

England Loses World Cup to Australia

England's hopes of world cup glory have been dashed by the Australians at the Gardening World Cup in Japan.

British competitors Sarah Eberle and Jonathan Denby were awarded silver and bronze medals (respectively) whilst Australian's Jim Fogarty claimed gold and 'Best in Show'. A title won by Andy Sturgeon last year who returned as judge this year.

Sarah Eberle and Jonathan Denby travelled half-way across the world to enter an extra-ordinary competition to build peace gardens alongside 16 of the world's very best garden designers. Sarah, who won her ninth gold medal at RHS Chelsea this year with a garden for the Prince of Monaco, was tipped to win again for Britain and narrowly missed a gold medal. Jonathan was down-graded from a silver medal because half his garden was not in place at the time of judging; a snail was found in the shipment delaying the release of its contents.

Commenting on her win Sarah said: "I am happy with my silver given the circumstances and I am very pleased to have produced a very solid and professional garden. I think the standard here is high and each garden is different which you don't always get at the British shows. Whilst there is always a subjective aspect to gardens, I think they are all good gardens and the right medals went to the right people giving confidence in these results."

Despite torrential rain, burst water pipes, a mad dash to secure plants and release precious cargos from customs, the designers had just ten days to build peace gardens from scratch. And, unlike any other gardening event, the designers have had to use their build time to check on and source plants and trees, meet and brief the constructions teams as well as produce a garden of world cup standards which could be on show for as long as four months when one week is the norm. They all had the same tight budgets to work too.

The event opens to visitors tomorrow (Saturday 8 October) where they will be able to see 'peace' gardens by designers representing 12 countries.

The winners of the four gold medals were : Jim Fogarty - Best in Show (Australia); Lim in Chong (Inch) who also won 'Best Design' and 'Best Interpretation of the Peace Theme' (Malaysia); Ryoji Fujiwara - Best construction (Japan) and John Cullen (USA).

Three other silver medals went to British based designer Jo Thompson who represented Italy, David Davidson (South Africa) and Kazuyuki Ishihara (Japan). Nico Wissing (Netherland) took the second of the bronze medals.

The Gardening World Cup takes place in the South East of Japan in a 17th century Dutch replica theme park Huis Ten Bosch. With its proximity to Nagasaki, the theme is deliberately, 'gardens for world peace and a prayer for Japanese recovery'. This year it is being held in aid of the victims of the Japanese Tsunami. Last year's event saw 100,000 people visiting in the first week. It was so popular that it was extended by a further three months.

For more information about the designers and their designs visit: gardeningworldcup.com

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