

# Association of British Botanical Artists

every one - every where - every stage

## ABBA Survey Results - September 2018

To comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) survey invitations were sent by email to those individuals who had signed up for either information about ABBA membership, about ABBA events or just general information about the association. A total of 257 invitations were sent by email on the 7th August. and the survey closed on September the 11th.

As of September the 11th there were a total of 102 respondents who completed the online survey which represents 39.7% of the polled audience. This online survey used Google Forms and consisted of twenty one questions in five sections. The introduction to the survey was as follows:

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*“ABBA is at the initial stages of forming a group of like-minded individuals with a passion for botanical art and native plants. We would love to get your input at this early stage as we work with you to form a group for all that will promote its members and help them grow in their chosen passion.*

*Our three guiding principles are:*

*Every One*

*Every Where*

*Every Stage*

*This means the group would be open to all, from any location national or international and at any stage of artistic development.*

*The survey has five short sections and should take about TEN minutes to complete.*

*Section 1 - A little about you.*

*Section 2 - What type of group ABBA could be.*

*Section 3 - ABBA Education*

*Section 4 - What type of events could ABBA facilitate.*

*Section 5 - Communication with you.*

**ALL RESPONSES ARE ANONYMOUS AND NO DETAILS ABOUT YOU ARE STORED**

*We would love your thoughts to the following questions:”*

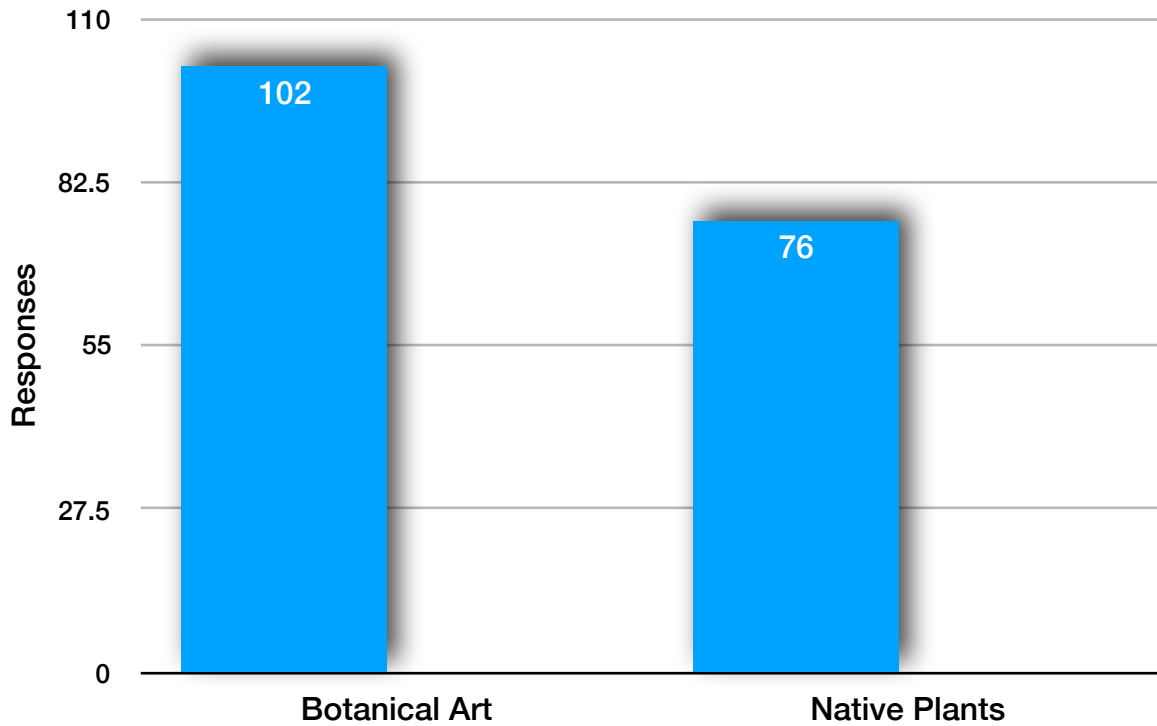
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The results have been collated and are shown in their entirety and without comment in the following pages.

# Results

## Section 1 - A little about you.

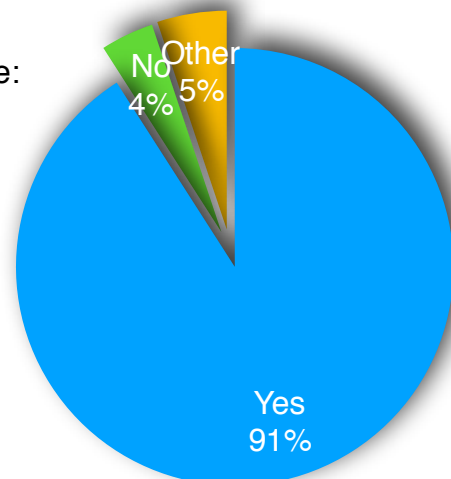
Q1. Are you interested in? (you can select more than one) - 102 responses



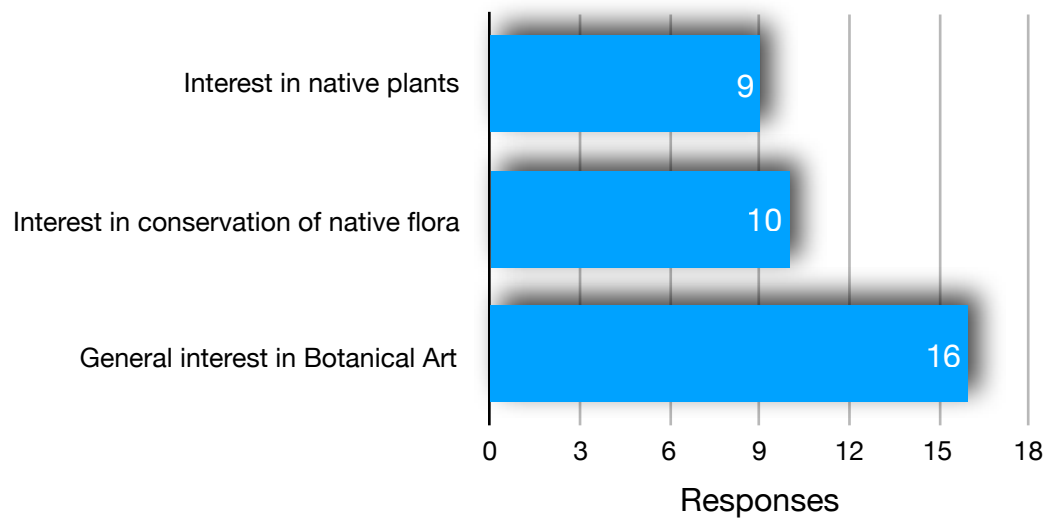
Q2. Are you a practicing botanical artist? ( regardless of what level) - 102 responses

Of the five who responded with “Other” the comments were:

