# Garden design at Chelsea Flower Show spotlights urgent restoration of Britain’s temperate rainforests



Next time you contemplate removing that oft-derided patch of moss from your garden, reconsider its ecological significance. Zoe Claymore, a garden designer, is urging a shift in perspective with her creation for this year's Chelsea Flower Show, aimed at spotlighting Britain's endangered temperate rainforests through a garden designed for the Wildlife Trusts. This initiative aligns with a century-long campaign to conserve and expand these unique ecosystems, which historically covered 20% of the UK yet now only constitute a mere 1% of the land.

Though lacking the vibrant colours and exotic wildlife of tropical rainforests, temperate rainforests boast rich biodiversity and lush vegetation that is crucial for carbon sequestration, storing over 1,000 tonnes of carbon per hectare. Rare in their global distribution, these biomes are found in select regions of the UK, alongside areas in the US, Japan, New Zealand, Canada, and Chile, all characterised by mild, humid climates fostered by proximity to the sea.

Claymore's childhood experiences in Lydford Gorge, Devon—a site of one of Britain's few rainforests—provided her with a whimsical backdrop for her current design. Drawing from cherished memories of the site's wildness, she aims to revive similar landscapes through her exhibit. "It was magical. I liked the wildness of it," she recalls, emphasising the importance of revisiting these natural habitats for inspiration. Her design incorporates elements observed in various rainforest sites: water, stone, and the eclectic collection of native trees and plants, which include resilient species like ferns, lichen, and, notably, mosses.

The perspectives surrounding these plants often border on negativity, as many view them as unkempt. Claymore challenges this notion, advocating instead for a "right plant, right place" ethos. As she argues, "If you’ve got three hours to kill on a Sunday, why are you spending them scarifying moss out from somewhere it wants to live?"

The plight of the UK's temperate rainforests has been exacerbated by centuries of deforestation driven largely by the demand for grazing land, alongside the detrimental impacts of air and water pollution since the Industrial Revolution. Ruth Swetnam, carbon and research manager for the Wildlife Trusts, notes that while these issues have persisted, the degradation of these rainforests has accelerated dramatically in the last century, underlining an urgent need for restoration.

Claymore's Chelsea garden embodies these challenges and opportunities. Featuring native species such as silver birch, hazel, and field maple, alongside local flora like foxgloves and bluebells, it is designed not just as an aesthetic display but as a call to action. The inclusion of sturdy elements such as a raised walkway reinforces the notion of resilience, while also giving visitors a unique experience of walking through moss-covered grounds and beneath a leaning birch tree, symbolising nature's inherent tenacity.

The Wildlife Trusts' ambitious £38 million Temperate Rainforest Restoration programme, supported by Aviva, aims to acquire 1,755 hectares for rainforest restoration, marking a significant step toward revitalising this vital ecosystem. The initiative, which started in 2023, projects the sequestration of approximately 222,000 tonnes of carbon by 2050. However, as Swetnam acknowledges, "It’s a drop in the ocean," emphasising the need for collective engagement in conservation efforts.

The aim of the Chelsea garden is not solely to showcase the beauty and importance of temperate rainforests but also to encourage public participation in their restoration. "What we’re trying to do is inspire other people to help recreate and restore our rainforest," Swetnam elaborates. The message is clear: these ecosystems are shared national treasures, deserving care and attention from every citizen. With continued effort and education, there lies potential for the resurgence of these remarkable habitats, echoing with the beauty and biodiversity that once flourished across the British Isles.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
2. Paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 6
3. Paragraphs 2, 6
4. Paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5
5. Paragraphs 1, 6, 7

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.ft.com/content/11671a26-2b63-4da7-8096-0ed7d6377a4f> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/rhs-chelsea-flower-show-2025-british-rainforest-garden> - The Wildlife Trusts are exhibiting at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2025 with a garden designed by Zoe Claymore, aiming to evoke the lush, wet woodlands that once covered the British Isles. The garden features native plants like silver birch, hazel, and ferns, and includes a raised walkway over moss-covered ground and a leaning silver birch tree symbolizing nature's resilience. This initiative is part of a 100-year project to restore temperate rainforests across the UK, with support from Aviva and Project Giving Back.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/dec/27/chelsea-flower-show-garden-to-champion-britains-endangered-rainforests> - Garden designer Zoe Claymore is creating a garden for the 2025 RHS Chelsea Flower Show to showcase Britain's endangered temperate rainforests. Inspired by the Atlantic rainforest restoration programme, the garden will feature native plants such as ferns, foxgloves, and a moss wall, aiming to raise awareness about the importance of these rare ecosystems and the need for their restoration.
4. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/gardens/2025/wildlife-trusts-british-rainforest-garden> - The Wildlife Trusts' British Rainforest Garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2025, designed by Zoe Claymore, aims to rekindle the wild and wet woodlands that once covered the British west coast. The garden features a raised wooden walkway, a leaning silver birch tree, and a fern and moss wall, showcasing the resilience of nature and the beauty of temperate rainforests.
5. <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/wet-wild-and-wonderful-wildlife-trusts-bring-enchantment-rainforests-rhs-chelsea-flower-show> - The Wildlife Trusts are creating a British Rainforest Garden for RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2025, designed by Zoe Claymore. The garden aims to inspire support for the restoration of temperate rainforests, featuring native plants like silver birch, hazel, ferns, and a moss wall, and is part of a 100-year mission to restore rainforests across the UK.
6. <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/wildlife-trusts-renters-retreat-wins-gold-medal-and-best-get-started-garden-award-rhs-hampton> - The Wildlife Trusts' show garden, Renter’s Retreat, designed by Zoe Claymore, won a gold medal and the Best Get Started Garden award at the RHS Hampton Court Garden Festival. The garden aims to inspire people to make yards and gardens wilder, especially in urban areas, by utilizing small outdoor spaces to help nature recover.
7. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/news/2025/all-about-plants-gardens-shaped-by-nature> - The RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2025's All About Plants category features gardens that explore how plants, wildlife, and people adapt and interact with the environment. The Wildlife Trusts’ British Rainforest Garden by Zoe Claymore evokes the verdant wilderness of the rainforests that once covered the British west coast, showcasing naturalistic planting and regenerative gardening.