

Tatton Park 2012

This year's RHS Flower Show Tatton Park celebrated good design, interesting detailing, 'orchestra' gardens and bedding displays

Photography: **Tim Sandall, Neil Hepworth** and **Lee Beel**

► 'Nature Squared'

Gabions were used in this Show Garden to create bold structures that also offered habitats for wildlife by housing a log pile or to form a colourful insect hotel when filled with a mix of recycled materials. Plants to attract pollinating insects filled the beds (designers: Foundation Degree Garden and Landscape Design Year 2 Students at Reaseheath College; sponsor: Trentham Gardens).



▲ 'To The Beat'

In the Orchestra Garden category, sponsored by the RHS, designers took inspiration from a section of the orchestra. Here the ripples on a central pebble pool represent the vibrations on a drum skin, with rings of perennials including *Cosmos atrosanguineus* radiating outwards (designer: Owen Morgan).

► 'Untie the Wind'

This garden, inspired by wind instruments, was dominated by a large central pipe with a path running through it to symbolise the movement of air passing through the body of the instrument. The pipe was anchored by an informal meadow mound, while bamboos and grasses planted alongside also moved in the wind (designer: Sheena Seeks; sponsor: RHS).



Gold; Best Show Garden



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◀ 'The Mornflake Garden'

Using York stone for walls and paving, this garden was a reflection of the traditional practice of milling cereals. A circular, radiating, dry-stone wall sculpture mirrored the central circular 'weir' below. The circle of water emerging from between the stones added a sense of movement alongside rusted sculptures that conveyed heads of oats swaying in the wind, enhanced by the airy panicles of *Stipa gigantea* with *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Bronzeschleier' below. (Designer: Janine Crimmins; sponsor: Mornflake Cereals).



► 'The Science of Strings'

Strips of undulating turf represented sound waves generated by stringed instruments in this Orchestra Garden, intersected by rills and a simple row of variegated *Carex* 'Ice Dance' or *Stipa tenuissima* (designers: Brendan Vaughan and Leon Davis).



▲ New planting areas in raised beds

1 A circle of raised workbenches eased wheelchair access in 'Ring the Changes' Show Garden (designers: Will and Amber Lyon). 2 In 'Care Home Garden', raised beds filled with smaller drop-in modular planters were devised to be tended by less-mobile gardeners (designer: Joan Mulvenna). 3 Colourful beds housed a mix of vegetables in 'Growing Together' a Back to Back garden (designer: Emily Ross). 4 Old packing cases doubled up as containers in a Show Garden designed by young people from New Charter DreamScheme. >>



▲ Welcoming water into your garden

5 Water tumbling down a rocky stream through banks of wild flowers created a natural landscape in 'Making a Splash' (designer: Jackie Knight). 6 A sheet of water emerged under an oak cantilevered seat in 'The Science of Strings' (see p63). 7 Recycled gutters were used to create a zigzag waterfall feeding a small pool in 'Second Chance' (designers: students of Clusius College). 8 Water in a stainless-steel bubbling pool and rill were a main feature of 'A Perfect Match', a Show Garden supporting Kidneys for Life (designer: Harry's Gold Stars).



► WorldSkills UK

As part of the selection process for the WorldSkills UK National Competitions, four pairs of competitors (aged 18 to 23) in the landscape gardening section built gardens at this year's show inspired by landscaping styles in Japan, Finland, Canada and the UK (pictured). In this traditional garden a dry-stone wall and curved paving was complemented by soft, naturalistic planting.



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▲ 'The Long Jumper'

This year the theme for the RHS National Flower Bed Competition was the London 2012 Olympics. Here Darlington Borough Council used a simple but bold design showing a silhouette of an athlete about to land in a floral sandpit of yellow *Tagetes* outlined in blue *Lobelia*.

◀ 'Bagpuss'

The School Front to Front Gardens were created by local schoolchildren, encouraging them to employ skills across the National Curriculum. This year the designs were based on children's TV programmes. This garden was built by Thelwall Community Infant School in Warrington showing off Bagpuss, the saggy cloth cat and main character in the show.



▲ 'Brownfield Beauty'

A clever use of industrial-scale Venetian blinds, which created secluded areas in a communal garden set in a former brownfield site, won for designer Tristen Knight (left) the RHS Young Designer of the Year award. A mix of perennials and grasses softened brick and granite surfaces.

Silver-Gilt Flora; Best Back to Back Garden



RHS Online

For highlights from the 2012 RHS Flower Show Tatton Park visit:

www.rhs.org.uk/tattonpark

✦ Find full lists of the medal-winning gardens in the Show, Orchestra, Back to Back and Visionary categories along with the Best Garden awards.

✦ View highlights from the RHS Summer Fruit and Veg Competition.



► 'Peak Reflections'

Bringing together dry-stone walling, water and a colourful banked planting, designer Charlie Williams celebrated the charms of the Peak District. Heucheras and grasses in deep shades reflected the colours of local mineral, blue john (sponsors: GK Wilson Garden Services, Glossop Garden Centre, Nook Design).

▲ 'Urban Oasis'

This was the last of a series of gardens designed by Chris Beardshaw in a partnership between environmental charity Groundwork and the RHS. Shown at all four main RHS Flower Shows, it highlighted the benefits of encouraging local communities to take ownership of public spaces. This feature showed how former 'no-go' areas such as back alleys can be simply transformed into safe community gardens (sponsor: Marks and Spencer).



▲ Creating attractive walls of stone

10 Smooth York stone contrasted with rough surfaces below in a curved wall in 'The Mornflake Garden' (see p62). 11 Gabions held limestone blocks in 'A Prison Garden for Rehabilitation through Wellbeing', a Young Designer Garden by Katherine Wills. 12 Varying thicknesses of Derbyshire sandstone were beautifully knitted together with a curved coping in 'Peak Reflections' (see left).