

Best in show

Scotland's national garden project gets a winning design, says Raoul Curtis-Machin

Cast your mind back to the benign days of last May, when your garden looked like a burgeoning paradise compared to the flattened cowp left by the recent gales. You may recall we profiled a design competition, the winner of which would have their vision realised at the Calyx, Scotland's national garden project in Perth.

Now the prize-winning designs are being exhibited in Edinburgh. Like all the entries – which came from gardeners across the UK – they possess a brave dynamism coupled with the traditional traits of small modern gardens: security, tranquillity and beauty.

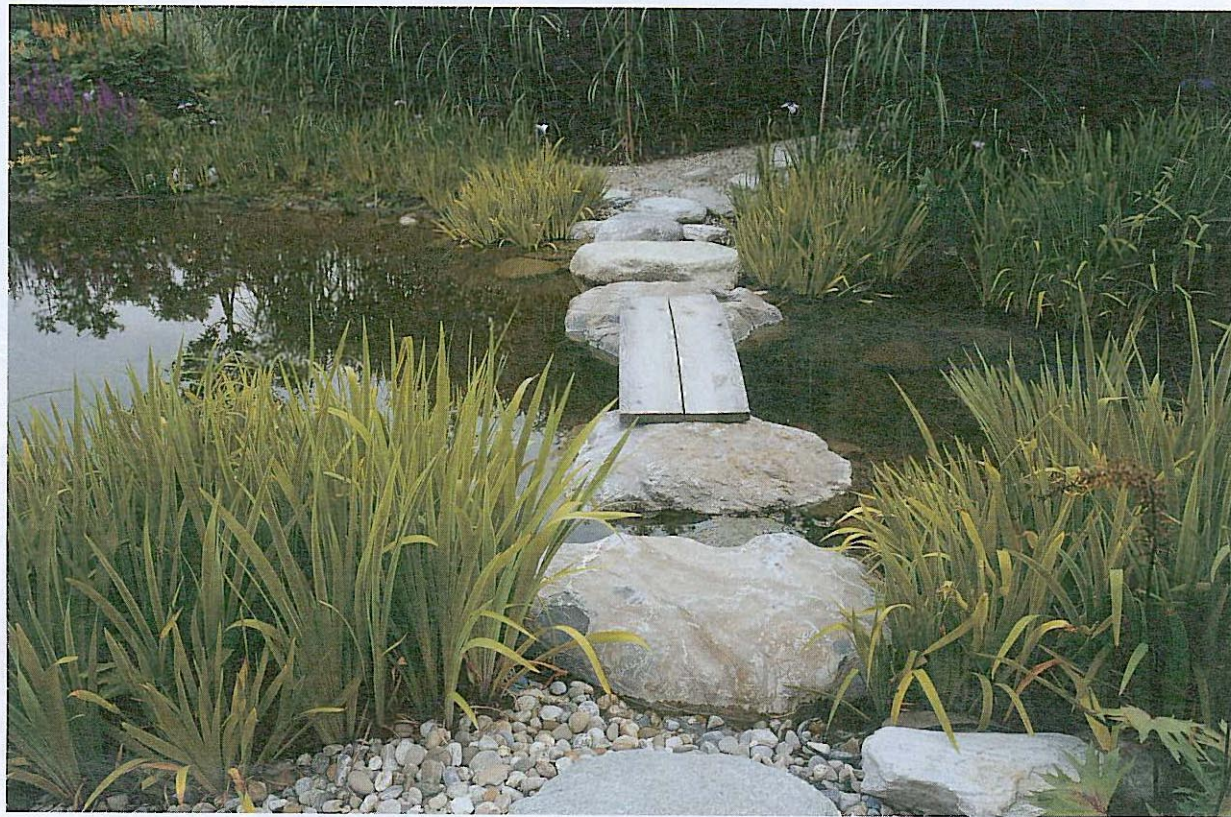
The winner, Rhona Fleming from Norfolk, met the brief – a garden measuring 11m by 7m linking inside and outside – with aplomb. She created a visionary space that features an enclosed sanctuary at the end of a bridge and dramatic planting all around. From the drawing alone you get a good sense of the dynamic, exciting qualities of the layout.

Rhoda Robertson from Edinburgh came second with a more traditional garden plan with ornamental lawns, flower and shrub beds, and a vegetable patch. These features are cleverly screened from each other, the design linked by an open creeper-covered gazebo connecting the enclosed interior space with the outdoor one.

Just outside the prize-winning categories was Pedro Pezeres from Dundee, who entered a carefully conceived, thought-provoking design using sharp, clean lines and a simple but dramatic use of materials. Complete with recycling areas for glass, paper and green waste, this looks like the garden of the future (provided councils get rid of those hulking plastic wheelie bins). Pezeres mixes ornamental with edible planting and a relaxed wildflower meadow.

