

RHS Chelsea Flower Show – RBC New Wild Garden

RBC New Wild Garden wins Royal approval at RHS Chelsea Flower Show

The RBC New Wild Garden at the 2011 Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Chelsea Flower Show turned out to be a stunning success. Designed by award winning landscaper Nigel Dunnett, the garden took a silver gilt medal and was visited by Her Majesty the Queen - one of only six gardens she viewed.

2011 marked the first year in which RBC has sponsored a garden in the Show. It is also the first time a full scale rain garden - designed to capture and use every drop of water that falls on it - has been built on the Royal Hospital site.

The Garden project, including marketing, advertising and client events was a joint collaboration between RBC Wealth Management, RBC Capital Markets and the RBC Blue Water Project – a wide-ranging, multi-year programme to help foster a culture of water stewardship.

Inspired by William Robinson's seminal 19th century gardening guide 'The Wild Garden', the RBC New Wild Garden combined the arts and crafts ideal of using reused and recycled materials with naturalistic gardening. Robinson advocated more natural and less formal-looking plantings of hardy perennials, shrubs and climbers. He railed against standard roses, statuary, sham Italian gardens and other artifices common in gardening at the time. The result was a colourful, interesting and innovative garden well received by judges and visitors alike.

Virtually all of the recycled elements used in the garden were materials which were given a new lease of life. The paving stones used as a walkway were once granite kerbs on Exhibition Road, London, while the garden studio had previously travelled the world as a shipping container. A close look at the habitat walls straddling and separating the flower beds reveals fire wood and old books strategically placed to attract common garden creepy crawlies.

The rain garden elements of the garden were in keeping with the goals of the RBC Blue Water Project. The garden captures each raindrop by storing it in small circular pools which slowly release the rainwater back into the soil. Lynn Patterson, Director of Corporate Responsibility for RBC, sees close links between the story of the RBC New Wild Garden and the RBC Blue Water Project. "The sustainability message, which is at the heart of our garden's design, aligns perfectly with our ongoing commitment to water education and preservation," she says.

After the show, the RBC garden was donated to the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT). Renamed as the RBC Rain Garden, visitors to WWT's Slimbridge site in Gloucestershire can view the award-winning garden all year round.