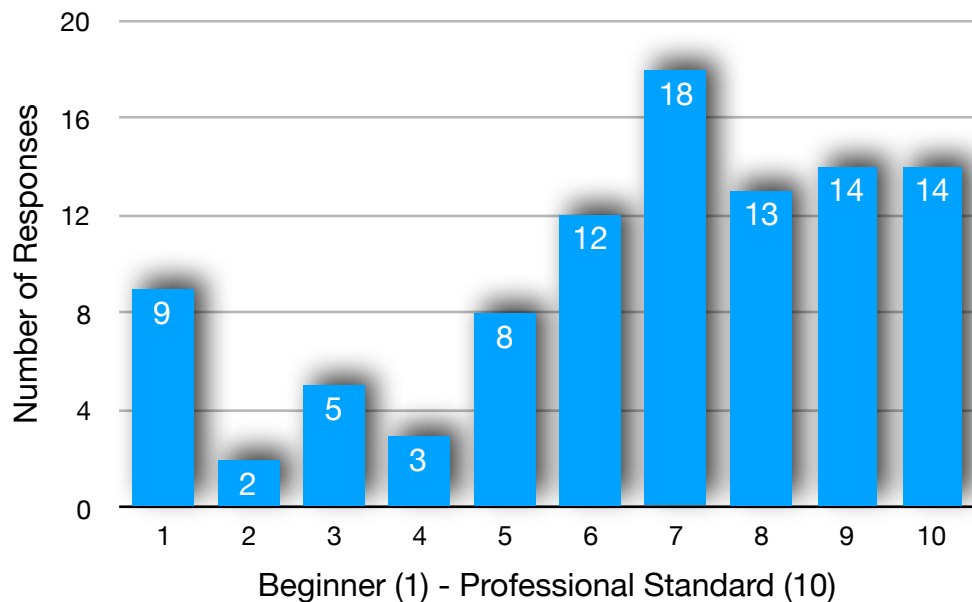
- beginner botanical artist
- learning the botanical side of art.
- do paint a bit--mainly what's organised for group
- I'm interested amateur!
- currently practice still life flower painting
- learning artist



Q3 If you are NOT a botanical artist what attracted you to ABBA? (you can select more than one) - 16 responses

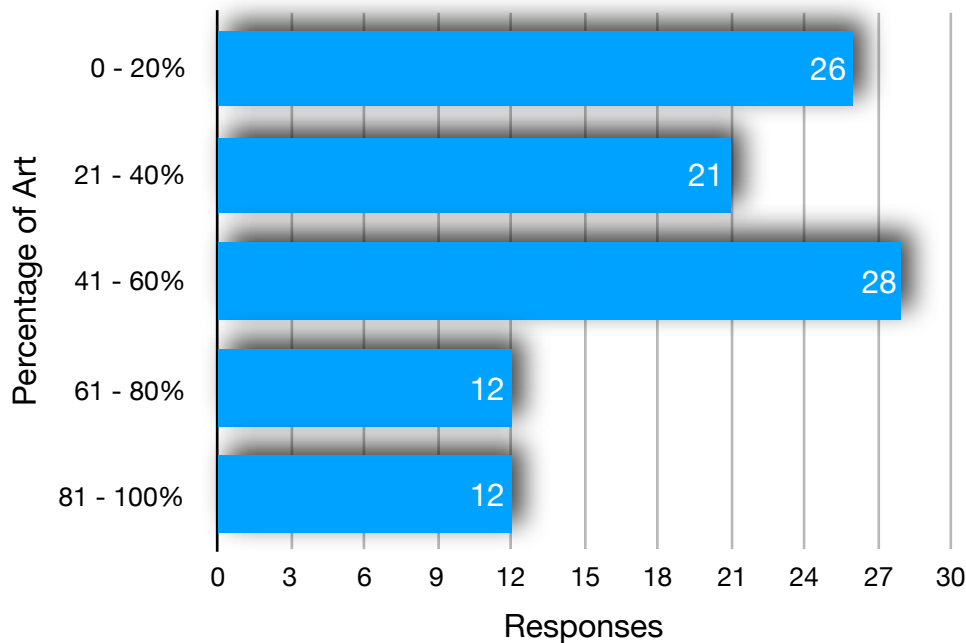


Q4. If you are a practising botanical artist where would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 - 10? - 98 responses



In this case the scale went from 1 (Beginner) to 10 ( Professional Standard) and the standard was self assessed by the respondent.

Q5. If you practice botanical art, approximately what percentage of your art would focus on "native" plants (a wild plant indigenous to a country)? - 98 responses

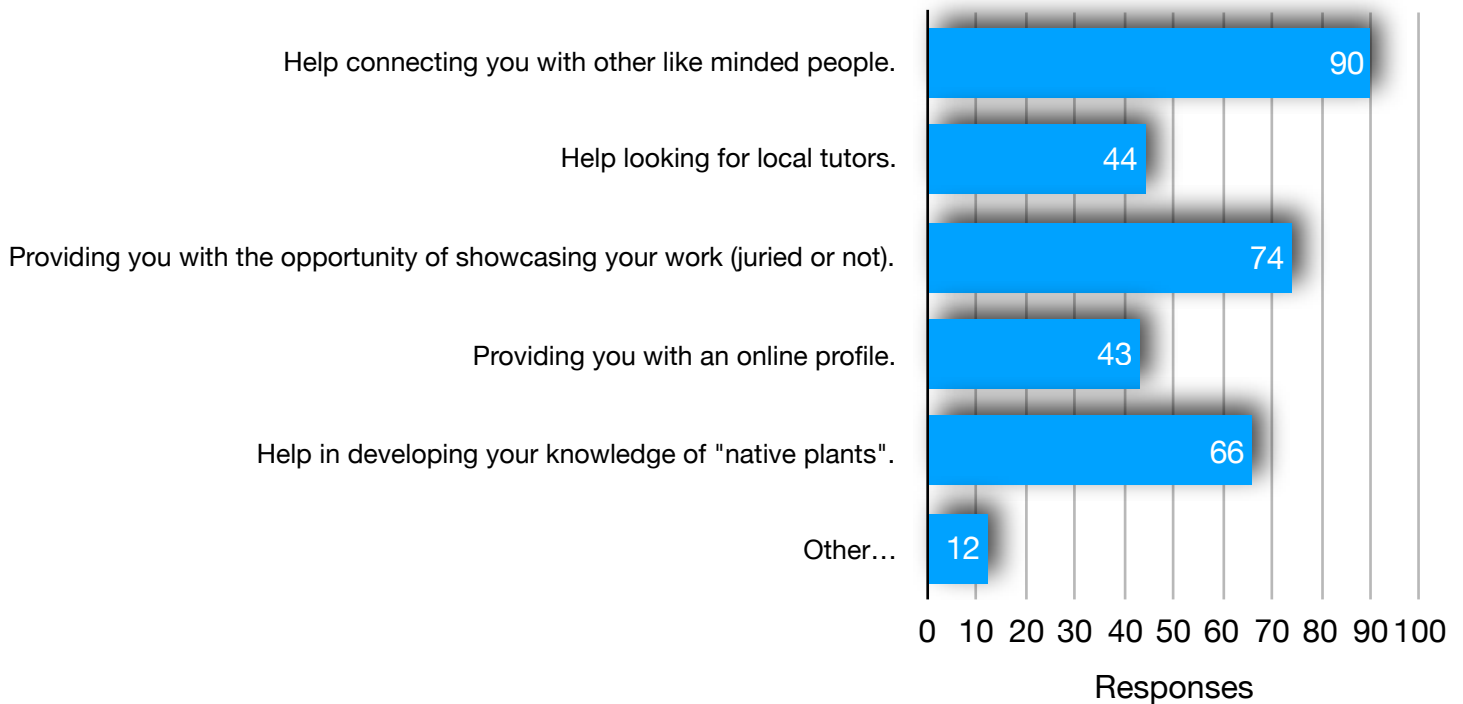


## Section 2 - What type of group ABBA could be.

Q6. If you are NOT a botanical artist what do you see ABBA providing for you? - 8 responses

