



PRESS RELEASE

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THE RETURN OF THE FOLLY?

- **Landscaper Twig Group predicts retro revival in urban garden design**
- **Chilstone Garden at Chelsea offers a stunning 21st century re-imagining of an 18th century tradition**

British urban gardens may soon be host to contemporary versions of the 18th century folly, a fixture in the grounds of many stately homes. That is according to landscapers Twig at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

If it seems fanciful to have an everlasting ice sculpture standing in a paddle pool by a temple on a garden path made of turquoise deep-pile carpet that's because it is. It makes a statement and it is full of eccentricity. It is a folly, with its centerpiece Temple borrowed from another era – and it could herald a retro revival in town garden design. For a week in May it is part of a striking urban garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

The Chilstone Garden (picture attached) has been designed by the award-winning Heather Appleton, making her debut at Chelsea, and is being built and project-managed by the Kent landscaping firm, Twig.

Heather's design for the urban garden revives materials and ideas from the past and gives them a modern twist. She has mixed old and new, technologies and textures to create a retreat for busy people to chill out in.

Heather says: "When architectural stone makers Chilstone approached me to design their Chelsea garden I was inspired by the sound of their name - Chill-stone. I used one of Chilstone's 'old school' stone statues - a cherubic boy holding up a bowl full of ice cubes, with a dog at his feet -- and had it cast in resin. It's a material which can last forever, so the everlasting ice sculpture was born - and may be an antique of the future. I like the contradiction in terms - a conventional figure transformed into what could be the most expensive ice bucket in the showground, melting into a paddle pool below."

The sculpture (pictured being revealed from its mould) is made of the same material used by Italian artist Mauro Peruccetti for his recent jelly baby art installation in London's Marble Arch.

"Follies are meant to be whimsical, foolish and purely decorative, to serve no purpose. But there's nothing foolish about this folly. It serves as a chill-out space, so it is functional and I guess that is another contradiction in terms," says Heather.

Additionally, the Chilstone Garden includes

- A luxuriously soft deep-pile turquoise outdoor carpet instead of paving (see attached for details)
- A neo-classical stone temple, inside which hangs a retro Eero Aarnio hanging see-through bubble chair
- Snowball shaped seats
- An intricate pattern of wild grasses and winter-white plants, including *Stachys byzantine*, perhaps the coolest plant in the garden looking as though it is encrusted with ice yet flourishing in full sun.

Heather says that she likes to try to source materials in a show garden that haven't been seen or used before. She plumped for the resin after seeing an ice sculptor at work surrounded by crowds at an exhibition. "It was mesmerizing to watch and I thought that having our own 'ice sculpture' would create a real sense of theatre."

She is using carpet rather than paving because of its slinky soft feel underfoot as a contrast to the stone and ice. Bright turquoise fits in with the chilled theme. She says: “ I used a similar outdoor carpet at BBC Gardeners World Live in 2010 in bright purple and show visitors loved it - especially the men, for some reason!”

Heather says that all the materials in the garden have a retro feel: “shag pile” carpet, resin products, the acrylic Eero Arnio bubble chair. “Everything I use is like a come-back kid – a bit like platform shoes – only I remember everything first time round.”

The Twig Group have the task of constructing the garden. Managing director David Eyre predicts that Heather’s design is so cool that it will inspire others to create their own urban follies. He says: “We were thrilled to have been hand-picked by Heather to make her design become a reality. She is a perfectionist – as we are at Twig, so we’re confident of working well together. Heather is highly creative – and her eye for precision and perspective means we are all being kept on our toes as we build what we hope will be one of the most inspirational show garden at Chelsea.”

Heather Appleton’s urban garden is on show at Chelsea from May 24-28 2011. Visit the Chilstone Garden on the Pavilion Way RHW30

For more information please contact:

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Key facts

Heather Appleton is a designer who consistently wins show garden competitions. Whether her creations are for charities, such as the PDSA or the Anthony Nolan Trust, or to promote commercial sponsors, she has a strong track record of winning design competitions Heather, who took up garden design later in life, had long yearned to land a coveted place at RHS Chelsea. She is delighted to be showcasing her urban garden there.

The temple at the centre of the garden was designed for a show garden at the 1982 Chelsea Flower Show. It was part of the Home & Gardens display and was designed by David Stevens and won a gold medal. It has been tweaked for this year to give it a more contemporary appearance; the fibreglass roof has been changed to look like lead.

The columns and lintels were manufactured by hand using 2.5 tonnes of crushed sandstone. Heather adapted a number of Chilstone's standard components such as 22-inch balls, converting them into snowball seats, one of which will hook over the edge of the paddling pool. In total Chilstone used over 5 tonnes of crushed sandstone. Two staff were assigned to make all of the stone for Chelsea - the aptly named Greg Sands and Calon Flack.

To view the **garden concept** in pictures, visit:
<http://www.chilstone.com/Chelsea2011.php>

The suppliers of the long grasses are Wildly Rural:
<http://wildlyrural.com/Nursery/nursery.html>

Trees from Deepdale trees:
<http://www.deepdale-trees.co.uk/index.htm>

CMA Moldform have supplied the ice sculpture. (They supplied the resin for Mauro Peruccetti's jelly baby installation at Marble Arch):
<http://www.cmamoldform.co.uk>

The deep-pile outdoor carpet is manufactured in Germany by Kymo - www.kymo.de - and distributed in London and the South-East by the Twig Group: www.twigggroup.co.uk

The garden is being built and project-managed by the Twig Group, the Kent based landscape and countryside management company
www.twigggroup.co.uk

About Twig

1. The Twig Group is an award-winning* landscape and countryside management company with dedicated branches operating within the domestic, commercial and educational sectors.

2. Twig's latest projects include landscaping various country gardens and agricultural spaces in south England; the clearance, redesign and rebuild of London town house gardens; creating an innovative rooftop garden for students at London's City University; landscaping for the 230-acre site at Thanet Earth and completing a number of outdoor learning spaces for schools as well as sensory gardens for those who are hard of hearing and visually impaired.

3. Twig have launched the widely acclaimed Maternitree tree-planting campaign: www.maternitree.co.uk is endorsed by the Woodland Trust and the influential online networking site, mumsnet

*Twig's most recent award was for London and South-East Business of the Year at the British Chambers Awards held in November 2010

Follies

Follies were an important feature of the English garden and French landscape garden in the 18th century, such as Stowe and Stourhead in England and Ermenonville and the gardens of Versailles in France. They were usually in the form of Roman temples, ruined Gothic abbeys, or Egyptian pyramids. Painshill Park in Surrey contained almost a full set, with a large Gothic tower and various other Gothic buildings, a Roman temple, a hermit's retreat with resident hermit, a Turkish tent, a shell-encrusted water grotto, among other features. In France they sometimes took the form of romantic farmhouses, mills and cottages, as in Marie Antoinette's Hameau de la Reine at Versailles. Sometimes they were copied from landscape paintings by painters such as Claude Lorrain and Hubert Robert. Often they had symbolic importance, illustrating the virtues of ancient Rome, or the virtues of country life. The temple of philosophy at Ermenonville, left unfinished, symbolized that knowledge would never be complete, while the temple of modern virtues at Stowe was deliberately ruined, to show the decay of contemporary morals.

Later in the 18th century, the follies became more exotic, representing other parts of the world - they included Chinese pagodas, Japanese bridges, and Tatar tents.

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