

Life

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The Sunday Telegraph 11.07.10

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GARDENING

GARDENS THAT MAKE YOUR DAY

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gardening awards **P12-13**

GAP PHOTOS



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LIFE GARDENING READERS' AWARD

The Sunday Telegraph launches a new award to honour those whose gardening efforts touch the lives of others. It is dedicated to the memory of the writer Elspeth Thompson

Gardening Against the Odds awards

Why do we garden? And why does the passion with which we garden so often seem to be in inverse proportion to the conditions in which we do it?" This was the question posed by Elspeth Thompson in what was to be her final online diary entry before her death, aged 48, in March this year. In the diary, she planned to chronicle the progress of her own garden on "shingly soil on England's south coast", and to champion others who endeavoured to make gardens in "unlikely and unpromising places". She described it as: "Gardening Against the Odds."

For 14 years Elspeth delighted *Sunday Telegraph* readers with her writing. She drew our attention to the glorious gardening efforts on roof terraces or windowboxes. A strip of no man's land planted with wildflowers, she wrote, "seems to me all the more beautiful for it being completely selfless - it reminds me of that old hippy tenet to 'practise random kindness and senseless acts of beauty'."

Elspeth's enthusiastic support of The Conservation Foundation's Green Corners Awards saw her nominate many London gardens for special recognition. And it is in association with the Conservation Foundation and Green & Black's that *The Sunday Telegraph* today announces a special award extended to the whole country, to carry on Elspeth's championing of ordinary gardeners: The Gardening Against the Odds awards.

WHAT IS 'GARDENING AGAINST THE ODDS'?

Entries can be from, or on behalf of, individual gardeners or small communities who have

HOW TO ENTER OR NOMINATE SOMEONE FOR THIS AWARD



Anyone with a garden or public "green space" of any size can enter. And neighbours, friends, family or passers-by are encouraged to make nominations. Entries should be sent preferably via the link on our website www.telegraph.co.uk/gardeningawards where

there is a form, terms & conditions:

- On the form, include the plot-owner's name, address, and if possible phone number and email. If you are nominating someone else's garden then please include your own details too.
- Describe why this garden should win a Gardening Against the Odds award (in no more than 500 words). Include the circumstances in which the garden was created, and note any flowers, trees, fruit or vegetables growing there.

Please attach at least two clear digital photographs. They can be taken earlier this year (2MB max).

By Post

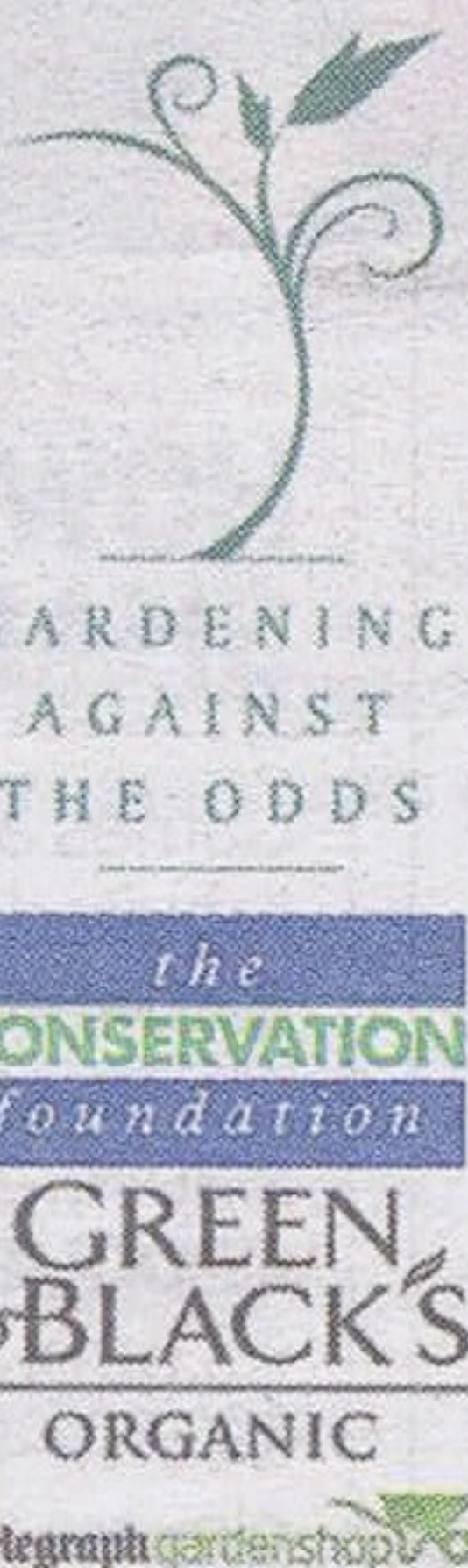
If you do not have internet access, send written entries with photographs to: Gardening Against the Odds Awards, Life, *The Sunday Telegraph*, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0DT.