- *to be made aware of events and courses around the UK*
- *I hope that Abba can encourage local, regional and national interest in botany and botanical art.*
- *support as I learn more about botanical art and my ability to paint botanically*
- *a chance to paint some of the flowers I love*
- *help me to get into botanical art and improve my flower paintings*
- *a shop window for new and established artists*
- *occasional exhibitions and a chance to buy*
- *I'm keen to help support original botanical art in all its forms from scientific illustration through to an exploration of plant's beauty*

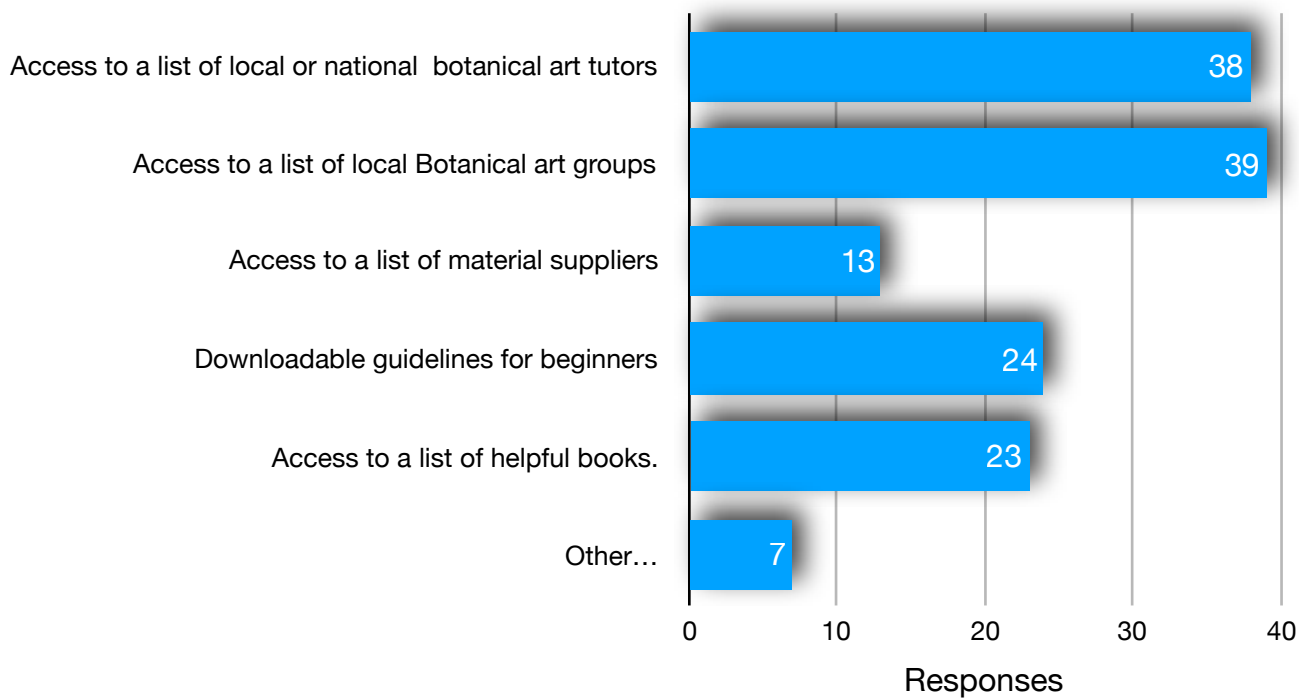
Q7. If you are a botanical artist how do you see ABBA working for you? (you can select more than one) - 96 responses



Text Responses to Q7 - "Other"

<i>I'm keen to help support original botanical art in all its forms from scientific illustration through to an exploration of plant's beauty</i>
<i>Help connecting you with other like minded people.</i>
<i>Involvement in projects on the subject as an artist, and as a lay person.</i>
<i>As a point of contact between me and those looking for tutoring in my area</i>
<i>Help connecting you with other like minded people.</i>
<i>Local group</i>
<i>Highlighting native botanical art to inspire others</i>
<i>Information about courses &amp; exhibitions.</i>
<i>Linking with botanists and important projects. Bringing together different societies and associations.</i>
<i>Providing a base for which collaborative projects could be undertaken; taking the initiative on industry standards e.g. judging criteria, teaching standards,</i>
<i>1) Involvement in projects of botanical art. 2) developing my knowledge of botany.</i>
<i>Supporting interested amateur botanical artist alongside the profession on an equal footing and non-competitive basis benefits us all.</i>
<i>Help to form a local group that meets regularly</i>
<i>Education, online tips and tested methods from experiences artists, if willing to share.</i>
<i>The opportunity to engage in broader issues around botanical art practice</i>
<i>Help with developing artistic skills and knowledge of botanical art.</i>

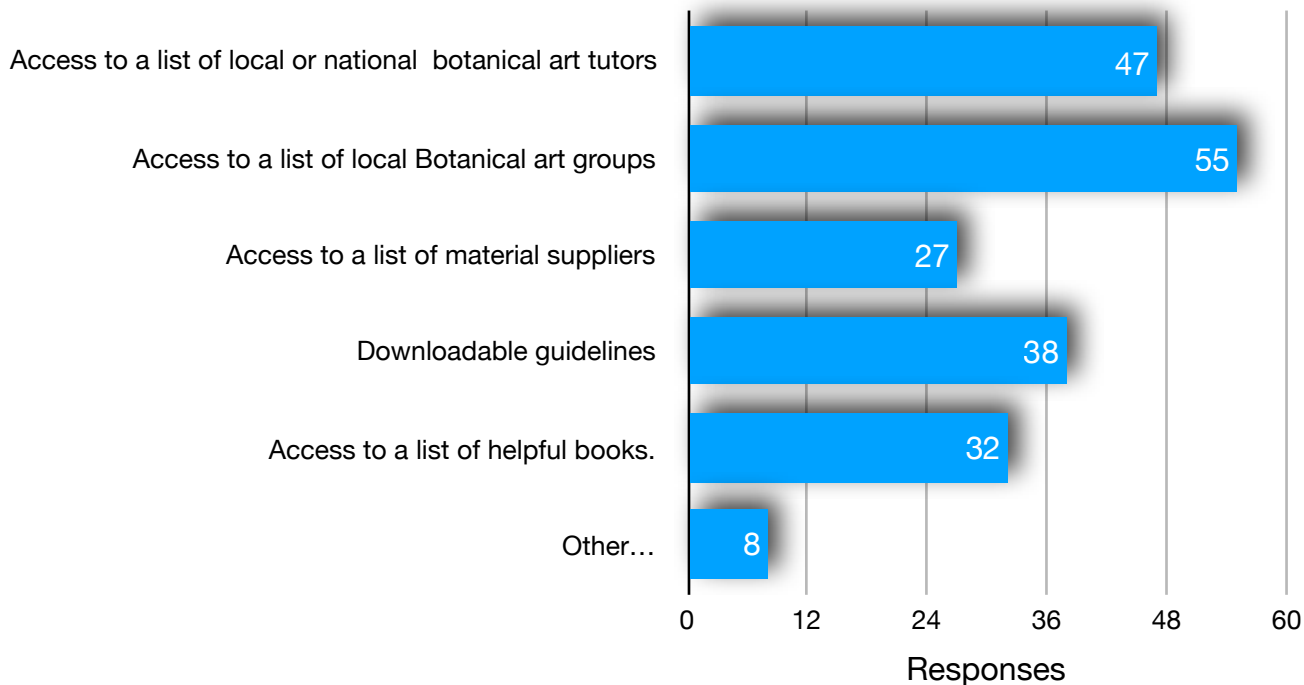
Q8. Regarding educational opportunities for BEGINNER level artists - what would be of value to you? (you can select more than one) - 43 responses



