

Chelsea Flower Show 2013: a preview of the gardens

Bunny Guinness enjoyed a sneak preview of the Chelsea Flower Show this week. Here, she picks out the show gardens worth making time to see.



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As ever with the Chelsea Flower Show, you want to seek out those gardens that excite, inspire and really lift your heart.

Excellence in design, be it some clever small detail or a wonderful space, is always enjoyable. In a good year, there are usually at least a handful of such elements that enthral me. I viewed the show last Thursday, when it was still very much a building site rather than a flower show. I did get a good flavour of what will unfold in the next three days of manic activity. Sometimes, though, I am surprised when I pop back on press day and I am wowed by something I walked past just a few days back.

8 After the Fire: Cancer Research garden



James Basson's garden (Scape Design) is a small one (9m x 9m) that caught my eye. It's a strong, simple design with informal plantings of myrtles, phillyrea, cistus, arbutus and other Mediterranean-style plants arranged with the supposed remnants of burnt trees cleverly positioned among them. Hard-packed earth paths crossed through in places, and a gully of orange terracotta traversed the space running to an earth-baked pool. The terracotta was all done by Poterie Le Chêne Vert, and was different, dashing and delightful (poteriedanduze.com). Lots of impact here, but subtle too.