There are also a couple of le Corbusier-style designs at the Views on the Garden Exhibition, looking as much like city wine-bar gardens as private gardens – perfect for the busy urbanite.

The award for most eye-catchingly colourful design, though, must go to six-year-old Holly Jane Walton-Jones. From Carnoustie, Angus, Holly Jane creates a house and garden with trees, bright flowers, a bird table and an enormous sun bursting out above the roof – ah, the optimism of youth. But for truly entertaining conceptual stuff,



cross the floor to the students' competition area – with climbing frames, web spaces and moving walls, it's like Diarmuid Gavin on acid.

"We were very pleased by the response," says Willie Watt, a member of Dundee Institute of Architects (DIA), which organised the contest with the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) and the Calyx. "There are some high-quality presentations from lay gardeners and professionals. It seems to have struck a chord with students and recent graduates. It's encouraging to see the quality that's coming up."

The aim of the competition was to explore the relationship between house and garden and allow the RIAS to stimulate debate. "Architecture doesn't happen in a vacuum," explains Mary Wrenn, chief executive of RIAS. "We're trying to break down the barriers between professional and public – this is all about getting the public's views and listening."

Sandy McAllister, the president of the DIA and chairman of the judging panel, agrees. "From here we'd like to get the message out to schools and careers fairs, so we're pushing it that architects don't just design buildings," he says.

Besides myself, the other judges were BBC Scotland's Beechgrove Garden presenter Jim

Entrants to the Calyx competition were charged with designing a small space that connected house and garden

PHOTOGRAPH: RON SUTHERLAND

McColl, Professor Ric Russell, a senior partner in Nicol Russell architectural practice, and Penny Lewis, the editor of architecture magazine Prospect. The first prize was a weekend trip to London for two, including entry to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, plus £500 of products donated by the landscape materials supplier Marshalls, who also provided a second prize worth £400 and £300 for third and fourth places.

Fleming's winning design will now be built as part of a show garden display area at the Calyx, a 62-acre site at Cherrybank in Perth that aims to showcase the best in modern horticulture, similar to the Eden Project in Cornwall. Marshalls and Burlington Slate will supply landscaping materials and the project's application for £25m has been short-listed by the Big Lottery Fund. A community fun day on February 4, from 11am-3pm, will let people examine the plans and contribute to the final design. Entry is free, and it seems there is such a thing as a free lunch – well, that's what the publicity flyer says. ■

The Views on the Garden exhibition runs until February 2 at the RIAS Gallery, 15 Rutland Square, Edinburgh. Visit www.rias.org.uk or call 0131 229 7545.

TURN TO... PAGE 4
THE ONLY WAY TO BE FLUENT IS TO HAVE A FRENCH LOVER FIDELMA COOK

GROWING PAINS



CAROLE BAXTER

I have noticed that some leaves on one of my camellia bushes have developed a series of yellow spots. What do you think is the cause and what action should I take, if any?

J Morrison, Helensburgh

The lovely flowers and glossy leaves of shrubby camellias can be spoilt by a virus-like organism known as camellia yellow mottle, which causes bright yellow or creamy white blotches or speckles to appear.

It is particularly common in cultivars of *Camellia japonica*, and usually just a few leaves or specific branches show symptoms. Thankfully, the vigour of the plant is not often influenced. Prune out the affected parts

and avoid using the shrub for propagation purposes.

Several of my shrubs and herbaceous plants seem to be affected by what I believe to be capsid bugs. Can you advise me on how to get rid of this pest?

C Woods, Dumbarton

The main culprits are the common green capsid, *Lygocoris pabulinus*, and the tarnished plant bug, *Lygus rugulipennis*. Sucking

insects about a quarter of an inch long (6mm), both adult and nymph stages damage plants.

Capsids feed on the sap of young growth, and as they do so secrete a toxic saliva. This results in the leaves from the shoot tips being puckered and distorted, with small ragged holes. Buds and growing tips can be killed, and flowers and fruits are misshapen. Plants prone to this include caryopteris, hydrangeas,

fuchsias, dahlias, apples and chrysanthemums.

Damage is most likely from late spring through summer, but by the time the problem is detected the insects will have moved on, or, once disturbed, will drop to the ground or fly away. Eggs and adults tend to overwinter in plant debris or on woody plant material.

To reduce the capsid bug population practise good garden hygiene by, for example, removing leaf

litter beneath hedges and tidying up herbaceous borders in autumn. From late spring make regular checks around vulnerable plants to spot symptoms as early as possible and apply a suitable systemic or non-systemic insecticide. Spray the surrounding soil as well as the plant. Be aware, though, that not all capsid bugs are a problem; some act as predators to other common garden pests such as aphids.