

# NEWS

What's new in the world of garden design *Compiled by Zia Allaway*



## MEMBERS LEAD THE WAY AT CHELSEA'S CENTENARY

RHS Chelsea Flower Show this year celebrates its Centenary with a star-studded cast of designers, including seven SGD members. Robert Myers, Jo Thompson, Marie-Louise Agius and Christopher Bradley-Hole are creating main show gardens, while James Basson, Andrew Wilson and Gavin McWilliam will be exhibiting in the Fresh category.

For his eighth Chelsea Show Garden, Robert Myers is creating a calm, reflective, private garden. "Sculptural and textural planting, together with stone, timber and water, will create spaces for relaxation and entertainment," he says. "The garden promotes the use of UK native plants, and shows how they can be used in an ornamental but quite contemporary way. The design is inspired by sponsor Brewin Dolphin's ethos as a British company: bespoke and innovative, but firmly rooted in past traditions."

Veteran of Chelsea, Christopher Bradley Hole, returns to the show after an eight-year absence with a garden for the *Daily Telegraph*. He says: "The design is inspired by the English landscape, Japanese design and abstract art. I have

been working on a large project set in an historic landscape, and appreciate the importance and subtlety of our native woodland. I also have a keen interest in Japanese design, and the garden is an abstract, minimalist amalgam of these ideas."

Jo Thompson's fourth Chelsea garden is 'Stop the Spread', sponsored by The Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) and the National Trust to promote the threat posed by imported plant pests and diseases. The garden includes an avenue of 'ghost' trees, sourced for Jo by the Forestry Commission. "They are likely to be *Betula pendula* trees, removed for thinning purposes from a local forest," she explains.

The 'East Village Garden', designed by Marie-Louise Agius and Michael Balston, picks up the 'designed for living' theme of the Athletes Village, now part of the Olympic legacy. "We hope to highlight how good design, contemporary materials, and a strong emphasis on planting, can work in harmony, with the juxtaposition between 'urban' and 'green' reflecting the ethos of London's newest neighbourhood," says Marie-Louise.

James Basson's 'After the Fire' garden in the Fresh category was inspired by the regeneration of the Var area in the South of France, which was devastated by fire four years ago. "We have taken the essence of this landscape and remodelled it to make a garden," he says.

Chelsea Show judge Andrew Wilson, together with Gavin McWilliam, are creating a garden in the Fresh category for sponsors Cloudy Bay wines. "The design is inspired by the vineyards in New Zealand and the jewel-like colours of the wines, presented through the planting," says Andrew. This will be Gavin's first Chelsea, and he says: "Andrew and I have talked about doing a show garden many times and it's great that it's finally happening. As my wife is from New Zealand, the garden holds a particular resonance, and explores the concept of 'rough luxe', where luxurious materials are contrasted with rough textures."

For further information and tickets, visit [www.rhs.org.uk/Shows-Events](http://www.rhs.org.uk/Shows-Events)



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT** 'Stop the Spread' by Jo Thompson; 'East Village Garden' by Michael Balston and Marie-Louise Agius; Robert Myers' design; Christopher Bradley Hole's garden for the *Daily Telegraph*