

# Cheshire's golden glow

The RHS Show Tatton Park produced a significant crop of medals this year, both in the Floral Marquee and outside in the many show gardens. Photography by Tim Sandall

**AFTER STIMULATING** RHS flower shows at Chelsea and Hampton Court Palace, expectations for this year's show at Tatton Park were high. And, even in this difficult year, visitors were not disappointed. Displays from nurseries such as Elizabeth MacGregor, specialising in herbaceous plants, and Southfield Nurseries, winners of Best Exhibit in the Floral Marquee for its cacti, were of the highest standard. Outside, Chris Beardshaw's sumptuous prairie-style planting, celebrating the work of nearby Ness Botanic Garden, drew the crowds, as did the popular RHS/Ball Colegrave National Flower Bed Competition.

● Visit: [www.rhs.org.uk/tattonpark](http://www.rhs.org.uk/tattonpark)

## ▽ 'FIBONACCI NUMBERS IN NATURE'

Taking inspiration from the 'bird's nest' stadium in Beijing, this woven-steel wall sculpture provided a dramatic backdrop to this Show Garden, softened in the foreground by pink-flowered cosmos and white agapanthus (designer: Stephen Dennis Designs).



Bronze Flora

## ▽ 'FORGOTTEN BUT NOT OVERLOOKED'

Showing how a shady area can be transformed into an attractive place, variegated large-leaved hostas, silver birch trees and yellow-flowering hemerocallis lightened the mood (designer: Tim Fowler).



Gold, Best Back to Back Garden

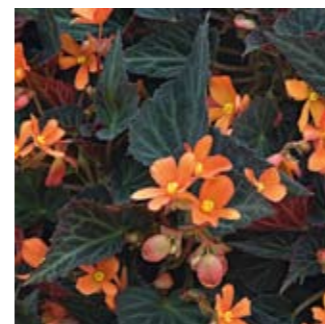
## 'NESS BOTANISCHE'

The 'Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction under the microscope' garden, inspired by the scientific work at Ness Botanic Gardens, was well designed by Chris Beardshaw, and featured drifts of planting, surrounded by a turf amphitheatre and horn-beam hedge. The Show Garden will be re-created at Ness (sponsor: Northwest Development Agency).

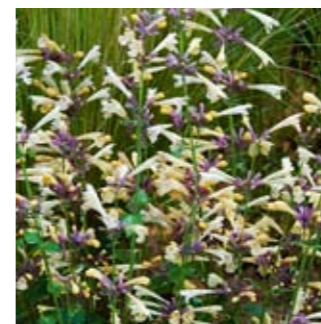


Gold, Best Show Garden

## NEW AND INTERESTING PLANTS AT THE SHOW



New *Begonia* 'Glowing Embers' was shown by KinderGarden Plants growing as part of a green wall. Its dark foliage made a good foil for the orange blooms. Available at selected garden centres in 2010.



*Agastache* 'Summer Glow' is a new selection from the USA, shown by Cath's Garden Plants of Cumbria: a further five selections will follow. Availability limited; plants cost £5. Tel: 01539 561126.



New double-flowered *Echinacea purpurea* 'Meringue' was shown by wholesale growers Barton Nurseries of Cambridgeshire. Compact and free flowering, the central cone gets more pronounced with age.



*Crocosmia* 'Ellenbank Goldcrest' is a new, early-flowering bronze-leaved selection bred and shown by Elizabeth MacGregor of Kirkcudbright. Limited availability; plants £5. Tel: 01557 330620. ▶

## ◁ 'LOSE THE SHOES'

In this Back to Back Garden, bold orange walls combined to strong effect with the surrounding planting of orange-flowered *Crocosmia*, russet-orange *Echinacea* and dark maroon *Canna*. The combination of colours aimed to symbolise fire and energy, while the paving was designed to make barefoot walking a pleasurable experience. A pierced stainless-steel screen at the back of the curved seating area gave a focal point (designer: Bernie Quinn).



Silver Flora



Gold, Best Visionary Garden

## ◁ 'CUBED3'

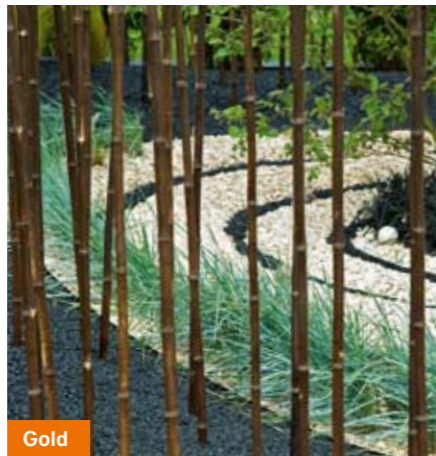
Designed by two Landscape Architecture graduates from Leeds Metropolitan University, this garden featured a modular, flexible concept to demonstrate movement and space. Gabions were the highlight of the display, some filled with Indian river sandstone, some left empty and others planted with moss; lush and dense planting surrounded the cubes (designers: Alan Burns and Philip Dugdale).

