# Chelsea Flower Show features first-ever funeral floristry display celebrating sustainable remembrance



The Chelsea Flower Show, a hallmark of British horticultural excellence, typically embodies joy and celebration, adorned with peonies and accompanied by the refreshing clink of Pimm's. However, this year's event introduces a profoundly poignant element that has caught many off guard: a funeral floristry display that is as innovative as it is evocative.

For the first time in its storied 112-year history, the show features an exhibit dedicated to funeral flowers, created by The Farewell Flowers Directory. This installation is a departure from traditional approaches, illustrating a willow coffin, gravestones, and a wire sculpture of a man and his dog, symbolising companionship and loss. Surrounding these central pieces are personal flower tributes, including unexpected choices such as walking boots filled with garden blooms, a violin embedded with flowers, and a casket arrangement designed for shared mourning and celebration.

Gill Hodgson, co-founder of The Farewell Flowers Directory, emphasised a crucial revolution in funeral floristry stating, “Funeral flowers haven’t altered for 50 years... We want to let people know that they have a choice.” This exhibit is intended to challenge the long-standing conventions surrounding funeral flowers, which typically have been dominated by plastic floral foam and fixed aesthetics that often mirror sorrow more than celebration.

Hodgson's vision includes a sustainable approach to floral tributes, incorporating fresh, seasonal materials devoid of plastics—indeed, there is not a single piece of plastic in the exhibit, from pots to cable ties. Instead, the flowers are arranged in glass jugs filled with water, allowing them to remain lively and vibrant. This shift aligns with a growing awareness regarding environmental responsibility, especially as cremation becomes increasingly prevalent in the UK, now accounting for approximately 80% of funerals.

According to Hodgson, the traditional floral materials often end up in landfills after just a brief display during funeral services: "Floral foam was invented in 1954 and every bit that’s ever been made is still sitting there." This stark reality underscores the importance of rethinking how we commemorate lives, turning the focus to new possibilities that embrace both beauty and ecological mindfulness.

The emotional impact of the exhibit has not gone unnoticed; several attendees have been moved to tears, including well-known florist and television presenter Simon Lycett. Reflecting on the display’s impact, Hodgson remarked, “I think it’s nice that people can be moved…it’s not that they’re sad, but they’ve been moved.” This stirring response highlights how art can resonate deeply, allowing for reflection on personal grief while celebrating lives lived.

The exhibit, which was awarded a gold medal by the Royal Horticultural Society—a prestigious recognition of excellence—has caught the attention of not only visitors but also dignitaries, including Queen Camilla, who expressed admiration for this innovative approach to floral tributes.

Mathew Crawley, Chief Executive of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management, which sponsored the exhibit, noted, “The Farewell Flowers Directory champions a simple but transformative idea: funeral flowers can be personal, beautiful, and environmentally responsible.” His statement encapsulates the exhibit's aim to coexist grief, remembrance, and sustainability harmoniously, inviting contemplation on the burgeoning possibilities within the realm of funeral arrangements.

As the Chelsea Flower Show continues, this ground-breaking display may influence how we perceive and honour life and death, advocating for a modernised view on floral tributes that embrace both beauty and ecological consideration. The movement towards sustainable funeral floristry not only serves a practical purpose but also offers a pathway for those who mourn to create tributes that reflect individual lives and values, intertwining memory with nature in a way that could redefine rituals of remembrance.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5
2. Paragraph 2
3. Paragraph 6
4. Paragraph 7

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14731073/Chelsea-Flower-visitors-break-tears-moving-funeral-display-festival-first.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.farewellflowers.co.uk/stories/taking-the-first-ever-funeral-flowers-display-to-rhs-chelsea-flower-show-in-may> - The Farewell Flowers Directory is set to make history by staging the first-ever funeral flowers exhibit at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May 2025. The display will feature exclusively British-grown cut flowers and foliage, arranged without the use of plastic floral foam or single-use plastics. The exhibit aims to demonstrate that funeral flowers can be both beautiful and sustainable, offering a choice to celebrate and reflect a life with fresh, seasonal materials that are natural, beautiful, and resonant with meaning.
3. <https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9709770/uk-a-chelsea-first-as-the-farewell-flowers-directory-takes-funeral-flowers-to-the-rhs-chelsea-flower-show/> - The Farewell Flowers Directory, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to removing plastic from funeral floristry, has been invited to stage an exhibit of funeral floristry at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. This marks the first time funeral flowers have been exhibited at the show. The display will feature exclusively British-grown cut flowers and foliage, entirely free of plastic floral foam and single-use plastics, aiming to demonstrate that funeral flowers can be both beautiful and sustainable.
4. <https://www.garden.help/News%3AThe-Farewell-Flowers-Directory-takes-funeral-flowers-to-RHS-Chelsea> - The Farewell Flowers Directory, a not-for-profit organization aiming to remove plastic from funeral floristry, has been invited to stage an exhibit of funeral floristry at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. This will be the first time funeral flowers have ever been exhibited at the show. The display will feature exclusively British-grown cut flowers and foliage, entirely free of plastic floral foam and single-use plastics, demonstrating that funeral flowers can be both beautiful and sustainable.
5. <https://www.floristrytradeclub.co.uk/post/preview-rhs-chelsea-flower-show-2025-showground-exhibits> - The Farewell Flowers Directory is set to make history by staging the first-ever display of funeral designs at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2025. The exhibit will feature exclusively British-grown blooms and will be entirely free of floral foam and single-use plastics. The display aims to prove that beauty and sustainability can coexist, showcasing how fresh, natural, seasonal materials can be resonant with meaning.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2023/04/25/queen-elizabeth-pony-emma-topiary-rhs-chelsea-flower-show/> - A special garden commemorating the life and reign of the late Queen Elizabeth II will feature at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Designed by award-winning garden designer Dave Green, the 'Garden of Royal Reflection and Celebration' will include a range of the Queen's most-loved plants, such as the Olivia Austin rose and a silver birch. The garden will also commemorate King Charles's coronation with some of his favourite plants, including light pink and white flowers in memory of the late Queen.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce96e6vnnp3o> - A special garden celebrating the life of the late Queen Elizabeth II will feature at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Created by award-winning garden designer Dave Green, the 'Garden of Royal Reflection and Celebration' will include a range of the Queen's most-loved plants, such as the Olivia Austin rose and a silver birch. The garden will also commemorate King Charles's coronation with some of his favourite plants, including light pink and white flowers in memory of the late Queen.