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## **THE ROOTS IN FINLAND KYRÖ GARDEN**

The Chelsea Flower Show 2019 will for the very first time in its long history feature a Finnish Garden



### **THE DESIGNER**

The creative force behind the Finnish garden in the Space to Grow –class is a Finnish landscape designer, horticulturist and environmental biologist Taina Suonio, who is no stranger to British and Irish gardening, having lived 13 years in Northern Ireland and participated in the RHS Chelsea Flower Show for 14 years, working with the leading designers on their Show Gardens (Carol Klein, Andy Sturgeon, Paul Stone, Thomas Hoblyn, Professor Nigel Dunnett and Jo Thompson). At the 2018 Show Taina, as the planting Team Leader, helped Mark Gregory to win Gold and reach the coveted Best Construction and the Show Gardens People's Choice Award. Professor Dunnett described her as “my go-to person for show garden planting - a true ecological artist with plants” for good reason!

Back in her native Finland, Taina is perhaps best known for her expertise on green roofs, in which capacity she is the mother of an award-winning new “The Greenest of the Green” apartment building project in central Helsinki. She is also an active member in the University of Helsinki’s research group on green roofs, called “The Fifth Dimension”.

## TEAM FINLAND

The main sponsor of the garden is Finnish rye distillery Kyrö Distillery Company, which, after winning the Best Gin & Tonic with their Napue at the International Wine & Spirits Competition (IWSC) in 2015 has also found favour with the demanding British gin-loving audience. Kyrö Distillery Company sees the garden as exporting their raw materials and Finnishness in a homely manner. "Taina has done excellent work and actually, out of the raw materials presented in the garden, we could distil a gin", says the MD Miika Lipiäinen.

The Finnish Embassy is obviously excited about the garden, too. "We are extremely pleased that Finnish Garden Design is represented in the most prestigious garden show of the world. Naturally we hope, too, that The Roots in Finland Kyrö Garden is right up there when "The Best in the Show" will be chosen", says Special Advisor on public diplomacy and culture, Pirjo Pellinen from the Embassy.

Loimaan Kivi Company, pioneers of Finnish stone refining are particularly pleased too: "A Finnish garden featuring Finnish granite, alongside the Finnish gin is the perfect setting for us as we move to gain foothold in the British market for our soon 100-year-old professional tradition", says the MD, Mikko Paljakka

The Finnish trees and plants of the garden (*Betula pubescens* f. *rubra*, *Rosa pimpinellifolia* 'Plena', *Rosa majalis*, *Rosa* 'Pohjantähti') will be supplied by the nursery Taimisto Huutokoski Ltd. "As the northernmost nursery in Europe, we produce among other plants, a lot of trees that are exceptionally adaptable for harsh winters, and we are specialised in trees for cities", says Arttu Haverinen.

Speaking of trees growing in the harsh climate of the North and the superior quality that the conditions contribute to, plywood used in the garden will be supplied by Finnish UPM, the leading plywood supplier in Europe.

## THE GARDEN

The great and the good, visiting next year's Show will see a through-and-through Finnish Garden:

The clear Nordic lines of the design, including the charming 100-year old weather-beaten, naturally grey barn wall and the imposing granite, will stand out from the vegetation, providing for an overall atmosphere of timelessness, permanence and perpetuity, which are central attributes of the Finnish nature, also during the often harsh winters. "Although we will see this design in bloom, as a designer I can see it through the four distinctly different seasons of the Nordic climate in Finland", Taina describes. In an urban setting into which the garden is designed, it will have the desired impact throughout the year, reminding the owners of the scenery of the countryside in the middle of the capital city, Helsinki.

The clear lines and the use of granite were also the hallmarks of the world-famous Finnish architect Alvar Aalto (1898-1976), who used them e.g. in the design of the famous Finlandia Hall congress and event venue in the heart of Helsinki, on the waterfront. The statuesque granite benches in the sunken area of the garden are very much in this tradition.

The inspirational biodiversity of Finnish meadows and woodland is not just pleasing to the eye but, with the included butterfly garden section, will also convey the message of the importance of the pollinators to our ecosystem. Coming from the land of thousands of

lakes, a cascading water feature reminds the visitors to this garden about the relationship the Finns have with their roots in the country and the much-cherished respite by their countless lakeside cottages.

Junipers, in this Finnish garden are a given, but the red birches, making the first ever appearance in the Chelsea Flower Show, are rare even in Finland. Lily of the Valley, being the national flower of Finland has a space to grow under the trees. Finns, too, love their art and the skillfully crafted silver insects by the artist Ru Runeberg, which decorate the garden in places as if naturally becoming part of it will not go unnoticed.

The harmony of the colours in the design is reflected throughout the Roots in Finland Kyrö Garden.

The Garden will be constructed by the award-winning landscaping company Conquest Creative Spaces and the plants acquired from the UK come from the renowned Creepers Nursery. The planting and the final touches will, as a matter of course, be by the designer her team.

#### CONTACT DETAILS:

Taina Suonio, Roslings Manor Gardens, +358 (0)50 443 5789,  
taina.suonio@rimgardens.fi, [www.biodiversitycity.fi](http://www.biodiversitycity.fi)

Embassy of Finland, London, Pirjo Pellinen, Special Adviser, public diplomacy, culture,  
Pirjo.Pellinen@formin.fi

Kyrö Distillery Company, Mikko Koskinen, Brand, +358 (0)50 379 4642,  
mikko@kyrodistillery.com, [www.kyrodistillery.com](http://www.kyrodistillery.com)

UPM Plywood, Ari Voutilainen, Director, [ari.voutilainen@upm.com](mailto:ari.voutilainen@upm.com), [www.wisaplywood.com](http://www.wisaplywood.com)

Loimaan Kivi Oy, Mikko Paljakka, +358 (0)40 746 9370, [www.loimaankivi.fi](http://www.loimaankivi.fi)

Taimisto Huutokoski Oy, Arttu Haverinen, +358 (0)40 553 4175, [www.huutokoski.fi](http://www.huutokoski.fi)

Ru Runeberg, +358(0)40 742 6356, [ru.runeberg@ruruneberg.fi](mailto:ru.runeberg@ruruneberg.fi), [www.ruruneberg.fi](http://www.ruruneberg.fi)