THE PERENNIAL LIFELINE GARDEN IS COMING UP ROSES AT RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2019

Summary
First time Chelsea designers Colm Joseph and Duncan Cargill have designed a sustainable rose meadow as the centrepiece of their planting scheme for the Perennial Lifeline Garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2019. The innovative rose meadow is a contemporary interpretation of the more classical rose garden at The Laskett Gardens in Herefordshire.

SUSTAINABLE ROSE MEADOW
One of the stand out features of the Perennial Lifeline Garden is the sustainable and low maintenance ‘rose meadow’. Roses will be planted in amongst ornamental grasses, perennials and annuals to create a striking and texturally rich display with long seasonal interest.

In a bold move away from traditional rose pruning and maintenance techniques, the ‘rose meadow’ will see several types of rose (modern shrub, patio, climbing and species) grown amongst a matrix planting scheme of perennials and grasses. The roses will be encouraged to grow wild, scrambling in and over other plants in the meadow. The effect will not have been seen before at the show and has been designed as a deliberate contrast to the more traditional rose displays in the floral pavilion.

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The rose meadow will have a wilder aesthetic than is to be expected of a rose garden, encouraging a sustainable plant community to establish with long seasonal interest year after year. This planting would all be cut back at the same time in later winter or early spring, and let to grow freely again the rest of the year. In this maintenance regime, the cultivated roses would be cut back to the base every year along with the perennials and grasses, while the species roses would be hard pruned only every 4-5 years. Rose cultivars have been chosen for perfume, seasonal longevity, autumn colour.

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and winter hips. Roses are being shown as plants that offer garden structure, texture and interest throughout the year, not just in their summer flowering period. The illustration below shows how the meadow might work in a larger planting scheme, later in the season.

Colm Joseph and Duncan Cargill say:

“This is a surprising approach to a garden at Chelsea – we are not creating the idealized slice of perfection that visitors have come to expect. Rather we are creating something real, something that would naturally work in a domestic garden setting. Controversially, we won’t be deadheading the roses so visitors should expect to see spent flowers in amongst the blooms. The planting will feel loose and feathered – a perfect juxtaposition with the crisp and contemporary lines of the overall design.”

The mix of roses will include species such as *Rosa glauca*, modern shrubs like *Rosa* ‘Ballerina’, and patio climbers like *Rosa* ‘Purple Skyliner’. The mix of perennials and annuals that will complement the roses, will include grasses with texture and movement like *Briza media*, and perennials with long seasonal interest such as *Sanguisorba menziesii* and *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum'.

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BACKGROUND

Perennial launched a design competition with the London College of Garden Design in late 2017 to offer a newly qualified garden designer, or garden design team, the opportunity to create a garden to celebrate Perennial’s 180th anniversary at the 2019 RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The brief stated that inspiration for the design should be taken from The Laskett Gardens in Herefordshire, designed by Sir Roy Strong CH and his late wife Julia Trevelyan Oman.

Colm Joseph and Duncan Cargill run separate garden design practices, but teamed up for the Perennial submission. Their design largely takes its inspiration from the classical colonnade at The Laskett Gardens and its classical rose gardens. But rather than recreating these iconic garden elements, the designers have ‘reimagined’ them as part of a more contemporary design.