

# GARDEN DESIGN JOURNAL

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NEW GARDEN DESIGN:  
REVIEW OF THIS YEAR'S  
WESTONBIRT FESTIVAL

**DRAINAGE IN YOUR GARDEN**

**HYDROPONICS**



**ISABELLE VAN GROENINGEN**



**TREE CARE**

**JAMES VAN SWEDEN**



# WESTONBIRT REVIEW

This year has seen the second Westonbirt International Festival of Gardens attract over 100,000 visitors. To review this year's show, *Garden Design Journal* has canvassed opinion to see how well the three months fared. Photography by Helen Fickling

Above: Andy Sturgeon and Stephen Reilly's 'Situation'.

The garden matured well over the festival's length, with the informal planting either side of the pathway standing up to visitor movement. The blue Perspex squares added a bold colour to the grid walls

Last year, the first Westonbirt International Festival of Gardens (WIFG), Gloucestershire was given a cautious welcome by the garden design profession. In its favour was the opportunity to design a show garden that would grow from June until September (rather than the normal week-long events seen in the United Kingdom), with the dramatic Westonbirt arboretum as a backdrop. The influence of garden shows such as Chaumont-sur-Loire in France and the International Garden Festival of Métis, Quebec, Canada had at last galvanised enough enthusiasm for the UK to have its own type of new garden show.

However, there were some over-riding concerns from last year ('True colours', *GDJ*, December 2002/January 2003): the sense of arrival and movement around the festival site; the location and relation of the gardens to the site, and each other; and the quality of garden maintenance.

To address some of these concerns for this year's WIFG, the organisers (TJM Associates and the Forestry Commission) reformed the user flow through the site; reduced the number of gardens to 14 (from last year's 20); created a more significant sense of arrival; commissioned eight art installations; and appointed Jon Simcox, from the maintenance division of Tony Heywood Landscapes, to look after the site. Have these changes been enough to show a marked improvement in the show? Did the reduction in the number of gardens allow for a better experience? Generally, as the correspondents over the next five pages demonstrate, it seems as if this year's show was significantly better...

Visit the website: <[www.festivalofgardens.co.uk](http://www.festivalofgardens.co.uk)>.

→ *Thérèse Lang and Jan Chillery from TJM Associates will be speaking at the Society of Garden Designers' autumn conference. See page 3 for details.*