Closing date: Entries by Friday September 17 2010. The winner and two runners-up will be published in *Life* on October 3.

Prizes

The winner will receive the Gardening Against the Odds trophy and £100 to spend in the Telegraph Garden Shop. Two runners-up will receive £50 to spend in the Telegraph Garden Shop. Nominators of the top three gardens will receive a bottle of champagne.

www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening;
www.conservationfoundation.co.uk



created a beautiful garden (of any size) or green corner that touches the lives of others. The obstacles overcome may include the following:

- 1 Creating a garden in an unlikely, or inhospitable corner - such as a derelict site or built-up area.
- 2 Gardening in the face of physical health problems;
- 3 Gardening in the face of mental or psychological health problems such as depression or grief. Elspeth Thompson herself suffered from depression and in

March, following a severe spell, she took her own life.

NOMINATIONS PLEASE

Gardeners can be modest about their achievements, so we urge friends, relatives and neighbours to nominate gardeners who deserve recognition for what they have created. See the box, above, for details of how to enter. Best entries will be posted on the Telegraph gardening website (www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening) throughout the summer.

JUDGES

• From *The Sunday Telegraph*, gardening columnist and landscape architect **Bunny Guinness**; Life editor **Anne Cuthbertson**.

• From The Conservation Foundation: the botanist **David Bellamy** and the actress and gardening author **Susan Hampshire** (pictured left) and **David Shreeve**, director of The Conservation Foundation. Commenting on the awards, David Shreeve said: "Elspeth was a judge of The Conservation Foundation's Green Corners Awards which celebrate the efforts of Londoners. She was a wonderful supporter, always on the lookout for the quirky, unexpected and uplifting and her delight in those who garden against the odds knew no bounds. She shared the pleasure they gave her with the readers of her articles and books. We are delighted to be part of these awards in memory of such a talented and inspiring person."

