

Grant Associates reveals design inspiration behind Chelsea Flower Show garden



Grant Associates has revealed how the design concept for its show garden at Chelsea Flower Show 2020 was inspired directly by its namesake.

‘Guangzhou China - Guangzhou Garden’ is the award-winning landscape architect’s first show garden for the Chelsea Flower Show and its layout is inspired by Guangzhou - a port city northwest of Hong Kong on China’s Pearl River.

Known as ‘the city between mountain and water’, Guangzhou’s approach to environmental planning is based on the concept of ‘ecological civilisation’.

Peter Chmiel, director at [Grant Associates](#), and Chin-Jung Chen, associate at the practice, aim to capture this concept in 'Guangzhou Garden', and show how cities of the future must be considered as landscape cities. This design philosophy gives equal consideration to the needs of people and wildlife through sustainable city planning strategies, reconnecting people and nature in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Guangzhou has a distinct environmental plan which divides the city into three zones: social green space for people within the central business district (Heart); protected green spaces to the north (Green Lungs); and protected aquatic areas to the south (Blue Kidneys).

'Guangzhou Garden' is inspired by these zones:

- Lungs. Characterful trees (dawn redwood, scots pine, field maple and birch) create the 'woodland dell' capturing particulate matter, absorbing nitrous and sulphur dioxide. Sedges, Euphorbia and ferns form a green carpet, punctuated with accent and dome-shaped plants such as rodgersia and angelica. These species all help to clean the water, air and provide a resilient habitat.
- Heart. Areas for people and nature to mingle and rest. These are created through five structures made of laminated moso bamboo (*Phyllostachys edulis*) - a fast growing, sustainably sourced bamboo that is also easier to recycle than typical construction materials. The tallest structure will be 8.5 m tall.
- Kidneys. Wetlands planted with aquatic plants to improve water quality, including water forget-me-not, irises, scouring rush and floating plants. Stepping stones allow people to experience the water at close range which includes waterfalls and small weirs and cascades over rocks,

The three garden zones are all visually united by an elegant, graceful drifting wave of green foliage plants including airy frothy perennials in soft shades of white, and subtle hints of blue and yellow. Variations of these colours, including vivid lime green, are woven throughout.

Grant Associates is designing 'Guangzhou Garden' on behalf of China based culture project consultancy [Creativersal](#) and the main sponsor is the Administration of Forestry and Gardening of Guangzhou Municipality.

Grant Associates is creating the garden in collaboration with garden design consultancy [The Outdoor Room](#), and nursery [Kelways Plants](#). The bamboo structures are being developed in partnership with [Charlie Brentnall and Martin Self of Xylotex](#).

The environment and sustainability are set to be key themes at [RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2020](#), which runs from 19 May to 23 May.

"Taking part in the RHS Chelsea Flower Show has presented us with a fascinating and creative challenge: capturing the essence of vast and vibrant Guangzhou in a garden plot just 20mx10m! The show is also providing us with a fantastic opportunity to broadcast our message about the need to think about our future cities as landscape cities and the importance of connecting people and nature to a new audience. Indeed, this year the climate crisis and biodiversity emergency are clear themes across several gardens at Chelsea."

— Peter Chmiel, director at Grant Associates

"We're fortunate to be working with a very experienced team on our Chelsea journey. Creating 'Guangzhou Garden' is a collaborative process where designer, grower and contractor all play an equally important part. We're looking forward to sharing the results of our efforts with the public in May."

— Chin-Jung Chen, associate at Grant Associates





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ABOUT GRANT ASSOCIATES

Grant Associates is a pioneering international [landscape architecture practice](#). Our work reconnects people with nature in insightful, delightful and distinctive ways whilst addressing the global challenges of urbanisation, the climate crisis and biodiversity extinction.

Our design process is underpinned by a knowledge of human behaviour, nature and ecological science combined with innovative design technology. We bring original thinking, creative collaboration and are exploring what regenerative design and the circular economy means to landscape architecture.

Our varied portfolio includes ambitious large-scale, landmark projects through to small, local ventures.



Grant Associates