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Sowing the seeds of success

A pair of pensioners are celebrating after they swept the board in the annual Whitefriars Garden Competition.

Proving they know their Artemesia from their elbows, Edwin and Margaret Page have claimed the competition's top spot for the seventh year in the past ten. This year the couple, of Merynton Avenue, beat more than 100 entrants to win the Championship prize along with the Area 4 and Retired categories.

Eighty-three year-old Mr Page said: "We just like to keep the garden nice. I've always liked gardening, my father used to garden in Leicester and he is my inspiration.

"It's a joint effort with my wife who is disabled. It's quite a big job to keep it nice and tidy but we like to feel proud of it."

The couple, along with a host of other winners, picked up their prizes at a special event last night at the Britannia Hotel. Lord Mayor John Gazey and Lady Mayoress Hazel Gazey presented winners with their prizes.

But Mr Page, a retired decorator, said it was the taking part that counted: "There are no losers. I'm not about to become big headed and we don't want people to think we enter to win. We just like our garden to be nice. We'd like to encourage other people to take part and give way soon to someone else."

However, even if the green-fingered twosome hang up their gardening gloves, competitors should still beware.

Mrs Page, a former supervisor at Walsgrave Hospital, said: "We have three grandchildren who all enjoy playing in the garden. Christopher is only eight but he has quite an interest and already has some plants in the greenhouse. When I said this might be the last year Nanny and Grandad take part, he asked if he could enter and put his name in. He's always designing gardens and often helps out."

Two other stars are seven-year-old Alex and Katie May Robinson, four. The super siblings scooped the children's colouring competition prizes with Alex claiming the age seven and above class and Katie May winning the age six and under category.

Proud mum Sue, of Gerard Avenue, Canley, said: "We are both really proud and pleased for them. This is the second year they have entered and the second year they have both picked up prizes. I don't think they get it from me though!

"It's really good the competition is for all the family and the children loved the award ceremony. It's so exciting for them and they are treated as if they are the most important people there. It just gives them both an extra boost of confidence."

More than 150 gardening gurus and local businesses attended last night's presentation. Attractions on offer included a range of displays and stands by local gardening clubs and societies, a free prize draw and a buffet. An annual Garden Competition has taken place in Coventry since 1935.

Groups exhibiting at the event included Coventry Flower Club, Coventry Fuchsia and Geranium Society, Lodge Farm Herbs and Plants, Allesley Park Walled

Garden Group, Coventry and District Chrysanthemum Society and The Coventry and District Greenhouse Society.

Howard Farrand, Chief Executive at Whitefriars, said it was a fantastic opportunity for residents to come together and gain a real sense of community.

He said: “As well as being a very enjoyable event, it is a valuable opportunity to engage with residents and encourage them to improve their own gardens as well as communal areas, all of which benefits the community as a whole.”

Ends

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