Text Responses to Q8 - "Other"

<i>More like minded people</i>
<i>Guidance in exploring a wide variety of media.</i>
<i>Local get together</i>
<i>Institutional courses</i>
<i>I think this very much depends on where the beginner is starting and how adventurous they might be! It's certainly not one size fits all, but I greatly benefitted from being in a group setting where we all learned from each other.</i>
<i>I live 6 months in France would love to meet French botanical artists in my area, but it is very difficult. There is no international directory of groups that I can find.</i>
<i>Access to a list of local or national botanical art tutors</i>

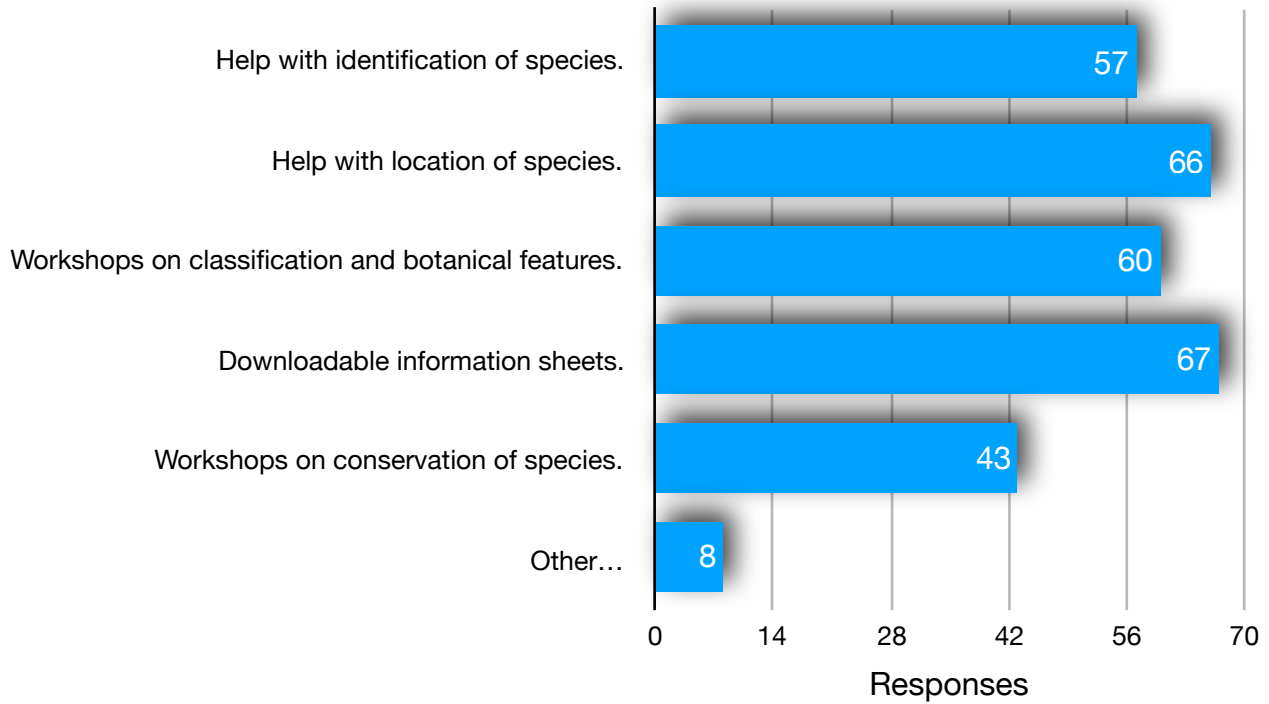
Q9. Regarding educational opportunities for INTERMEDIATE level artists - what would be of value to you? (you can select more than one) - 64 responses



#### Text Responses to Q9 "Other"

Access to a list of people specifically interested my preferred media
Certified local courses
Information about art shows and submitting work
Forging links to botanical tutors and groups to share our common interest in native plants
Connection with other painters and people who know about plants/ habitats
Ditto above
A similar answer to the Beginner level, but with a difference - to aspire to advance beyond intermediate level, information on accredited courses, SBA, RGBE etc. Plus of course information on current botanical art exhibitions taking place across the country where we can explore the highest standards of botanical art/ illustration, or be pleasantly surprised that our work is on a par with what's on display. Perhaps we just haven't had that opportunity yet.

Q10. Regarding native plants - what would be of value to you? (you can select more than one) - 95 responses



Text Responses to Q10 "Other"

Local group
I think working with plant enthusiasts to promote wildlife preservation would be interesting
Links with botanists and projects
Pointers to workshops already provided by BSBI, Bot. Gardens etc
Get a lot of this sort of help from WFS but travelling sometimes tricky
My level of interest in botanical art hasn't required that exactitude of detail. I would imagine (perhaps through bodies such as FSC or Natural History Societies, many of these workshops currently exist, so I'm not sure what ABBA can contribute over and above this other than to collate the information into a centralised 'search' platform...
field trips
Access to a list of current flora guides that are considered to be the 'standard' guides.



