

HorticultureWeek

Expansion is success at Hampton Court

8 July 2004,

RHS's largest show is bigger and better than ever with new layout and extra space.

Two-and-a-half hectares of extra space at Royal Horticultural Society Hampton Court Flower Show has “brought the people and the palace together”. RHS shows director Stephen Bennett said sending the catering facilities “downstream” along the Long Water and opening up new space for show gardens down the palace railings meant visitors and exhibitors could expect a less congested experience. He added that the removal of trees next to Long Water meant the space was not being used for show gardens, so new trees could become established. “Everyone seems to be enjoying the new layout. This is one big show now.” This year’s event, which takes place this week, features 20 show gardens, 26 small gardens and seven water gardens. Seeds of Hope won the Tudor Rose for best garden. The Christian Aid garden, designed by Claire Whitehouse and built by Jed Powell, was inspired by the need for fair trade in West Africa. Berkshire College of Agriculture students won the best small garden prize, while Jonathan Gittens and Torunn Saksvikronning’s night-time LED-lit Garden of Light won the creative garden award. Celebrity garden designer Diarmuid Gavin said he was impressed with the students’ work and the innovation of the show in general. But he added that he would not design a show garden at Hampton himself because “once you get to Chelsea, you don’t turn around”. Woking Nursery Exhibition chairman Mark Roberts said the show helps him to see the way the industry is going, “as sooner or later it trickles down to us”. Among the new exhibitors this year was Fernatix. Owner Steve Fletcher said: “It’s our first big RHS event that we can sell plants at.” Squire’s garden centres chairman Colin Squire said the show was “key” and “right in our patch”. Squire said he expected to sell several thousand pounds’ worth of plants. He was displaying Rosa ‘Golden Memories’, the rose of the year, as was Bill LeGrice Roses, which also introduced Rosa ‘Missing You’, bred by Colin Horner. Owner LeGrice said: “Hampton Court is the biggest show by far – we sell four to five times more here than at Tatton. They’ve really enlarged the site, which is great.”