



Accessible garden wins top prize at Chelsea show

Helena Horton

A wheelchair-accessible garden for people with spinal injuries has won best in show at the Chelsea flower show this year.

Horatio's Garden is designed to be a sanctuary for those who may otherwise find gardens inaccessible, and to help people with spinal injuries heal.

The layout is deliberately immersive, calming and restorative, with the light, airy planting seeking to be the antithesis of a hospital ward. Plants used include irises and hydrangeas,

which provide gentle pops of colour. The garden will be relocated for the enjoyment of patients at the Princess Royal spinal injuries centre in Sheffield at the end of the annual gardening showcase.

Its designers, Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg, built the garden for the Horatio's Garden charity, which has created natural landscapes outside several NHS spinal injury centres.

On receiving the prize, they said: "It's unbelievable and still sinking in. It's a really special garden for us because of the nature of the charity. Horatio's is a charity about gardens and how they help on journeys of healing and so it feels absolutely right that it should win best in show."

"We are delighted for the charity, and we hope it helps to raise the profile of the incredible work they do, and are delighted it will live on to form the heart of Horatio's Garden Sheffield after the show."

Gardens aimed at aiding recovery from disease were common at this year's show. Also winning gold was Myeloma UK's garden, which

▲ *Joanna Lumley and a Chelsea Pensioner in Horatio's Garden at the Chelsea flower show*

PHOTOGRAPH: GUY BELL/SHUTTERSTOCK

aims to raise money and awareness for the incurable but treatable blood cancer. Judges appreciated the rich, lush planting coupled with the strong message: the garden was designed to capture the eternal optimism of spring and give hope to those who suffer from the disease.

The RHS chair of show garden judges, Marie-Louise Agius, said: "The standard of the show gardens this year was extremely high. What particularly stood out about the Horatio's Garden was how the design had been driven by the end user, to be experienced by spinal injury patients from a bed or wheelchair."

"The garden is uplifting, beautiful and considered, and for someone who has had a life-altering spinal injury it will provide them with a wonderful sanctuary."

The Chelsea flower show is on until Saturday 27 May.