

Making every drop count

January 26 2011

A sustainable “rain garden” designed to capture every drop of water that falls onto it has been unveiled as one of the leading attractions at the 2011 Chelsea Flower Show.

Working on the project is Newcastle University graduate Ed Payne together with his colleagues at The Landscape Agency. Sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada, the New Wild [Garden](#) will be RHS Chelsea’s first full-scale rain garden.

The project team – led by award-winning landscape designer Dr Nigel Dunnett – have based their design on the new Rain Garden they developed last year for the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) London Wetland Centre.

Drawing on the ideals of Victorian horticulturist William Robinson – a pioneer of modern gardening and an advocate of the principles of sustainable gardening – Ed said one of the key aims of the design was to highlight the importance of not wasting our most precious resource; [water](#).

“We’ve designed the garden in such a way as to capture and use every single drop of rain that falls onto it,” explains the former Newcastle University biology student.

“From the living roof on the building, through to the collecting pools below and the soakaway planting area, the garden brings water to life, making the garden water-cycle visible, and retaining water that would

otherwise be lost.”

Placing sustainability at the heart of the project, the garden will also include a recycled shipping container to create a novel office space and a deck constructed from timber reclaimed from sea defences on Southend sea front.

“Everything in the garden is recycled, reclaimed or re-used to create a system that is totally sustainable,” says Ed. “It’s an ethos which we place at the heart of all our projects – looking at how new technologies and materials can be used to restore and revive areas in a way that enhances and benefits the environment.”

Lynn Patterson, Director of Corporate Responsibility at RBC, added: “The team has conceived a design that is hugely innovative and immensely relevant to 21st-century city living.

“The sustainability message, which is at the heart of the RBC New Wild Garden’s design, aligns perfectly with our ongoing commitment to water preservation through our RBC Blue Water Project.”

Provided by Newcastle University

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