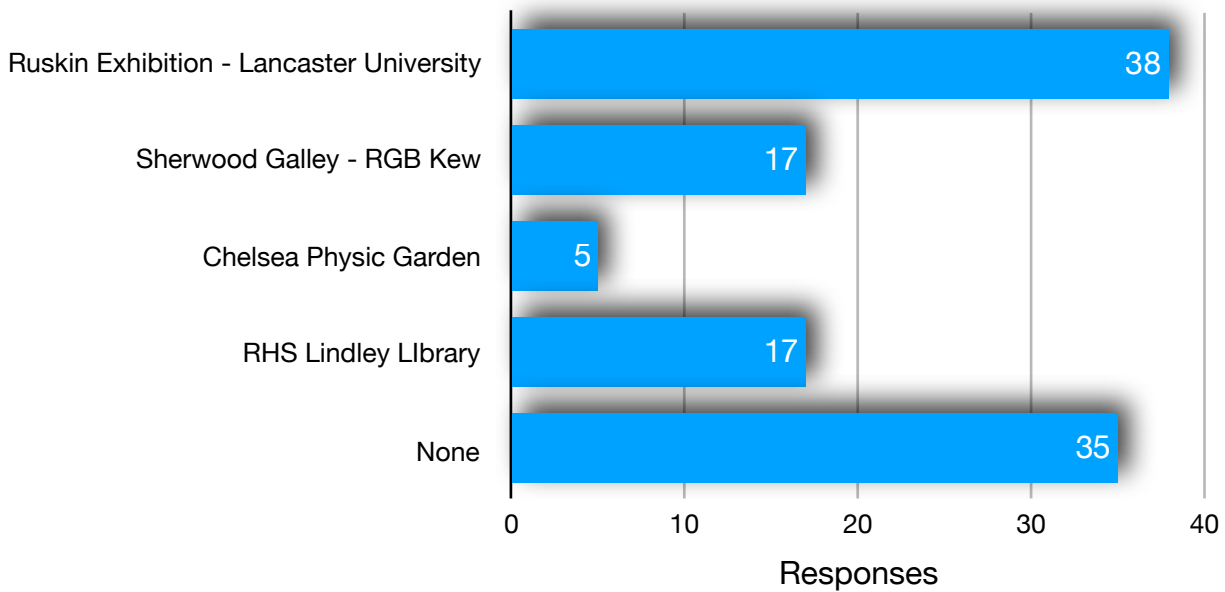
## Q11. Any other comments about " what ABBA could facilitate" ? - 28 responses

- I hope that Abba can encourage local, regional and national interest in botany and botanical art. It would help the outsiders whose support and understanding we need if botanical artists were more consistent in their descriptions and definitions of flower painting, botanical art and scientific illustration.
- Meet up
- I am a competent field botanist, but always willing to learn more. I have run workshops on identification and would be happy to do so for artists.
- A directory of local groups would be a great idea so that new artists could 'find a home ' and tap in to the resources available
- I think that being in contact with fellow artist is important. On the educational side it should be cautious about duplicating resources that are already available such as courses at Cambridge University Botanic Garden and Kew that already cover a lot of topics. Getting this information out to ABBA members would be very valuable
- maybe they could collate an image library for people to use when they are unable to source a plant?
- To be really inclusive I'd like it to be affordable for everyone - the society that everyone in botanical art is a member of! Other societies are regional or can be expensive. ABBA could be an umbrella society that links everyone and brings us together. Maybe with a ASBA style conference!
- Provide a forum that matches and liaises other national associations e.g. ASBA
- 1) Projects as a group, either locally or nationally. 2) workshops focusing on the botany in the art.
- Inclusion of artists often without support in their particular area. Joining likeminded people together, facilitating local knowledge
- Yes! I think you should facilitate compiling a full listing of all botanical groups across the United Kingdom. In fact this should be an interactive map on your website where you can zoom in and click on the local group closest to you, and there's a link to the local group's website, or contact information if they don't have one. With the right marketing, ABBA could become 'the place' to access information for the beginner/ intermediate looking to connect.
- Other networks could be created for different levels of experience or expectation.
- Seminars and speakers
- just being in touch with other like minded people

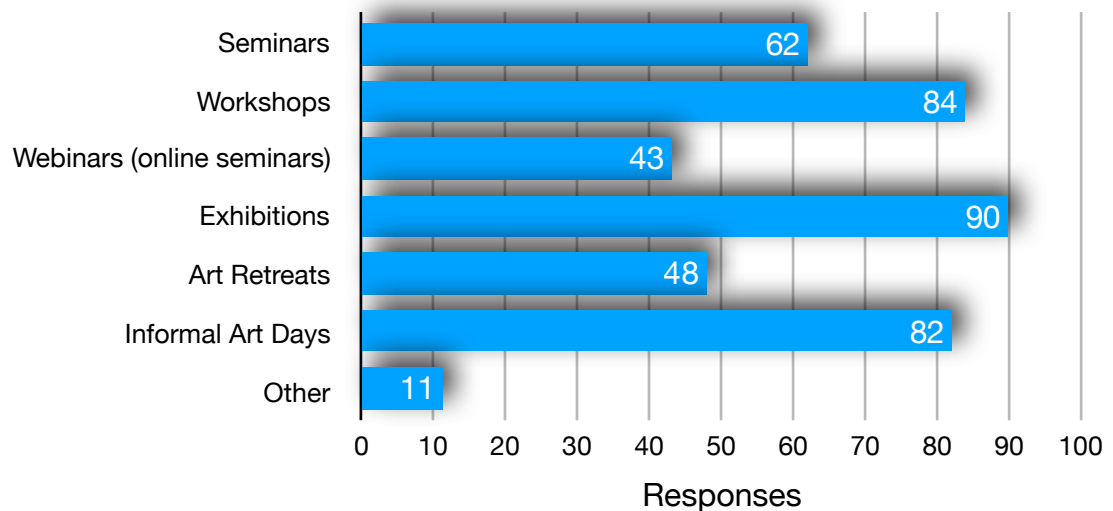
- I already have all I need in Q8, 9, 10, but I might be able to offer advice to others regarding points in Q10
- see intermediate replies a no category for professional artists
- I love the idea that ABBA could be a way of connecting botanists and British flora enthusiasts with illustrators and artists. This could lead to mutually helpful collaborations, learning workshops, and sharing of skills. I can imagine something lovely like a team of botanists choosing a professional illustrator and paying them a modest retainer to come with them on botanising field trips and produce field notes and finished illustrations to accompany and published research they might be keen to put out into the public domain (well, that'd be a dream illustration opportunity for me!)
- Raising public awareness and appreciation of the scope of botanical art in an area of the country where there appears to be a dearth of such knowledge.
- High standards! Why go to all the trouble of doing research and the work for scientific studies when flower paintings are getting all the praise and awards.
- talks-demo
- field trips
- Inclusivity. Wider public recognition of botanical art as an art form/discipline.
- Reference photos
- Opportunities for botanical artists who are also practising botanists / ecologists to connect.
- Ways of linking botanical art/artists with conservation projects.
- Just raising awareness of the importance of preserving the native flora, for everyone, and portraying it in beautiful artwork is a positive way to do that

## Section 4 - ABBA Events

Q12. Did you attend any of the following events for the World Wide Day of Botanical Art in May - June this year? (you can select more than one) - 96 responses



