RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2013

Highlights from this year’s show included vibrant planting and novel design ideas

Photography: Neil Hepworth, Tim Sandall and Sarah Cuttle

‘Ashes to Ashes’
Ash dieback (Chalara fraxinea) and its devastating potential are hot topics among gardeners. In this Conceptual Garden parallels were found with Dutch elm disease, which posed a similar threat in the 20th century yet some elms continue to survive - indicated here by saplings emerging from charcoal mulch, presenting hope for the future (designer: Bruce Waldock; contributors: Rumwood Nurseries, AVS Fencing).

‘Desolation to Regeneration’
The process of plant regeneration after forest fire was represented by a changing palette of plants from fiery spikes of Eremurus ‘Rumba’ and lupins to cool ferns (right), linked together by charred sculptures in the form of licking flames (designer: Catherine MacDonald, Landform Consultants).

‘Athanasia’

Directed water
1. Water bursts from a giant bottle of household cleaner in ‘The Ecover Garden’ and runs into a series of descending cobble-filled pools.
2. In ‘Four Corners’ water falls from a pipe into a rift of Cotswold stone and then under a wooden seating area (designer: Peter Reader; sponsor: Provender Nurseries).
3. A curvy divided rill in Corten steel extends over a sunken garden and delivers water to a reservoir below in ‘A Cool Garden’ (designer: Ruth Marshall; sponsor: Cool Gardens).

New roses
1. Rosa Pink Martini (“Tan04608”) A light pink Hybrid Tea with strong, sweet fragrance, for garden or cut/fabric use. £17.5; Pocock’s Roses; 01794 367500.
2. Rosa Kaffee Fassett (“Tan07291”) With a strong lavender fragrance and a hint of citrus, this burgundy-mauve Floribunda is suited to growing in containers or borders. £17.5; Pocock’s Roses; 01794 367500.
3. Rosa Silver Shadow (‘Frystereo’) Bred by Gareth Fryer, this bashy Hybrid Tea has full-petalled blooms of pink, silvery lilac. £10; Fryer’s Roses; 01565 755455.

‘Vestra Wealth’s Jardin du Gourmet’
Outdoor dining was the theme of this Show Garden. Steps led down to a sunken area (a feature in many gardens this year) for dining, surrounded by raised beds of vegetables, salads, fruit and herbs growing close at hand for harvesting as fresh as possible. Nepeta and Agapanthus were threaded through the edibles (designer: Paul Martin; sponsor: Vestra Wealth).

Gold; Best Show Garden

Gold; Best Conceptual Garden

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‘The Ecover Garden’
This Show Garden related how water is fundamental to life. Naturalistic plantings included Salvia, large Agapanthus, grasses and magenta Dianthus carthusianorum to represent the colour and movement of water; the accents were woven strips of turquoise recycled plastic. (designer: Matthew Childs; sponsor: Ecover).

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Low Cost High Impact

Following last year’s success, the Association of Professional Landscapers (in conjunction with the Horticultural Trades Association), again ran a competition for members to submit designs for gardens with budgets of £7,000, £13,000 or £15,000. The budget covered labour, plants and materials; the four best designs were selected and made into gardens at the show.

‘Tip of the Iceberg’
Designed by Caroline Tait and John Esting, this Conceptual Garden aimed to create awareness of the waste our modern world creates, and the opportunities that come from it. Using fridges as planters for alpines, inspiration came from Japanese gardens (contributor: Zanussi).

‘A Cool Garden’
Designed by Ruth Marshall, this garden provided a private space for a family to enjoy, while offering views through to a borrowed rural landscape beyond. Multi-stemmed corkscrew hazels provided an unusual vertical element. (sponsor: Cool Gardens).

‘A Room with a View’
Creating a budget of £15,000, this garden was designed by Mike Harvey to make use of spoil from a house extension; sloping up to a raised deck at the back. Reclaimed materials were used throughout, softened with subtle planting in shades of copper, silver and blue.

‘Bugs in Boots’
This ecologically conceived garden was made on a budget of £13,000. Bee-friendly flowers were used throughout and runoff was minimised by allowing part of the garden to flood during heavy rainfall then drain slowly through the soil (designer: Caspian Robertson).

Deep colours
1. Dark red Anigozanthos hybrids used with lupins and cordylines in ‘Desolation to Regeneration’
3. Red lupins beside Dianthus cruentus in ‘The One Show Garden’ (designer: Vicky Sforihard; sponsor: The One Show).

Changes of level
11. Recessed risers made stone steps seem to float in ‘In at the Deep End’, a £7,000 Low Cost High Impact Garden (designers: Peter Cowell and Monty Richardson).
12. ‘Stepping stones’ made from reclaimed wooden sleepers sat comfortably amid the planting in ‘A Room with a View’.
13. Designer Raine Clarke-Wills used travertine steps, neatly buttressed with box, in her Summer Garden ‘Layers & Links’.

Mid Century Modern
Drawing influence from the vivid colours and bold graphics of a 1950s advertising poster, this garden was created on a budget of £15,000. The sheltered dining area alongside a reflective pool leads to an open seating area (designers: Adele Ford and Susan Willmott).

Macmillan Legacy Garden
Featuring a striking shade shelter, representing Macmillan Cancer Care’s ‘safety net’ for those affected by cancer, this Show Garden was full of symbolism. Aluminium figures in the borders signified Macmillan professionals, and the gentle woodland planting served as a reminder of the therapeutic role of gardening, helping to manage depression and sadness (designer: Rebecca Gover, sponsor: Macmillan Cancer Support).
Show sensations

Visitors to the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show (9-14 July) enjoyed a wealth of new and unusual plants in the Floral Marquee.

New Hydrangea serrata
Tuff Stuff (‘Mak20’) (syn. Blueberry Cheesecake) has lacecaps of blue, cream and green. Cost £15 from Cook’s Garden Centre: 01299 826169; www.cooks-garden-centre.co.uk

Lilium ‘Mystic Dream’ is a new lily with strange green / short flowers that may be purple streaked. Three bulbs cost £5 from HW Hyde & Son: 0118 934 0011; www.hwhyde.co.uk

Eremurus ‘Victor’ is one of several new foxtail lilies from Jacques Amand International; this selection has tall apricot spikes. Tuberous roots available in autumn: 020 8420 7110; www.jacquesamandintl.com

Dahlia ‘Crème de Cassis’ was one of many different kinds displayed by the National Dahlia Collection. This splendid selection (classified as a Small Decorative; see RHS Advice, p28) has double, two-tone flowers with petals lilac above and purple beneath. Rooted cuttings can be ordered for spring 2014 delivery: 07879 337714; www.national-dahlia-collection.co.uk

Verbena officinalis var. grandiflora ‘Bampton’ is an upright, wiry perennial with purple foliage and small, bright pink flowers. Shown by, and available from, Hopleys Plants: £4.50, 01279 842509; www.hopleys.co.uk

Astrantia ‘Burgundy Manor’ is a tall (75cm/30in) cultivar with purple flowers and stems for moist sun or shade. Plants £5 from Hardy’s Cottage Garden Plants: 01256 896533; www.hardy’s-plants.co.uk

Nepenthes robcantleyi ‘Queen of Diamonds’ can produce 30cm (12in) pitchers that may catch small rats. This individual is said to be one of only nine mature plants in the world. Shown by Borneo Exotics, Sri Lanka: 0094 7187 33262; www.borneoexotics.com