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Scent and sensibility

Anna Tyzack profiles two quirky designers exhibiting at this week's Daily Telegraph House and Garden Fair

'Clouds of Scent' was an idea that came instantly to Todd Longstaffe-Gowan (pictured left). "When I heard the theme for the House and Garden Fair at Olympia was 'scent', I thought giant, suspended spheres of flowers would be heavenly," he says. "I love the idea of a hanging garden."

Longstaffe-Gowan plans to suspend 50 flower shapes from the ceiling at various heights. Below will be a meadow of wild grasses with a winding path to enable visitors to move between the "clouds". "It will be like walking into a flower arrangement," he says. "You'll smell it first. The mass of colours will have an ephemeral nature, like eruptions or molecules. People will see how much fun there is to be had with flowers."

It will be the first time Longstaffe-Gowan, who is gardens advisor to Hampton Court and Kensington Palaces, has created arrangements on such a large scale. "The installation will have a kinetic feel," he says. "We will replant the 'clouds' several times over the course of the Fair and there will be an element of decay. We're going to use whatever is available on the day - lilies, herbs, alliums - it depends on what they have. Not everything has to have a scent."

But despite their size and magnificence, the spheres are, apparently, not difficult to make. Longstaffe-Gowan suggests using them as marquee or party decorations. "They are low-tech and economical - very *Blue Peter*," he says. At their core is a wire shopping basket full of floral foam. "You can be as playful and inventive as you want - these are not formal arrangements."

Richard Miers's garden is another must-see at the Fair. Describing himself as a "feeler and a doodler" rather than a theorist, his trademark ribbon hedging - whirling strips of green, wrapping their way around scented herbaceous borders - emerged from a doodle. "I immediately recognised it as another way of giving structure but providing something new," he says.

These baroque-style swirls will interweave Richard's garden at the House and Garden Fair, bringing together the various features. "A garden must look like a coherent whole no matter how many things are going on in it," he says. The hedges will weave through two avenues of limes planted into a fragrant chamomile lawn. A path

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'CLOUDS OF SCENT'

Name Todd Longstaffe-Gowan
Profile Landscape architect, academic and collector. Vice-president of the London Parks and Gardens Trust and gardens advisor to Kensington and Hampton Court Palaces.
Inspirations: The dramatic and sculptural potential of landscape.
Projects: Designs urban and country gardens both at home and abroad, mainly with a

conservation slant. Refurbished the King's New Privy Garden at Hampton Court Palace and recast the gardens at Spencer House, opposite Buckingham Palace.
"I like to think that my gardens are intelligent as well as beautiful. They are informed by my training as an architect, landscape architect, geographer and historian," he says.
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