

# HOW TO ORGANISE...

## AN OPEN GARDEN EVENT

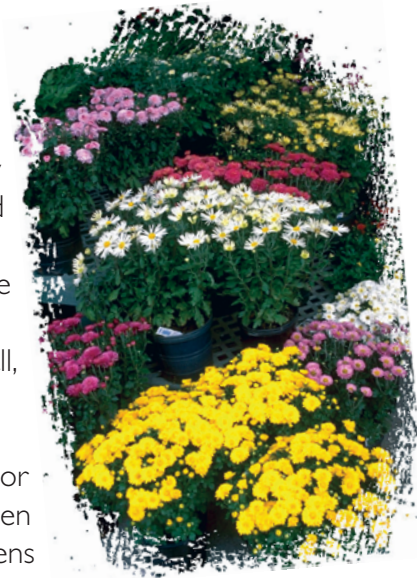
### INTRODUCTION

Garden enthusiasts are always interested to visit other people's gardens and to get ideas for how to make the best use of space, soil, and plants. If you know of some lovely or interesting gardens locally, approach the owners to see if they will open their garden for one afternoon when it is looking at its best, and allow people to visit and admire their handiwork. The gardens do not necessarily have to be large, but should have some interesting features, plants or colours.

You can either organise for several gardens in one town or village to open together, so that people can visit several on one afternoon, or organise a series of open afternoons from May to September. Tea and cakes can be sold and served in the gardens or at a local hall.

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU START

- Start planning well ahead, preferably as early in the year as possible for the coming season
- Select the time of year and date - Spring garden in early May, Summer garden in July, Autumn garden in September. Decide if it is to be a one or two day event at the weekend.
- Check proposed dates in local diary of events, Tourist Information Centres etc, so you have no competition from another event in the area. There may be a group visiting the area (eg caravan rally), so the event can be supported by incoming people as well as locals.
- Check availability of car parking (neighbouring roads, school playground, village green etc).
- Check availability of toilet facilities (owner's house, public toilets, local hall, school etc).
- Inform the local traffic police of your proposal.
- Advertise for gardens to open in Feb/March in local parish news (usually free or £5) or similar magazines and ask friends and neighbours in local area to open their gardens from 1-5pm. You will require between 6 and 20 gardens depending on their size.
- Ask a local garden centre or nursery to sponsor the event, pay for posters, flyers, etc, and/or donate plants or trays of bedding plants for sale.



### PREPARATION BEFORE THE EVENT

- Produce a proposal form to be filled in by the garden/homeowners stating name, address and telephone number. Ask them to describe garden size and any special features. Add date of proposed event, opening and closing times and the purpose of the event-raising funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. Ask them to sign and return the form to you by a certain date.
- Source volunteers and organise a meeting; find out people's strengths; delegate as many jobs as possible; ask them to make signs, organise the catering, run a cake stall, take entry fees, and direct.
  - Advertise the event and produce a poster for local press, church magazines etc; try for free editorial; contact gardening clubs, women's institutes, mothers union, send out posters to local schools, groups, shops, leisure centres, libraries, local pubs etc, push flyers through neighbouring

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11 London Road Bromley Kent BR1 1BY Tel: 020 8464 7211 Fax: 020 8313 0472 [events@cftrust.org.uk](mailto:events@cftrust.org.uk)

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letterboxes.

- Decide how much to charge usually £3/£4 per person with children free.
- If organising for several gardens to be open on the same day, make a plan of the garden route starting with No 1 and name of house. Make enough copies to hand out say 300-500.
- Give the owners CF Trust promotional material, eg banner, posters, CF information leaflets, three balloons to be blown up and tied to each garden gate on the day.
- Remember you will need a cash float.
- The CF Trust has cover for £5 million public liability insurance. Your Regional Fundraising Manager can provide you with a copy of the insurance certificate if required.

## ON THE DAY

- Put out as many signs advertising the event as possible, stating place and time of opening.
- Make it clear with large arrows where refreshments, stalls etc are available.
- Put up bunting and signs where tickets will be sold - hall, pub etc.
- Publicise the CF Trust with promotional material provided.

## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Earn extra income providing refreshments in owners' gardens, local hall or community centre.
- Sell plants. Some garden centres will donate plants or let you sell trays of bedding plants on sale or return. You can then sell them individually and make more profit.
- Organise stalls eg bring and buy, cake stall, bric-a-brac, greetings cards, Osborne books. Charge 10% of income or £10 per stall.
- Arrange a bouncy castle for children and have a 50/50 arrangement.



## AFTER THE EVENT

- Make sure all posters and signage is removed.
- Remember to write and thank everyone involved, especially the garden owners.

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*Patron: HRH Princess Alexandra, the Hon. Lady Ogilvy, KG, GCVO President: Duncan Bluck CBE*  
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*Registered office: 11 London Road Bromley Kent BR1 1BY*