

WILD CHILD CORNWALL GARDEN PRESS PACK



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GARDEN INFORMATION

Garden name: Wild Child Cornwall

Designer: Victoria Cucknell

Category: Resilient Planting Pocket

Site location: RRP204

Sponsors:



- *Slope Stability Southwest*
- *Truro School*
- *PACE – Perranzabuloe Action for Climate Emergency*

In essence: A maritime hardy, textural and biodiverse, growing creative space for children to explore and study wildlife and socialise.

Inspiration: The need for children to experience the joy of the outdoors in a safe and inspiring space.

Aims: To encourage more young people to enjoy the wildlife around them and find happiness in nature.

Who is this garden for? Communities

Where? Perranporth, Cornwall

Planting suppliers: Hortus Loci Nursery, Burncoose Nurseries, Millenium Plants Ltd

Relocation: The garden will form a community garden at the heart of Perranporth village. The garden will be a welcoming and growing space for young people to play in and enjoy.

SHOW GUIDE DESCRIPTION

Wild Child Cornwall is a resilient, textural, sensory, colourful growing space with strong three-dimensional qualities. This garden will provide the opportunity for young children to enjoy learning and play immersed in a texturally interesting, biodiverse, climate tolerant garden. Children can follow the set-out trail of balance wood blocks to explore the pollinator forest, fringed with edible flowers, through to the willow sculpture forms that act as small socialising play spaces amidst a textural, aromatic, edible growing garden.

GARDEN FEATURES

The tangible sculptural features in this garden will captivate children's imagination and provide nest like spaces to climb inside, sit-in, observe wildlife and socialise. Lynn Kentish, of Crows Nest Cornwall, supported the Wild Child Cornwall garden by spending three weeks with garden designer, Victoria Cucknell. The pair worked together to create designs in sculptural forms with freshly cut willow from Musgrove Willows. The live willow forms will remain a key feature of the design when the garden is relocated to its Perranporth home.

OTHER MESSAGING...

This garden aims to encourage communities to create wild, creative, climate tolerant and accessible spaces on their doorstep. Visitors are encouraged to get themselves and their young families involved with their own local community garden projects. The garden hopes to encourage people to plant with pollinators in mind and prepare for climate change by choosing plants that are potentially drought and flood tolerant.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability has been at the forefront of decisions for the Wild Child Cornwall garden. A Cornish shell mulch made up of local oyster, scallop and mussel shells collected by local fisherman, Ewan Abram-Moore, has been used to produce a nutrient rich and naturally pest repellent mulch. This has been with North Coast sand that will return to its natural ecosystem. This top layer supports a dry planting plan and provides marine nutrients to the soil.

All shells contain calcium, magnesium and trace elements like iodine and bromine. These are vital for plant health and mulching with them gives a stronger, healthier plant. A healthier plant needs no man-made chemical intervention.

This 'shelly mulch' also helps prevent water from evaporating from the soil and slows down the slugs and snails. Bizarrely, snails actually like eating the shells and helpfully for gardeners, the shells make them soporific and easier to manage.

Finely ground shell is a terrific soil conditioner. The calcium helps bacteria in the soil release locked in nutrients so that they are available to plants and also make acidic soils "sweeter" by bringing them toward a more neutral pH. The small particles also bind together to form a structure in the soil that facilitates drainage and promotes water retention. This is a result of a chemical reaction between the shell's cations and anions which promotes flocculation, thus creating air pockets in the soil.

Larger shell fragments up to 3mm, beside being great chicken grit, are a silver bullet for peat free potting composts. Coarsely ground mixes greatly improve the quality of the medium.

Furthermore, all plants have been grown in peat-free compost from nurseries in the South West of England. Many of the plants are perennial and self seeding (and do not require re buying)

EDEN PROJECT AND CORNWALL COLLEGE UNIVERSITY CENTRE

Victoria is currently a student of garden and landscape design at the Eden project in Cornwall and has been kindly supported by the Eden Project and Cornwall College University Centre.

ILLUSTRATION





Wild Child Cornwall Garden Unveiled at Hampton Court Flower Show

Wild Child Cornwall Garden: A Maritime Hardy, Biodiverse Playground for the community

The Wild Child Cornwall garden, a resilient and biodiverse space designed for children and communities to explore, study wildlife, and socialise, is set to make its debut at the prestigious Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival.