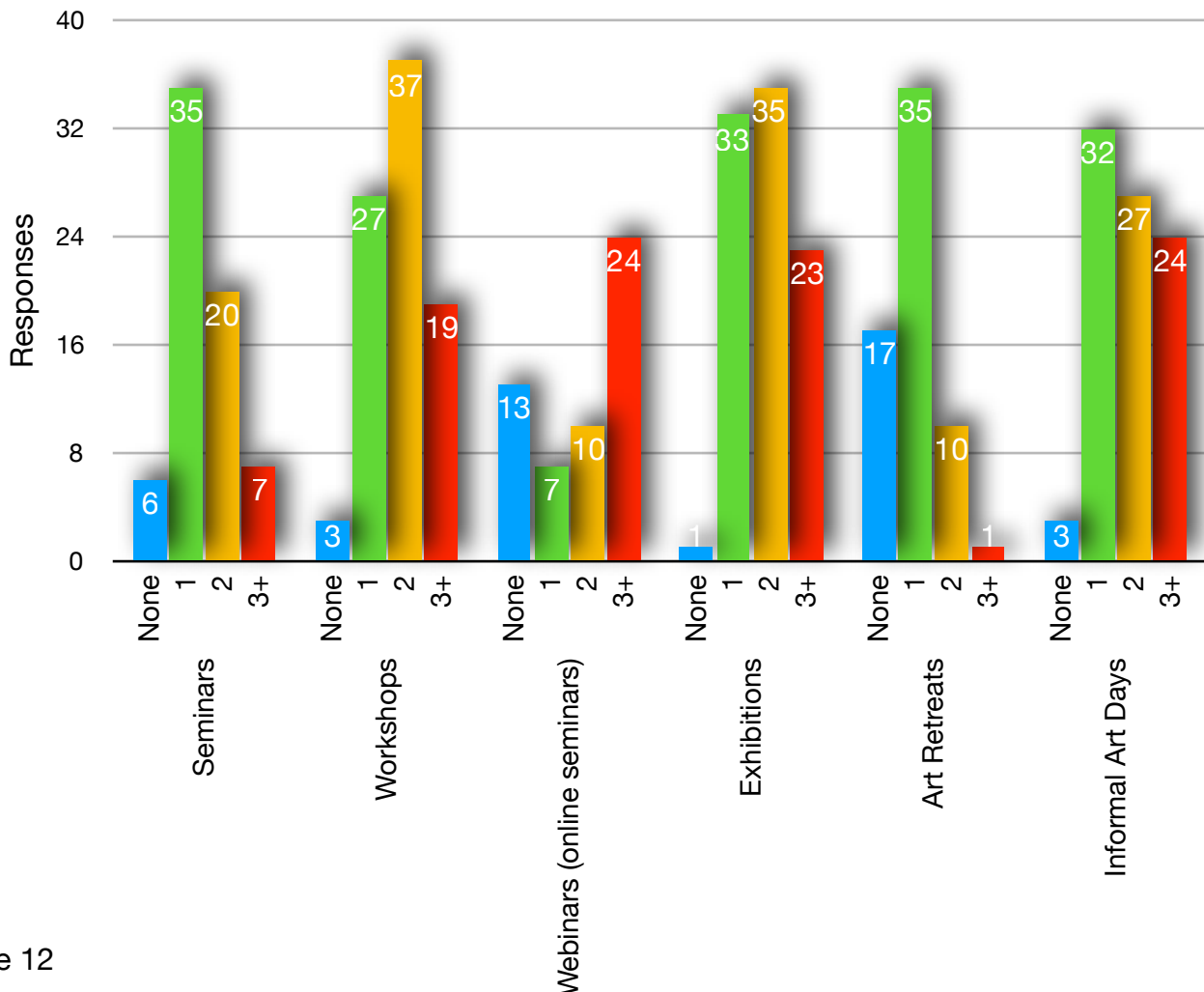
Q13. What type of activities do you feel ABBA could facilitate? (you can select more than one) - 101 responses



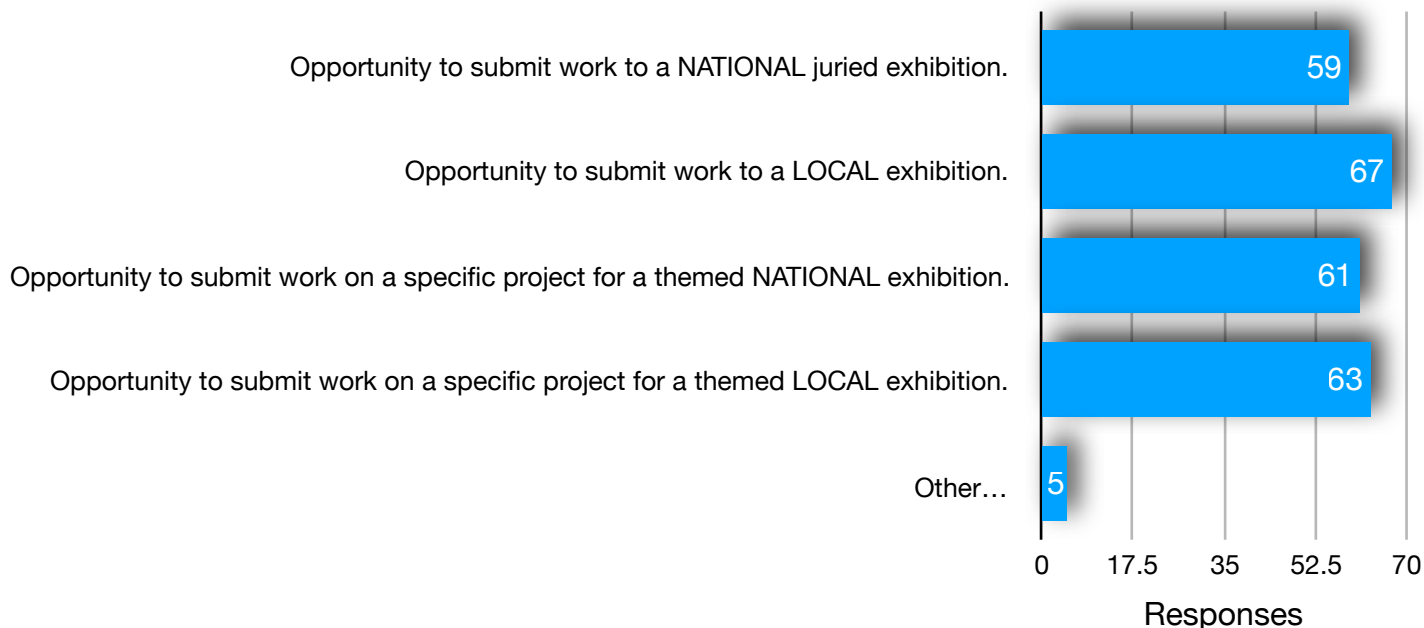
### Text Responses to Q13 "Other"

I attended Edinburgh botanical garden and the main day
Regular, untutored but mutually supportive workshops
Drop in botanical drawing & painting sessions hosted by members
Links with botanists and conservationists and botanical groups.
Initiate art projects, liaise with Scottish and Irish counterparts
Depends where meetings are held whether attendance would be easy.
All sound pretty good!!
Activities at a local level - working with, and finding ways to support, local botanical art groups. Our numbers are diminishing and we are struggling to attract new members. It might be our structure, or just a change in interests. External sound-boarding or advice would be really helpful to us to find a way forward.
compile register of british botanical artists; advertise specific native plant projects needed input.
All of the above sound fascinating, although I worry that if you spread yourselves too thin you might exhaust the fabulous people already involved and who might get involved in the future. For your own sanity you need to keep it managable, I'd imagine, no matter how delicious all the options might look!
Research into historic techniques.