## ▽ 'DUNWEEDIN AND GROWING IN SCHOOLS'

As part of the Society's continuing work with schoolchildren, Tatton hosted three displays created by local schools. Developed by Winsford Education Partnership, this scheme brought painted pots, a water feature and some humour to the children's outside space.

## ▷ 'TIME AND THE BELL'

Similar to Hampton Court Palace Flower Show's Conceptual Gardens, the Tatton Park show featured Visionary Gardens (above and right) – an opportunity for artists and designers to experiment with new ideas and unusual materials. Here, this garden took time as its inspiration, referencing both Einstein and Newton (the latter by placement of an apple tree in the garden's centre). The black and white gravel mulches symbolise the universe being made up of seen and unseen matter. Planting was simple, with black bamboo canes contrasting with grey-blue grass *Helictotrichon sempervirens* (designer: Sheena Seeks).



Gold



Gold

## △ 'THE DARK HORSE VENTURE GARDEN – OUT THE BACK'

This Back to Back Garden aimed to show how easy it is to grow a range of crops and ornamental plants in an inner-city terraced-house backyard, devoid of planting beds. Instead, a wide variety of containers was used to inspiring effect (designer: Hugh Thomas).

## ▷ 'BTCV@50'

Celebrating the conservation volunteering organisation's 50th anniversary, this Show Garden aimed to demonstrate the diversity of opportunities for people when volunteering. One section included a raised planting area, displaying a mix of productive crops, combined with some 'companion planting' ornamentals (designer: BTCV; sponsors: Mersey Forest, Forestry Commission, Moss Bank Nurseries).



Gold, Best Young Designer of the Year

## ◁ 'RED RHYTHM'

Another new category to the show this year was the Tatton Park Young Designer of the Year Competition. The aim was to encourage designers under 25 years of age to submit gardens, based on an imaginary client's brief. One of the two designs selected received a gold medal (left). Intended for a young professional couple, it used mixed colourful planting (red-flowered *Crocsmia* 'Lucifer' and red-leaved *Heuchera*, for instance), tempered with grass *Stipa tenuissima*. Bright red vertical pillars gave the space a sense of cohesion. The permeable paving offered room for entertaining, with a relaxed, decked seating area beyond (designer: Lee Belgrau).



Silver Flora

## NEW AND INTERESTING PLANTS AT THE SHOW



*Hosta* 'Red Dragon', shown by Bowden Hostas of Devon, featured red-flecked stems supporting rich green leaves. It was one of three new introductions on show. Limited availability; £15. Tel: 01837 840989.



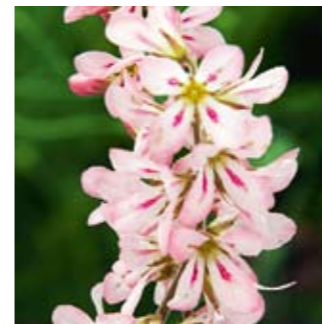
New *Heuchera* 'Plum Royale' was displayed by Solva Plants of Hampshire. It produces shiny, silvery purple leaves year-round and has a compact, mounding habit. Cost: £5.50. Tel: 01590 670581.



*Lilium* 'Double Sensation' was shown by HW Hyde & Son of Berkshire. It is a striking selection with a creamy base and varying amounts of red on the petals. Price: £5 for three bulbs. Tel: 0118 934 0011.



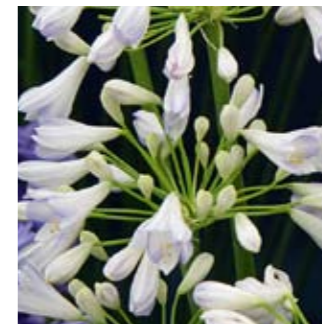
Primrose Bank of York displayed *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Fantasia', a new Dutch selection, its green flowers becoming diffused with cream and then pink. Plants £20. Tel: 07774 944447.



Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants of Hampshire showed new *Francoa sonchifolia* 'Pink Bouquet'. It is a compact plant with large, delicately coloured individual blooms, priced £4. Tel: 01256 896533.



Holywell Nursery of Cleveland included new *Diascia* 'Denim Blue' on its stand. It is the first selection with flowers of this colour and is said to be hardy to -5°C (23°F). Tel: 01287 644454.



*Agapanthus* 'Aimee' is a new selection from Broadleigh Gardens of Somerset. Its flowers have alternating pure white and blue-edged petals. Plants cost £10. Tel: 01823 286231.



*Acer conspicuum* 'Red Flamingo' was shown by Broadway Road Nurseries of Worcestershire. It has coral-coloured stems in winter and grows best in a sheltered position. Plants £20. Tel: 07967 193587.