

Chelsea Flower Show 2012 Preview

Author: Pattie Barron – Homes & Property

This year's Chelsea Flower Show, which starts on Tuesday May 22, is set to be a stormer. Plant ideas alone are thick on the ground: order Royal Jubilee, the glorious new English rose, cupped and deep-pink, and consider buying Kelway's latest peony, the divine Salmon Dream — yours for a mere £400.

Expect a revival of country-lane cow parsley as well as the stunning cube-cut classic copper beech for high-level hedging.

The Artisan Gardens section includes five retreats, each imaginatively kitted out by fashion designer Orla Keily, VV Rouleaux's Annabel Lewis, textile artist Kaffe Fassett, interior designer Vicki Conran and florist Nikki Tibbles. This is where to take tips on transforming the garden shed.

The Apco Garden in this section, drawing on the great Italian gardens, with cypress trees miraculously emerging from a waterfall — think carefully before copying — but this is Chelsea, after all, where everything goes — including a grassy, 80ft tower.



Chelsea's Shard of Grass: Diarmuid Gavin's 80ft Magical Tower Garden is taking shape

To prove the point, **Fresh Gardens**, with its own Refresh champagne bar, and marked with three towering sculptures by Jo Chapman, is a promising new category of cutting-edge spaces, none more so than Tony Heywood and Alison Condie's RHS Glamourlands: A Techno-Folly.

It is inspired by Dorset's Jurassic Coast, which manifests itself in a deeply contoured landscape, perfumed with a Penhaligon's scent machine and sensationally smothered in sparkling, multi-coloured jewels. Place your order with Swarovski now.

On a more practical note, of the 18 show gardens, major player Arne Maynard is back at Chelsea after a 12-year absence, doing what he does best: elegant, exquisite planting that also creates structure.



David Austin's peony-like Royal Jubilee English rose

A pleached copper beech hedge makes the perfect enclosure for a limestone terrace, while in the richly-planted borders, tumbling roses are trained over hazel domes.

This **Laurent-Perrier Bicentenary Garden** is the one to study for terrific take-home ideas. Two readers and their partners can see the garden at close quarters, and meet Arne Maynard himself, as well as win a bottle of Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rose, by emailing bicentenarygarden@wildcard.co.uk with your name, address and phone number by midday on Friday May 18. The winners will be notified and tickets couriered.

Both designers of the Olympic Park gardens have created tipped-to-gain-gold show gardens: how do they find the time? Sarah Price has summoned up the natural British landscape with her celebrated light-touch wildflower planting, for the **Daily Telegraph Garden**, while brilliant ecologist Nigel Dunnett has reinterpreted the traditional paradise garden, channelling and storing rainwater, for the **RBC Blue Water Garden**; turkscap lilies are his moisture-loving flower of choice.

The wild, rocky landscape of the Corsican maquis is the dreamy inspiration for **L'Occitane's Immortelle Garden**, in which Peter Dowle provides a stunning focus of *Helichrysum orientale*'s sunshine-yellow, healing Immortelle flowers massed alongside a lagoon and sandy beach footpath.

To win one of five straw baskets packed with products inspired by the fields of L'Occitane's Provence home, email HayleyR@moduspublicity.com with your name, address and phone number by midnight on Monday, May 21.



Hartley Botanic gives the humble greenhouse a clean urban edge

Closer to home, Joe Swift was inspired by the Cornus tree down the road to his Hackney home when plotting his ideal urban idyll. The **Homebase Teenage Cancer Trust Garden** is a realistic space that houses the ubiquitous London plane tree as well as a multi-stemmed Cornus mas, and has four large cedar arches that create changing views as you move around the space.

Swift's planting is sustainable and stylish, just what we want for town gardens; find not just the plants — apricot verbascum, deep plum cosmos, golden potentilla to name just three beauties — for sale at Homebase, but the invaluable what-to-plant-with-what instructions, so we can, hooray, recreate a piece of Chelsea for ourselves.

Link:

www.homesandproperty.co.uk/your_home_and_garden/outdoors/chelseaflovershow2012preview.html