Q14. How many activities might you attend each year? (you can select more than one)



Q15. Specifically regarding Exhibitions - what would be of value to you? ( you can select more than one) - 93 responses



Text Responses to Q15 “Other”

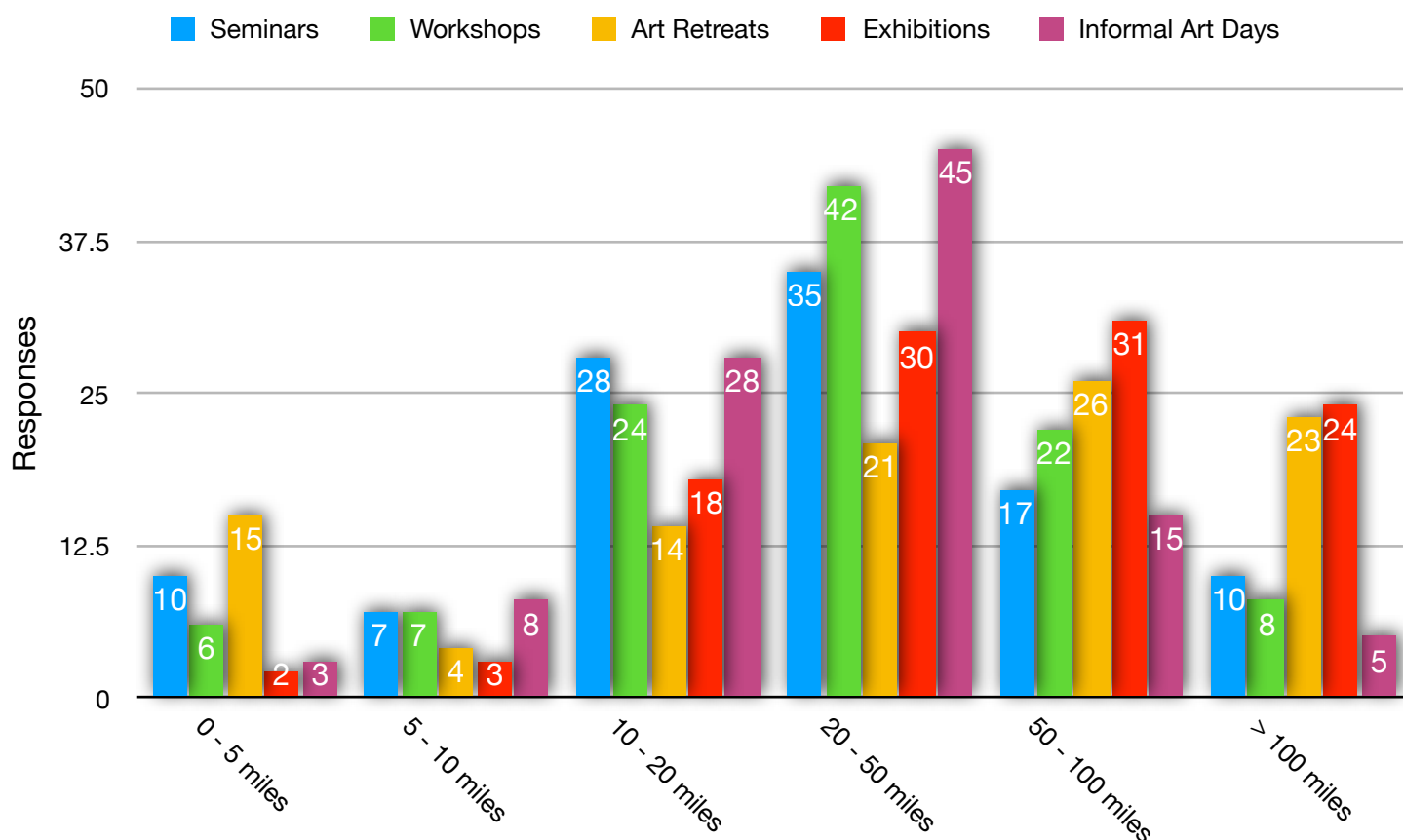
All dependant on time constraints and other commitments.
Yes--if I could reach a reasonable standard
This is difficult since I live in Hong Kong.
For now, as a beginner I would be happy to just see the exhibitions. I like botanical art very much. I have a book about the art os Magareth Mee and more Sarah Simblet books.
Opportunity to see work and perhaps buy.

Q16. Other activities you think would be valuable for ABBA members? - 25 responses

- *The ability to encourage and help sustain local and regional groups of people with a shared interest in botany and botanical art*
- *Internet discussion forum.*
- *Educating children about the wonderful flora all around them and art days to introduce them to drawing the plants, whether tiny or large trees, that are around them*
- *Clubs*
- *informal meetups for drawing and painting in parks and open spaces*
- *Botanical field trips led by interested botanist and local enthusiasts*
- *On line forum/ Facebook page for questions/ connection*

- *Information and news, help and guidance and a network of artists and botanists. Organising live projects on native plants in conjunction with botanical groups.*
- *I don't think ABBA should be doing too much itself. There are many local societies and institutions running workshops, holding exhibitions, etc. The internet is a source of information about materials. Local botanical groups provide know how about native plants. Rather, it should provide an accurate directory of societies, tutors, sources of funding etc. Maintain industry standards, liaise with counterparts in other parts of the British Isles, hold seminars on subjects that impact on the botanical painting fraternity e.g. the question of customs post Brexit in trying to get work in and out of the UK. Relations must be maintained with initiatives in Ireland and in Scotland. It could encourage local groups to begin a new Florilegium of British flora to update Stella Ross-Craig and Walter Fitch.*
- *Regular local group meetings*
- *A list of all paintings members with contact details*
- *The interactive map/ register of local groups would be the basis for much further development - for ABBA to determine.*
- *Field trips to see specific species/habitats*
- *plant identification*
- *Field sketching trips*
- *Other societies provide most activities you mention*
- *Online forum*
- *Input on the botanical knowledge needed for successful artwork.*
- *The occasional meeting up with other local botanical professionals for a whinge, a cuppa tea, and to share projects and inspirations.*
- *Twinning, putting UK groups in touch with other international groups to share ideas and techniques*
- *Open to schools-*
- *local meetings*
- *Online forums.*
- *Local art walks*
- *Botany days - informal workshops focused on finding / identifying plants with sketches being made in the field - this would help with developing ID skills as well as habitat knowledge etc.*

Q18. How far would you be prepared to travel if ABBA facilitated activities in your part of the country?



