

Ann-Marie Powell wins the People's Choice Award at Chelsea Flower Show 2024

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Published Date: 24 May 2024



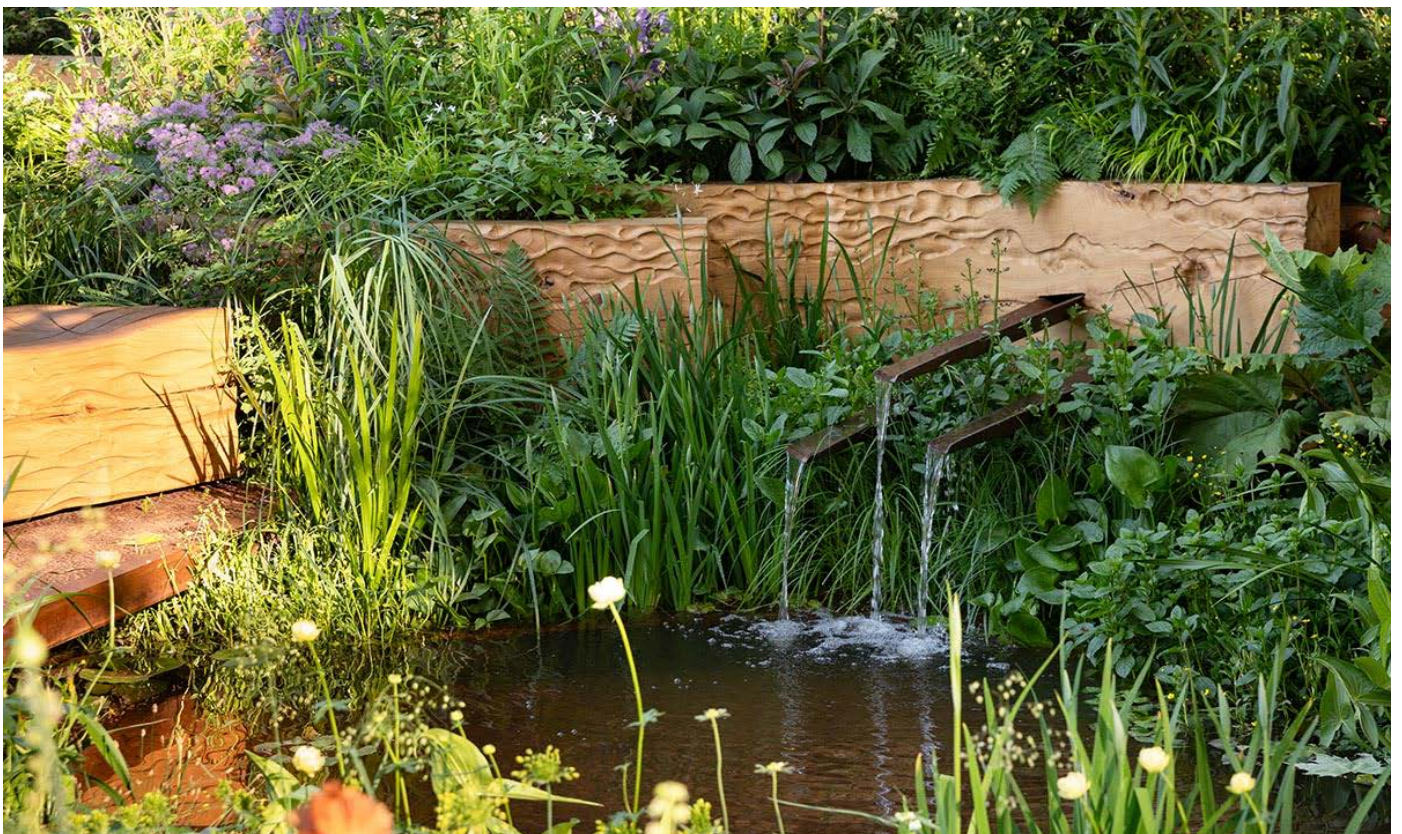
Ann-Marie Powell's Garden for RHS Chelsea. | Photo credit: Jayne Lloyd

The Octavia Hill Garden by Blue Diamond with the National Trust was one of the most colourful along Main Avenue, which perhaps explains why it inspired so many visitors and viewers to vote for it. Vibrant combinations of orange, yellow and rich, rusty reds were particularly prevalent. Bearded iris played a starring role, whether it was the rusty reds of 'Dutch Chocolate' and 'Kent Pride', or the yellow and crimson-brown 'Rajah' they gave the planting flamboyant impact.



Sunset colours in Ann-Marie Powell's bright and exuberant planting. | Photo credit: Jayne Lloyd

Voted for by the public, the People's Choice Award is always a happy one for a Chelsea designer to receive, and Ann-Marie Powell was delighted when she found out her garden for the National Trust and Blue Diamond had won it this year. "My goodness, it's amazing to win this award because the garden is designed for people to enjoy nature and plants, and every good thing they do for us – it's just ace!", she said.



Octavia would have wanted the garden to be built by hand, Ann-Marie feels. | Photo credit: Jayne Lloyd

Irises weren't the only star plants: one that caught everyone's attention was *Craspedia globosa* with its bobble-like golden yellow flowers, teamed here with satsuma-coloured 'Totally Tangerine' geums, and bobbing about in the brightest borders. For vertical accents Ann-Marie chose verbascums: 'Cotswold Beauty' in yellow and antique pink 'Petra'.



"We will lose our world if we lose out wildlife," says Ann-Marie. | Photo credit: Jayne Lloyd

Knitting it all together were those all-important geums. 'Totally Tangerine' was prevalent, but there was also red 'Scarlet Tempest'. Not just in the hot, sunny planting, they featured in the tapestry of ground cover Ann-Marie placed below her specimen trees and shrubs, teaming them with astrantias (try 'Burgundy Manor' for a deep red like these), bronze-flushed ferns and more. The geums also threaded their way through the frothy foliage of bronze fennel, which popped up repeatedly through the garden lending contrast with its feathery leaves.



Ann-Marie looked to nature-rich spaces for her design inspiration. | Photo credit: Jayne Lloyd

Even the woodland-edge planting below the gardens trees was colourful, featuring foxgloves, lime-green euphorbias, buddleja and thalictrum. Ann-Marie picked *Geranium phaeum* 'Joseph Green' for one of these spots - *Geranium phaeum* thrives in shade, and 'Joseph Green' is the only double-flowered cultivar currently available with unusual flowers in purple and emerald green.