

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,  
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,  
at the Britain in Bloom Award Ceremony  
on 21st May 2024

Dr Upson,  
Mr Wheatley,  
Distinguished Guests,

My wife and I are truly grateful for this opportunity to join the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Britain in Bloom. Taking this opportunity, we would like to congratulate the City of Mitsuke in Japan, with Mayor Ryo Inada, the Natural Garden Club and Ms Kei Yamada, on receiving such a wonderful award on this significant occasion at the renowned Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show.

The relationship between Japan and the UK through gardens and gardening runs deep. As a matter of fact, the two countries have been interacting with each other in this way for almost 100 years. It might be well known that Japanese gardens are influenced by Zen spirituality and the British and Japanese approaches to gardens are somewhat different. Having said so, to the both countries share strong affection to a culture of harmony with nature and a love of flowers and plants.

Based on our shared love of nature, English gardens and gardening are also becoming more and more popular in Japan. Many wonderful English gardens have struck a chord with Japanese people, including the Tateshina Bankura English Garden, designed by Ms Kei Yamada.

The City of Mitsuke in Niigata, Japan, the Natural Garden Club and Ms Kei Yamada are all being honoured with the Britain in Bloom Gold Community Award. I understand that the award is being given in recognition of the gardeners' contribution to the beautification and development of the local

community of Mitsuke City for over 20 years.

In this way, gardens and gardening have strengthened the ties and have become a symbol of friendship between our two countries. We hope that gardens will continue to be places of peace and relaxation for people and bridges of friendship between Japan and the UK. Once again, I would like to offer my congratulations to all the winners of this prestigious award at the 60th anniversary celebrations of Britain in Bloom.

Thank you very much.