

Pink and purple gang go for gold

GREEN thumbs are tickled pink at the prospect of again beating the Poms at their own game.

Nurseryman Wes Fleming is confident his team will again attract attention in London with another award-winning garden design.

So confident is he that he will use the respected Chelsea Flower Show to make an important pink point.

The Flemings and Trailfinders Australian team will don hot-pink caps and tops and bright purple boots to highlight the need for early breast cancer detection.

"We gain a lot of attention at Chelsea and hope to show

Kelly Ryan

a strong community spirit by highlighting this worthy cause," Mr Fleming said.

The team has already proved to be a thorn in the side of Europeans, twice winning gold at the World Cup of gardening competitions.

Its latest entry highlights Australia's outdoor lifestyle.

"With so many young Australians being diagnosed with breast cancer, we jumped at the chance to join the Purple Boot Brigade," Mr Fleming said.

The 20 green thumbs leave for London this weekend.



Showing their colours: the Flemings and Trailfinders Australian team dressed in their hot pink and purple boots.

Stone garden stuns Brits

MARK Browning has been to the top of the tree of world garden design, but lack of trees back in Victoria is what worries him most.

While we still claim to be the garden state, Browning laments that we have become tree-phobic — terrified to grow them in case they get too big.

This talented young designer warns that if we do not get back into the tree-planting habit, the future landscape, especially across Melbourne suburbia, will become a boring, dismal sight.

Melbourne's leafy enclaves, the ones where houses command ever-increasing prices, will become relics of the past.

Just back from London's Chelsea Flower Show as designer of the medal-winning Fleming's Trailfinders Australian show garden, Browning says that now he must work hard on clients to include a few trees in their garden plans.

Too often, he says, clients balk at growing even an 8m tree, claiming it is far too tall, whereas past gardeners would have considered an 8m tree small.

Apart from the aesthetics, he fears the climatic implication is immense. As he points out, the clever use of deciduous trees that block harsh summer sun from a



Royal approval: Mark Browning greets the Queen.

dwelling while allowing in warming winter sun can cut heating and cooling bills by 10 to 15 per cent. But too often clients are put off deciduous trees because they might have to sweep up a few leaves.

Browning predicts that within 10 years many home-makers in new estates will, rather than treed outlooks, be seeing other people's roofs.

Certainly Browning did his bit for world tree promotion by including 30 trees in this year's Australian garden at Chelsea, which won a Silver Gilt medal, rated just below a Gold.

He says his involvement at Chelsea will forever remain a highlight of his life, despite being a logistical nightmare.

It involved a year of plan-



Set in stone: Browning's prize-winning garden at the Chelsea Flower Show.

ning and battles with London downpours during the month-long set-up period, when the site became a quagmire.

He and the Australian crew of 20, headed by Wes Fleming, missed a Gold medal, but are satisfied to have done so well on the world garden stage.

Their garden was a contrast to many UK show gardens that, Browning says, involved

a lot of meadow planting and rambling, cottage-style construction.

What impressed UK designers was the Australians' use of 30 tonnes of Port Fairy bluestone they had shipped over. It was used sawn for paving, on pillars and in dry-stack walls.

It brought a flood of inquiries as to where it had been

obtained, being unlike anything available in the UK.

Browning claims it is a fundamental material of Victorian construction, something homemakers should be proud to use more often.

Fleming fell so in love with Browning's Chelsea garden and its bluestone that he plans to have it re-created on his own property.

Returning to Chelsea

Fleming's Nursery is returning to next May's Chelsea Flower Show in England, with a garden by Melbourne landscape designer Mark Browning.

Called The Australian Garden, it will have a main garden area with a raised platform of Victorian bluestone with built-in seating and a table. This space is surrounded by water, including a big fish tank embedded in a feature wall.

A steel triangular pergola ties all the elements together, and will create curved shadows on the fractured granite pavers.

The garden will feature 39 trees, all over 6m tall, including a grove of 19 Himalayan white bark birches and a grove of purple beech. Two *Dracaena draco* trees will make a bold impression with their spiky texture. Foliage in colours of purple, burgundy and silver, in a mixture of textures and shapes, will create interest.

It will be the fourth time that Fleming's Nursery has been to Chelsea. The company received gold and silver medals on the three previous occasions.

"The trend to smaller courtyard gardens is creating a decline in trees in our urban environment. This garden shows you can still have a garden and use small growing trees very sensibly," Fleming's director Wes Fleming said.

"Because modern gardens are smaller, people tend to plant fewer trees. This garden shows you can use trees to create an intimate space.

"The garden has great design principles, strong architectural themes and is heavily planted. The English are going to love it."

The garden will be constructed by award-winning Kiama Landscapes and Paving, from Melbourne.

New lawn chemicals

New herbicides are available to control Guildford grass and nutgrass.

Destiny (active ingredient iodosulfuron-methyl-sodium) is a



Destined for the Chelsea Flower Show, The Australian Garden by Fleming's Nursery.

new herbicide that can selectively control Guildford grass in couch and buffalo lawns without adversely affecting the lawn.

Monument (active ingredient trifloxysulfuron sodium) is another new generation herbicide that can selectively control nutgrass, mullumbimby couch, ryegrass and bindii in all warm-season lawns except buffalo.

These herbicides are not available to home gardeners. But they can be applied by specialists including: Nick Bell of Turf Grass Plus in Maylands, 0413 940 259 or nickbell@iinet.net.au; Ray's Lawn Care Service in Munster on 0147 913 690; The Lawncare Man in Scarborough on 0409 245 156 or lawncare.man@bigpond.com or Graham Gould of Lawncare 500 in Myaree on 0412 945 722.

MULCH

A mulch of at least 75mm thickness reduces evaporation from the soil surface by as much as 70 per cent. It also discourages weed growth and keeps plant roots cooler. Keep the mulch clear of the stems of trees and plants to avoid possible fungal problems.

PAVING THE WAY

TIM Sprague (right), of Kiama Landscapes and Paving, has used the *Foundation Plantdeck* for his garden projects.

“It has been good because it helps clients to visualise the plant and it gets them involved.” he says.

“You can still maintain a garden in the drought if you are aware about water and using the right plants.”