The garden is a maritime hardy, textural, and biodiverse space aimed at encouraging young people to enjoy the outdoors. It provides a creative, climate-tolerant environment for children to learn and play. This garden features a trail of balance wood blocks, a pollinator forest with edible flowers, and willow sculpture forms for socialising, reflection, and wildlife observation.

Victoria Cucknell, a student of garden and landscape design at the Eden Project in Cornwall, reflects on the project: “Creating this garden has been a deeply personal journey. I wanted to encapsulate the essence of Cornwall’s natural beauty and offer a space where people can feel a true connection to the environment. Every element, from the choice of plants to the design of the pathways, is intended to draw visitors into a sensory experience that reflects the stunning landscapes I am so fortunate to call home.”

Sustainability is central to the garden’s design. A Cornish shell mulch, comprising local oyster, scallop, and mussel shells, is used to create a nutrient-rich, pest-repellent soil. This mulch supports dry planting and provides essential marine nutrients, enhancing plant health without chemical intervention. Additionally, all plants are grown in peat-free compost, promoting environmental responsibility.

With 25-years of experience in art and design education, Victoria’s understanding of self expression and play is evident in her garden design philosophy as well as a thoughtful integration of texture, colour, and form in her garden designs. Victoria is dedicated to creating accessible community gardens and addressing environmental issues through her work. This imaginative garden, designed by Victoria Cucknell, will be relocated to Perranporth village, on the rugged North Coast of Cornwall, post-show.

For more information, high resolution images or interviews about the Wild Child Cornwall garden and its debut at the Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, please contact Victoria Cucknell at Email: wildchildgarden@gmail.com Tel no. 07811406726

END

KEY PLANTS

Most of the plants in this garden are climate resilient and thrive on the Cornish Coast:

Acanthus mollis, **Salvia amstad**, **Verbena bonariensis** have been used for the pollinator forest for their ability to attract bees and insects, their architectural qualities and for their purple colours.

Agapanthus africanus has been used for its beautiful blue colour and is a feature plant of the Cornish coast,

Achillea walther funcke for its contrasting colour, pollination, edible leaves.

Aeonium aboreum and **Aloe aboresens** have been used for their sculpturally interesting forms.

Borageo officinalis and **Tropaeloleum majus** for their edible flowers.

The **Acanthus Mollis** is particularly hardy and provides great architectural qualities for the pollinator forest alongside the deep purple and structure of the **Salvia amstad**.

The **Agapanthus Africanas** are a key statement plants for this garden as they thrive on the Cornish Coast and provide a great contrast blue to the orange of the **Achillea walther funcke**.

Onopodum acanthium has been incorporated for its climate tolerance, its ability to reseed and its statuesque form.

DESIGNER BIOGRAPHY

Victoria Cucknell is fresh to the Garden Design Profession and is currently studying the HNC in Garden Design at Eden University Hub as part of Cornwall College and Plymouth University. Victoria has worked as an Artist and Teacher of Art and Design in London and Cornwall over the last 25 years, exhibiting regularly locally and creating work to commission nationally and internationally.

In 2020, Victoria re-designed and built her own garden and subsequently started helping a new landscape business with design drawings for local gardens. This sowed the seed to take steps to change profession integrating education with art and a passion for growing plants and protecting nature. Victoria is proactive in addressing environmental issues and continues to work with a number of local projects that look to protect the Cornish coastline and local green spaces.

Her artistic interests in texture, colour and form are translated into her garden designs and she aims to develop her portfolio to suit coastal and maritime hardy planting schemes and create accessible community gardens for all to enjoy.

Professional History

2023-2024: HNC Garden and Landscape Design, Eden University Hub, Cornwall College

2008-2023: Art Teacher, Heseltine Gallery Director, Former Head Sixth Form, Truro

1999-2005: Art Teacher/ Co Head of Sixth Form Latymer School, London

Artist Exhibitions

Penwith Associates Exhibition St Ives, Cornwall, 2024

Breathe, Heseltine Gallery, Truro, 2021

Repurpose, Heseltine Gallery, Truro, 2020

Colour and Space Gallery, Perranporth, 2018-2024

Tide Lines, The Poly, Falmouth 2018

The Five, The Poly, Falmouth 2017

New Designers, Islington, London 1998

Interests and other qualifications

PACE (Perranporth Action to Climate Emergency) Community Gardening Group Volunteer

EDEN Growing Point Nursery Volunteer

PACE Marine Waste Volunteer Group

Perranporth Surf Life Saving Women's Coach

RNLI Lifeguard

Mountain Leader

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Victoria Cucknell – Wild Child Cornwall