

Introducing The Water Saving Garden

Site : SE807

The hot summer of 2022 was the seed from which Sam Proctor's debut RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden sprouted. With temperatures hitting record highs, drought and hosepipe bans were the only things flourishing in English gardens as the effects of climate change started to hit home. Inspired by the need to capture and save precious water to keep the plants in her gardens' pots and containers alive, the idea for The Water Saving Garden was born.

Having made her home in the Chilterns twenty years ago, Sam has grown to love its rolling hills and rare chalk streams and founded her design practice Chiltern Garden Design here.

The Water Saving Garden (pictured), sponsored by Affinity Water, is a love letter to the Chilterns' iconic chalk streams, highlighting the urgent need to save and re-use rainwater. This cause is championed by Affinity Water's Save Our Streams campaign, which offers simple ways to save water and money, including free water saving devices for home and garden.

The show garden design for RHS Chelsea features a contemporary courtyard space with clever water saving measures at its heart.

'The garden demonstrates how water saving measures can be incorporated into a sleek design. There is really no excuse for wasting drinking water on pots and containers every summer,' explains Sam.

How it works

The show garden's system of rainwater capture and storage means that the plants can be sustainably hydrated for as long as ten weeks of drought. Rainwater is channelled along copper guttering and down copper rain chains into stylish water butts. From here it's guided into two parallel reservoir systems, one on each side of the garden, which allows plants to take up as much water as they need from below, via capillary action. This system reduces water need by as much as 30% compared with watering from above, due to reduced soil evaporation. Gardeners need not be restricted to a narrow palette of drought tolerant plants, which often don't tolerate our wet winters, if they install a similar watering system.



Plant list

Tree

Cornus kousa 'China Girl'

Shrubs

Ilex crenata

Philadelphus 'Manteau d'Hermine'

Spiraea nipponica 'Snowmound'

Climber

Trachelospermum jasminoides

Perennials

Amsonia ciliata 'Halfway to Arkansas'

Amsonia tabernaemontana 'Storm Cloud'

Asarum europaeum

Astrantia major 'Snowstar'

Brunnera 'Mr Morse'

Digitalis purpurea f. *albiflora*

Erigeron karvinskianus 'Lavender Lady'

Geranium 'Cloud Nine'

Iris sibirica 'Shirley Pope'

Iris sibirica 'White Swirl'

Lupinus 'Melody'

Lupinus 'Persian Slipper'

Ferns

Asplenium ceterach

Grasses

Briza Media

Bulbs

Camassia leichtlinii 'Alba'

Camassia leichtlinii 'Caerulea'

Camassia leichtlinii 'Blue Heaven'

Camassia 'Maybelle'

Camassia 'Silk River'

Annuals

Orlaya Grandiflora

Succulents

Aeonium 'Red Edge'

Aeonium spathulatum

Aichryson bethencourtianum

Crassula ovata 'Hobbit'

Echeveria 'Blue Bird'

Echeveria colorata 'Haage'

Echeveria 'Cubic Frost'

Echeveria 'Mexican Giant'

Echeveria pelucida

Echeveria subsessilis

Pachyphytum oviferum x Echeveria laui

x Pachyphytum 'Elaine Reinelt'

Sedum burrito

Sedum moranense

Sedum adolphi

About the Designer

After winning a ticket to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show on Twitter in 2016, Sam Proctor was inspired to change career and study for a diploma in Garden Design. She graduated from the London College of Garden Design with Distinction in 2017. After 3 years working at the collaborative design studio Aralia in Hertfordshire, she set up her own practice, Chiltern Garden Design, based in Amersham in the heart of the Chilterns. She became a fully registered Member of the Society of Garden Designers in 2023, and joined the Association of Professional Landscapers as a Designer Member in the same year. This is her debut show garden.

Contact details

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