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Be Inspired -- Visit Botanical Gardens and Garden Events
By Ginny Landes
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There are several spectacular gardens and events around the world to indulge your passion for all things gardening. My recent opportunity to indulge was a visit to the annual Chelsea Flower Show in London, England, considered the most popular and prestigious horticultural event in the world. It is organized by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS).

For five days in the spring, London becomes the epicenter for talented horticulturalists and designers showcasing the best of garden and floral design, plant nurseries, and educational exhibits. Each exhibitor is assessed against specific criteria before being offered a spot at the distinguished show. Major department stores and shops in London decorate their windows in honor of the amazing event. Garden designers as well as floral and plant exhibitors strive to be awarded the RHS Gold, Silver or Bronze Medal for their efforts.

Fifteen large show gardens display outstanding examples of horticultural and landscape design excellence from around the globe. They capture the designer's chosen theme with hard landscape material and immaculate planting schemes. In addition, there are eight smaller artisan gardens that offer interpretation of a traditional craft, and nine fresh gardens that are designed to make us think about what constitutes a garden and educate us about different aspects of the world.

In the Great Pavilion, with more than 100 exhibits, specialist nurseries and plant breeders have displays showing how plants can look at their peak and how best to display and grow them. The floral displays are stunning.

There are over 70 new plant introductions at the Chelsea Flower Show. The Gold Medal Award for Plant of the Year went to Kilimanjaro Sunrise (Viburnum plicatum). Product of the Year Gold Medal Award was an ingenious potato planter. The Bronze Medal Award went to my favorite, "Love the Glove."

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The magic and excitement of this Show inspired me to visit more gardens while in England. One of which is the beautiful RHS Garden Wisley located on 200 acres and considered one of the finest gardens in the world. It has a huge cathedral-like glass structure with three climatic zones recreating dry, moist and tropical habitat.

Botanical gardens and arborets are wonderful places to visit throughout the year. Not only do they inspire, but they offer family activities, beautiful peaceful and serene walks, courses, talks and demonstrations. For more information on gardens in the U.S. and throughout the world, visit <https://en.wikipedia.org>. In search, type “list of botanical gardens in the United States,” or “list of botanical gardens in the United Kingdom,” etc., or for a complete list of all countries, type “list of botanical gardens.”

There is no UCCE Master Gardener class this Saturday, August 1st.

Master Gardeners are available to answer your questions at local farmers markets and in their office every Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512. Walk-ins are welcome at the office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities throughout the county, go to our Master Gardener website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmg>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter. You can also find us on Facebook.