



# 3 Ellerslie Designs

Quite apart from entertaining us, the designer gardens at the Ellerslie Flower Show have another function – to open our minds.

**Professionally designed gardens always have something to** teach us, whether it's as simple a lesson as how to position a piece of garden art, or as complex a subject as solving stormwater issues. The crop of designers exhibiting at last year's show had sustainability in the forefront of their minds, making their task more challenging, and our learning curve a good deal steeper. But both design and environmental awareness were the winners on the day, and a new style of gardening may well emerge as a result.

## 1# Bright White

Crisp, clean and elegant, Bridget Maire's design at Ellerslie was a show stopper in more ways than one.

It would be fair to say that one design which captured the attention of everyone at the Ellerslie Flower Show was the upside down planter in the Morris and James designer garden.

It raised a smile from just about everyone who saw it, and also served to draw them in to one of the most tranquil gardens at the show.

The brief to designer Bridget Maire of Designpoint Landscapes was to create an inspirational garden to celebrate Morris and James' 30 year anniversary and, of course, to showcase the innovative Antipode Planter and the Native Series.

The planter is a quirky upside down, self-watering pot that actually works, while the Native Series is a more traditional series of pieces reflecting the natural forms, colours and textures of the New Zealand flora.

"To display them, I felt that the design had to represent a stylish modern look," Bridget says.

She used plants that were suitable for both wetlands and dry coastal conditions representative of the beauty of the Matakana and coastal areas which surround the home of Morris and James.

The colours are quintessentially Matakana, with local sawn *Macrocarpa* timbers, pristine white sand representing the beaches of Omaha and Pakiri, and New Zealand coastal plants.

"The plants also reflect the specimens we use to landscape our dry beachfront properties, and the many wetland areas created by wastewater treatment systems in our local areas.

These plants require no watering, and aid in conservation and sustainability."

The site was sheltered by a pergola comprising a series of simple white arches stepping up the sloping garden to a mirror at the rear. White stone chip underneath and pale timber decking contributed to the theme. To one side a series of stepped timber platforms acted as both steps and sitting spaces.

"The large mirror and pergola anchor the garden design, and give a modern, clean feel. The raised seated area allows for an area of contemplative reflection. The sweeping white stone areas give the impression of clean, fresh, space and tranquility, representative of the Matakana area."

The Antipode Pots were planted with *Cordyline australis* and other planting in the garden itself consisted of *Apodasmia similis*, *Chionochloa flavicans*, *Libertia Taupo Sunset*, *Ophiopogon Black Dragon*, *Pseudopana crassifolium* and *Rhopalostylis baueri*.

The elegance and subtlety of Bridget's design meant the garden became one of those where weary show goers stopped to take a break, and it's hoped the design may be recreated at the Morris and James premises at Matakana.

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: The quirky, award-winning, Antipode pots designed by Patrick Morrisare were planted with cordylines to match those growing underneath.



ABOVE: To the right, a series of stepped timber platforms acted as both steps and sitting spaces.  
 RIGHT: Ceramics from the Native Series adorned the walls of the display.  
 OPPOSITE: The pergola, comprising of a series of simple white arches, sheltered the site and led up to a mirror at the rear.