



Has Kartika done enough to help Hillier Nurseries win their 65th consecutive Chelsea Gold medal with ‘Adventures in Gardening’?

Desperate times call for desperate measures. After a long, cold, cloudy spring and with a record of 64 consecutive Chelsea Gold medals to defend, Hillier are desperate people!

Last week, faced with more than 3000 Chelsea plants and trees looking alarmingly green, Hillier Managing Director, Andrew McIndoe, made a pact with a statue of Kartika. If she could work her magic in the Chelsea greenhouse and bring on a heatwave to coax plants into flower, then she would be allowed to go to Chelsea. If not, then she was doomed to stay at home alone in a sad, empty greenhouse!

Whilst the heatwave didn't come, a little more colour has indeed crept into the Chelsea stock over the past week – enough, at least, for kind-hearted Andy to reward Kartika with a trip to Chelsea!

“In over forty years of preparing plants for Chelsea, I have never known a year like it,” says **Ricky Dorlay, Hillier Plant Shows Manager** (pictured right). “Most of our plant materials is about a fortnight to three weeks behind! At Hillier, we don't like to force plants for Chelsea out of their natural season. We move plant material under glass to protect it from night frosts and the bitter winds, but that's all. There are no heated greenhouses and artificial light here, just gentle coaxing.”



Andy's Chelsea Blog hilliernurseries.blogspot.com

Now on site at the heart of the Great Pavilion, Andy is feeling the Chelsea buzz again and is blogging daily on the Hillier website, posting video clips, photos and daily progress updates. “We are all hard at work on staging the exhibit now, and I'm pretty pleased by how well the design is coming together,” he says. “Because of the challenging spring weather conditions, the pressure's really on this year. We are all (Kartika included) working flat out to create a garden to embolden visitors to embark on their own ‘**Adventures in Gardening**’, and to hopefully secure our 65th consecutive Chelsea Gold medal in the process.”

This year's Hillier exhibit will take visitors through a series of interlinking gardens inspired by the colours and imagery of Venice, Morocco, the Himalayas, the water's edge and woodland glades. Then, in the **Secret Garden Diary Room**, visitors are invited to share their own gardening tips and adventures on film for **Real Garden Advice from Real People**, the ground-breaking project for www.lovethegarden.com the website of Hillier's Chelsea sponsor, The Scott's Miracle-Gro Company.

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