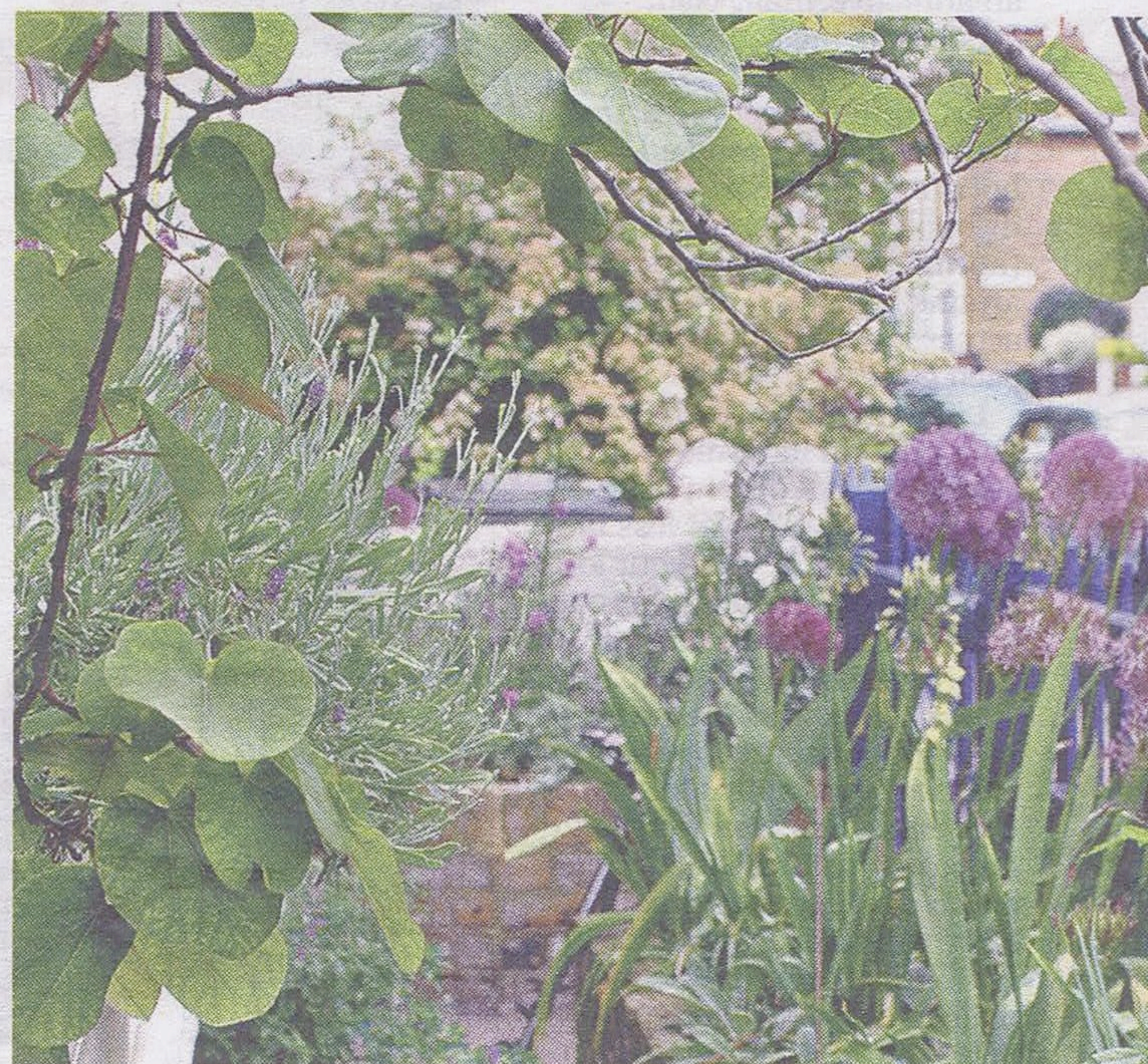
• **Christopher Woodward**, director, the Garden Museum

• **Richard Reynolds**, founder of "Guerrilla Gardening"

• **Craig Sams**, founder of Green & Black's

• And we are delighted that Elspeth's husband **Frank Wilson** has agreed to be a judge. "Elspeth always got great joy from seeing beauty in unlikely places, whether it was an abandoned bicycle in Amsterdam where its basket had been planted up with flowers, or the gardens she created herself - from a tiny balcony in central London, an allotment and the concrete box which was our garden in Brixton."

Send us your entries and help celebrate those who create places, no matter how small, using imagination, perseverance and perhaps a bit of good old quirkiness too, to bring life to our landscape, and prove that the power of gardening can lift the spirits.



BEN MURPHY (MAIN PORTRAIT); MAGDA TRUSKOWSKA; MAAYKE DE RIDDER

READERS' AWARD



GARDENING

LIFE

INSPIRING GARDENS WITH STORIES TO TELL



Enduring memory: Gardening writer Elspeth Thompson, above, pictured in her London allotment; left and right, the front garden of her Brixton terrace house, which never failed to stop passers-by in their tracks



Clockwise from top: The Livia Garden in Enfield was created on a derelict site by Giulietta Galli-Atkinson, whose daughter Livia had been killed by a car when it mounted an adjacent pavement. A beautiful front garden in Turney Road, Dulwich, which caught Elspeth's eye. The Alleyway was

once a no man's land; it has been reclaimed for passers-by Doreen King. The Lavender Field at the junction of Westminster Bridge Road and St George's Road was an expanse of weeds before the Guerrilla Gardeners transformed it. Pictures courtesy of The Conservation Foundation