Q19. Other comments about ABBA EVENTS you would like to add? - 18 responses

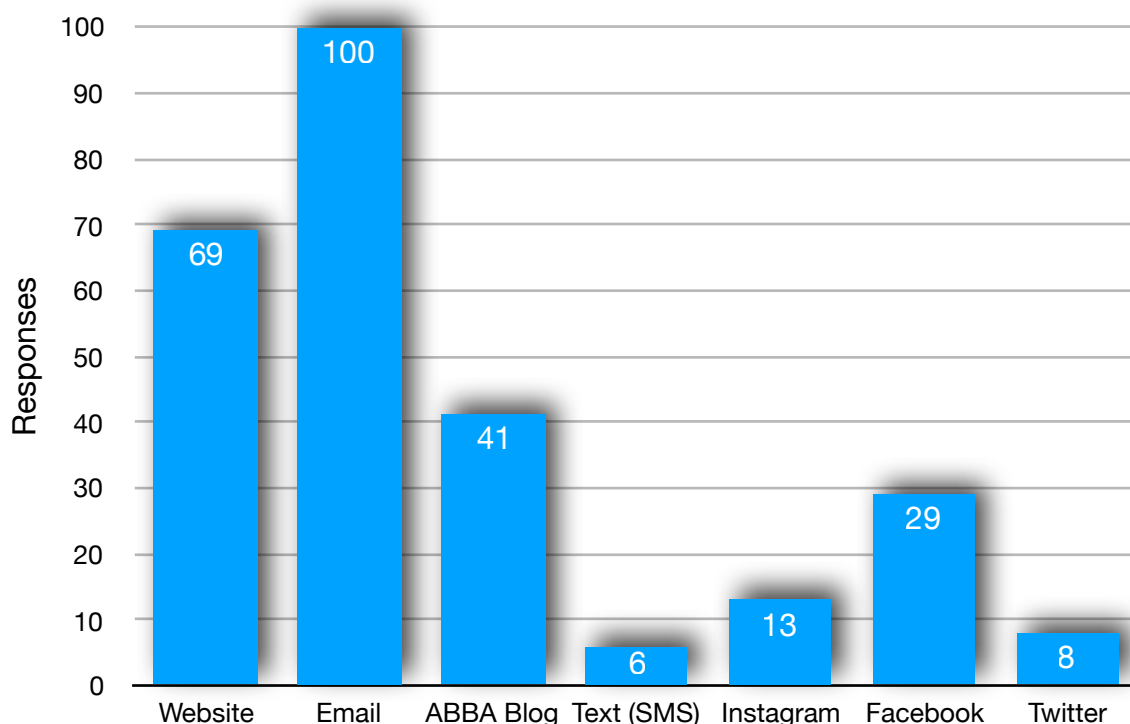
- *Abba will do an enormous service if it can harness the collective enthusiasm of hundreds of botanical artists and supporters in an effective communication process.*
- *For me it will help if events are held where there are good public transport links*
- *I think if their are future World Wide events I suggest abandoning the 'one species-one artist' rule\_select the best if there are multiple entries. Also I think the size restriction was a bit limiting but otherwise a great success / idea.*
- *No more thoughts at present*
- *Travel is the most difficult thing! Events where lots of activities happen at once are more worth travelling for but travel is definitely a barrier, both because of time and expense.*
- *Many of the above questions seem not to take into account existing local initiatives. There are many regional botanic gardens, with attendant courses, workshops and outings; there are also active botanical identification groups. Art materials and simple know how can easily be found on the internet.*

- *Because I have ticked all of them it doesn't mean that I WILL sign up for ever one, every year.*
- *Happy to host and /or tutor such events*
- *The absolute need to work with local groups in setting up, coordinating and delivering any local event: establish connections, buy-in, kudos. Reputation.*
- *easy access by road or rail. Same event at different venues and times*
- *The further away an event is from your location, the more planning there needs to be and preparation, publishing a calendar as far in advance as possible is very important*
- *advertise more widely.*
- *Where I live (on the North Yorkshire coast) is so isolated from current botanical art events. The majority of events are in London and/or "the south" and it was so great to have this year's exhibition, In Ruskin's Footsteps, located "north of The Wash"! I know there are some facilitators providing excellent courses in the Derbyshire area but it would be so encouraging to have one or two events a bit closer to home!*
- *events in the north, cheaper less hectic than London*
- *Informal themed online exhibitions - perhaps a monthly challenge?*
- *None*
- *Events need to be more evenly distributed geographically - with the exception of one, all of the exhibitions listed above are in the south of England which may exclude artists further north from participating - also none of these are in Scotland / Wales. In Scotland for example there is the Royal Botanic Gardens which regularly hosts exhibitions. Also for training and workshops, flora and habitats vary considerably across Britain so it would be useful if this were reflected in events programming.*
- *My only concern is that it 'duplicates' other societies - I think it should be quite distinct in what it provides.*



## Section 4 - ABBA Communication

Q20. What means of communication from ABBA would you prefer? (you can select more than one) - 101 responses



Q21. Any final comments you would like to add? - 33 responses

- *Thank you for all the work you'll ALL have put in to getting this far I am sure there is a lot of people that are very pleased to of received this email today*
- *I live in Northern Ireland and have little or no contact with other botanical artists here. It would be great to get to know of any others in my area.*
- *How may I help?*
- *I would really like to be in touch with some northern enthusiasts.*
- *Good Luck!*
- *I look forward to a society which will cater for all abilities*
- *Exhibitions in the North need to be better publicised, signposted and contain more exhibits. The Lancaster University exhibition was very disappointing.*
- *Thank you for the wonderful work that you did to put on the exhibition*
- *Not sure where this is leading, but it could be good. All depends on the company (and cost)*

- *Great initiative\_ keep up the great work*
- *...a new group is long overdue...i've only been painting botanically for 3 years and one thing that struck me at the SBA exhibition is that all exhibits aren't true botanical art....maybe ABBA should stick to 'true botanical' work only or if they choose to be more diverse have different categories at exhibitions...e.g botanical illustration, botanical portrait, contemporary botanical art?*
- *I think an open inclusive botanical art*
- *group based in the UK is a great idea*
- *I think the emphasis on native plants is great if backed up by botanists. It would make what ABBA did worth so much more and give it purpose.*
- *I would stress ABBA's function should be a collaborative one, building on what other local, regional and national groups are doing.*
- *Look forward to developments.*
- *It is a brilliant new organisation and I am so glad it is focusing on BOTANICAL ART and potentially might support us in developing our knowledge of botany, for my part which is sadly lacking.*
- *Wishing it every success!*
- *What a wonderful opportunity to inspire young or emerging artists to develop their talents and confidence to be able to express themselves through their love of nature and their art.*
- *i do not really know how ABBA works at the moment of if there are local groups? Travelling is difficult and expensive so not having to travel length and breadth of the country to participate would be ideal.*
- *I think it may be difficult for me to be an active member here although I would like to put botanical art on the Hong Kong map. It is lacking in this field.*
- *Please ,please keep going. The country has talent and expertise but it needs bringing together*
- *excellent idea. Well done for setting this up.*
- *A newsletter/journal along the lines of the American Society journal would be great I appreciate this would cost but would be willing to pay a subscription*
- *See earlier comment re location of events.*
- *Thank you for organising ABBA, all your hard work is much appreciated*
- *I attend an adult education botanical illustration course, most of the attendees are older, very keen, paint to a fairly high standard but have no interest in becoming professional artists.*

- *This is very exciting and much needed. Education to a degree level within this discipline is also much needed in my opinion to present highly disciplined artistic education in this field and promote quality and innovation.*
- *There needs to be more information about ABBA on the website - the 'About' section is not very informative. There is also very little information regarding what membership includes.*
- *Are floral paintings on silk or mixed media accepted?*
- *I attended Flora Scotia exhibition at RGBE which was part of Worldwide day of Botanical Art in June - it's not on your list! Travel to London takes too long and costs too much for me to consider any events in London so it would be great if ABBA organised events in the North.*
- *Thankyou for all your hard work !*
- *Can you be an overseas member?*
- *see my previous comment*

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*This is the end of the survey responses*