



Young Gardeners of the Year 2016 competition kicks off

Students to design and build sustainable urban show gardens to inspire, educate and connect people with nature

The Young Gardener of the Year Awards in association with TV Gardener David Domoney and the Prince's Foundation for Building Community launches at the Ideal Home Show Christmas

The 2016 Young Gardener of the Year competition launched this week on November 27th 2015 at the Ideal Home Show at Christmas, Olympia London. The annual competition to celebrate young green talent, now in its 6th year, is organised by TV gardener David Domoney in association with the Prince's Foundation for Building Community.

The competition sees six of the UK's leading horticultural colleges go head-to-head to create stunning sustainable urban show gardens, built in just one week. The finished gardens will be seen by a quarter of a million visitors at the Ideal Home Show in March. And the winners will be crowned the Young Gardeners of the Year 2016!

The competition launch day kicked off with introductions and presentations from TV gardener and event organiser **David Domoney**; **Lee Newton**, CEO of Media 10, the organisers of the Ideal Home Show; **Simon Sadinsky** from The Prince's Foundation; **Dr Stephen Millam** from Chichester College and **Ben Wincott** from Writtle College.

The presentations provided the students with an insight into gardens produced in previous years and some great hints and tips for the upcoming competition. Then the garden plots were allocated to each college and the day concluded with team photos and a chance for the colleges to meet and chat.

The Prince's Foundation sets clear guidelines for the garden design based on organic and sustainable principles. **This year there is a new focus: education.**

The Prince's Foundation have tasked the Young Gardeners with incorporating elements of an educational garden into the design. It should aim to **inspire young people to reconnect with nature.**

Simon Sadinsky, The Prince's Foundation's Head of Education, said:

"This year, our vision is to see gardens that are not only visually appealing, but that can also act as a source of learning on a diversity of issues, such as **health and nutrition, sustainability, biodiversity or art and science.** We want to see spaces that encourage young people to engage with nature, so that they feel the natural world is as important as it is beautiful, and a valuable resource to be protected.

We are inviting the Young Gardeners to demonstrate the educational value of nature to encourage the interest of future generations in the natural environment and contribute to the creation of beautiful, sustainable places.”

This year’s show gardens will be judged by an expert panel, which includes horticultural industry leaders, home and garden magazine editors and acclaimed garden designers. Entrants will compete to win the gold, silver gilt, silver or bronze award. The overall winner will receive the Best in Show award and be crowned the Young Gardeners of the Year 2016. Plus visitors to the gardens will be able to vote for their favourite to win the People’s Choice Award.

The 2016 participating colleges are:

Chichester college, Sussex (2012, 2013 & 2014 Champions)

Capel Manor, Middlesex (2011 Champions)

Askham Bryan College, North Yorkshire

Pershore College, Part of the Warwickshire College Group

Shuttleworth College, Bedfordshire

Writtle College, Essex (2015 Champions)

These annual awards offer students a great opportunity to showcase their work and celebrate the best of British young talent in garden design and build. Each college will be given a 5.5m x 4m plot to both plan and design a garden that will demonstrate an understanding of harmony and sustainability. It should also use clever plant combinations and incorporate a sense of proportion and clever use of the important vertical dimension in small, urban gardens and terraces.

The show gardens will inspire visitors with clever ideas they can try at home. This year David is actively encouraging diversity of design and promoting smart use of features such as lighting.

The gardens will inspire **city dwellers**, showing all that can be achieved in urban locations. The gardens are to create a sense of tranquillity and sustainability for the home owner; it should act as an escape from the pressures of inner city life and bring a touch of nature to the heart of the metropolis.

David Domoney, organiser of the competition says: “Through my association with HRH The Prince of Wales and the Prince’s Foundation for the Building Community. To date, we have given over 500 garden landscaping and design students the opportunity to build show gardens at a national event before they even leave the college gates. These young garden designers and landscape stars of the future are encouraged to use sustainable practices, which they will confidentially pass on through generations. Even in it’s 6th year, we still continue to grow young hopefuls pitching their skills against rival colleges for the title of Young Gardeners of the Year.”

Each college will be asked to submit their garden designs before the beginning of February, when they will then have **5 days** to build and plant their garden inside Kensington Olympia ready for the *Ideal Home Show* opening day on the **18th March 2016**.

Each garden will then be judged at the show on the **18th March**, by the esteemed panel of ambassadors and curators.

The *Ideal Home Show* London will open its doors for 17 days from 18th March – 3rd April 2016 at Olympia London. Tickets can be booked online via www.idealhomeshow.co.uk