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1.0. Welcome Message:

As President of AEFP I am delighted to welcome you to the first edition of the Entente Florale Newsletter. This Newsletter aims to communicate latest news and events to member countries and participant communities. We wish to keep everybody informed of developments in relation to our Entente Florale competition, in preparation for the resumption of judging in the Summer of 2022. I wish everyone well after what has been a very difficult time for communities across Europe and the globe and it is hoped that the resumption of our competition will act as a beacon of hope for the future of our European communities and environment.

2.0 Entente Florale Participant 2022 Keadue, County Roscommon Ireland:

Located in the midlands of Ireland Keadue is famous because it is the burial place of Ireland’s renowned blind harpist, composer and bard Turlough O’Carolan who died on the 25th of March 1738. A major Harp Festival takes place in the village annually to celebrate his wonderful melodic compositions which are still popular today. – see below some recent photos taken in Keadue over the summer 2021.

Not only is Keadue a very beautifully presented village, but the community also places a major emphasis on protecting local biodiversity. To this end on the advice of Mr. Sean Meehan Ecologist, and a follow up to the biodiversity workshops which were held in Keadue Hall and funded by Roscommon Leader Partnership, the following changes needed to be made in the established small wildflower hay meadow locally known as "Paddy Duignan's Orchard". Removal of overgrown shrubbery, removal of ivy from existing 100-year-old Apple trees. Levelling of ground to make way for planting new apple and other fruit trees, also advice on type of wildflowers which are more suitable to plant in this area. In this area are nesting hedges, an earth bank, old wood with holes and Bee hotels and native wildflowers. Well done to all in Keadue involved in this good work and we look forward to seeing you during our judging visit in 2022.



3.0. New members welcome!!

During the period of the Pandemic the AEFP has taken the opportunity to amend its rules and regulations. It is now possible for individual cities towns and villages or community organisations to join our competition on an individual basis without the need for a national competition. At present there are 8 member countries, and we are always on the look out to bring new countries on board. If you have contacts in any non-member countries around Europe, we would like to hear from you!

The current member countries are Belgium, Italy, Malta, Germany, Ireland, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Austria.

4.0. Competition Criteria Review:

A sub-committee has recently been established to review the existing 10 Entente Florale competition criteria with a view to updating advice to participant communities taking into account all recent developments in the context of the sustainability/environmental agenda. It is hoped to have this review completed at the end of this year in readiness for the commencement of the competition in 2022. Further details to follow.

5.0. Important Dates for your Diary.

14th Jan. 2022 – Deadline for submission of Entente Florale Entry Form and Photographs representing your community.

13th May 2022 – Precise details of Jury Visit in place and forwarded to Sec. Gen. AEFP.

3rd June 2022 – A4 Portfolio to be sent to Sec. Gen. AEFP.

23rd – 25th September – Entente Florale Awards Ceremony, Balatonfüred, Hungary. (TBC).

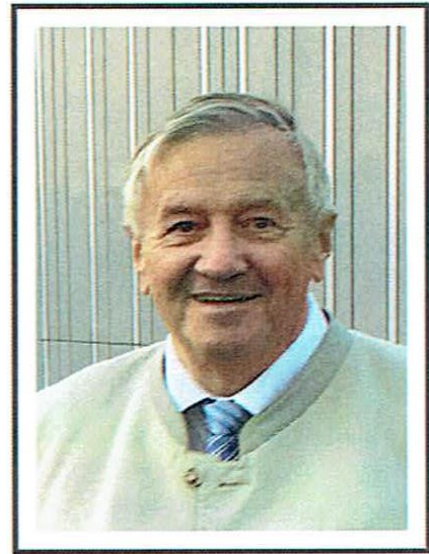
6.0 Technical Notes – the use of commercial ‘wildflower’ mixes.

Swathes of colourful ‘wildflowers’ originating from commercial seed mixtures have become a common feature on roadsides and open spaces, amidst a growing perception that such areas benefit bees and other pollinating insects and counteract biodiversity loss. This has been the subject of considerable debate recently in the media in Ireland - two famous patches of closely mown grass at the entrance to Trinity College in Dublin have been replaced with so called ‘wild meadows’. According to a recent position paper issued by the Dublin Naturalists Field Club (established in 1886) plants that are deliberately sown are not, of course, ‘wild’ and in their view the use of these commercial seed mixtures can be harmful to the natural environment, damaging natural habitats. These areas are not seen to be of any long-term value to pollinators or other wildlife. Instead, flora and fauna — including pollinators — are best served by recognising and conserving insitu natural habitats and adopting low-intensity management methods. The use of ‘wildflower’ seed mixtures fails to address and can sometimes even aggravate the real issues of biodiversity loss. A good point to remember when communities are contemplating converting closely mown grassed areas to meadows!



7.0. Herbert Titz Memorial Prize.

Herbert Titz, a board member of AEFP regrettably, died on the 28th of October 2020 in his 71st year, a victim of the Covid19 pandemic. Herbert was associated with Entente Florale Europe for several decades and served as President of AEFP from 2014 to 2016. He was very enthusiastic about the competition and was dedicated to its aims which are the enhancement of the quality of life in urban and rural communities in Europe, through the development of horticulture, tourism, and social/cultural improvements. The board and jury of Entente Florale Europe (EFE) have decided to honour our late colleague by establishing a Special Prize for entrants to the competition in 2022.



In deciding on the adjudication criteria for the Special Prize, we have taken into consideration Herbert's love of ornamental plants and in particular the use of plants with edible flowers, for medicinal purposes and the value of green space in relation to enhancing public health benefits.



EFE Awards Ceremony 2019 Haus im Ennstal, Austria.



And finally,

All prospective 2022 Entente Florale Europe participants, national co-ordinators, board and jury members are welcome to submit any information, news items or projects of particular interest relating to our competition, which I would be happy to include in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Bill Kearney,

Secretary General, AEFP.