantive planning limits on block-paving a front garden, with a crossover from road to pavement, in order to convert a garden into a parking space. Conversions may be increasing because of Controlled Parking Zones.

However, there is growing concern that we should have as much green space as possible, and not just because of how the area looks. Many organisations are taking an interest in the environmental benefits of the humble garden.

More paving, less land

Mike Gee of North Finchley Agenda21 Partnership, a voluntary organisation promoting sustainable development, says, "We are very concerned because gardens account for about 20% of the land area in London. Increased block paving has already led to overload of the sewerage system but local councils have no plans to change their stance on this issue." Agenda21 would like Barnet to provide residents with information on the effects of paving when applications are received to convert a garden space for parking. Agenda21 can be contacted through Mike Gee on 020 8346 5503 or Gardi Vaswani on 020 8445 6312.

Sadly the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association report that they do not have the resources to continue with their front garden competition.

Flowery landmark

By Sue Holliday

It is always with pleasure that I report on the activities or achievements of Maddens. After all, it was the place where THE ARCHER was conceived, back when it was known as Welch's.

This time it is to announce that Maddens was anonymously entered into the Daily Mail competition for the best flowery pub. Also on a recent Friday evening it featured in the Anne Robinson programme, 'What's the Problem?'

The floral display outside Maddens is often used as an aid to giving directions: "Just past the pub with all the flowers." Sadly, soon some of those flowers may disappear when renovations take place.

Police Dog recruitment

The Metropolitan Police Dog Training School is on the lookout for young German Shepherd dogs (dogs or bitches) aged between 10 months to 2 years for training as police dogs.

Mischievous or 'naughty' young dogs that pinch children's toys and rummage through waste bins may have the kind of temperament and drive necessary to succeed as police dogs. Anyone who thinks they may have such a dog and is prepared to present it as a gift dog should call the Dog Section at West Drayton on 020 8246 1712.

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