



Australia's 2008 entry at Chelsea will feature Kakadu, desert and beach influences.

Chelsea Flower Show organisers have given their blessing to a fifth consecutive Australian entry, formally accepting Jamie Durie's proposed design.

ONE OF Australia's best-known landscapers and some of its lesser-known flora will join forces at next year's Chelsea Flower Show.

TV host and principal of Patio Landscape Architecture and Design, Jamie Durie, will head up Australia's entry in the 2008 event in London.

The foray will be sponsored once more by Fleming's Nurseries, which has supported the Australian design and construction teams for the past four years.

Durie's design was accepted late last month by the Royal Horticultural Society, which hosts the show.

"Ian Barker and Associates will construct Jamie's garden design, which will see three shipping containers of materials sent to the UK three months ahead of the build, which is due to commence in early May," Fleming's director and the project's driving force, Wes Fleming, says.

Fleming says the garden is "described as a comprehensive representation of Australian horticulture and lifestyle".

"The 2008 design is titled 'Fleming's and Trailfinders Australia Garden, presented by Melbourne, Victoria' and will bring Australian landscape design to the world stage in a 200-square-metre area that is sure to impress the UK judges and public.

"Representing the many faces of Australia with influences from Kakadu and our vast deserts, beaches and distinctive flora, the design features a wetland, a large curved deck, a fire pit, layered stonework and textured walls together with iconic native Australian planting."

Fleming says the opportunity to work with Durie is "not only exciting but highly significant for Australian horticulture".

"We are absolutely delighted to work with Jamie and Patio in our fifth Chelsea expedition, for a number of reasons.

"Firstly, he is an exceptional designer producing work I believe is worthy of Chelsea gold and, more importantly, Jamie's involvement further highlights how active and important the Australian horticulture industry is.

"All of our entries and success at Chelsea to date have been vindication of the horticulture industry and of our value on the world stage.

"Our designs have also challenged the UK convention of what a garden can be, with many of the UK designers embracing our concepts and revisiting their views on gardening, garden design and garden structure as a direct result of our presence at Chelsea."

Each year Fleming's chooses a different landscape designer and construction crew to create and build a garden at Chelsea Flower Show, ensuring the experience is shared by dozens of individual businesses across the Australian industry.

"In the past horticulture has been thought of as somewhat of an

cottage industry, but the high-profile representation of this project has helped to break that cycle and showcase our talent and ability on the world stage," he says.

"For that reason it's wonderful to see a person of Jamie's credibility and standing embrace the opportunity and represent Australian horticulture internationally."

As this issue of *Australian Horticulture* goes to press the exact plantlist remains a work in progress. It is due to be finalised, however, by mid-December.

Unlike in previous years, Fleming has not made the preliminary sourcing trip to Europe with the designer, opting to stay in Melbourne to take care of nursery business while Durie and Fleming's Nurseries' Leanne Gillies head up the search.

Fleming says he expects some plant material may be shipped from Australia for the first time as some species are impossible to find overseas.

"Jamie and Fleming's staff are currently sourcing plants in Spain, England and Italy in the hope of finding the best possible Australian natives," he says.

"We've been seeking exceptional-quality plants from Jamie's plant list but it's proven difficult, with only a portion of our requirements likely to be found in Europe. This may mean that for the first time ever we have to ship and quarantine plants from Australia."

The Australian contingent has not attempted to ship greenlife from Australia to England for past shows, but teams from New Zealand have done so from that country with reasonable success.

The build up for the show will start on May 3, with the event scheduled to be open to the public from May 20 to 24.

Fleming's Nurseries has contributed major sponsorship to all four of Australia's Chelsea entries to date.

In 2004 Jim Fogarty and Semken Landscape Design became the first all-Australian team to compete at what is widely regarded as the world's leading flower and garden show, winning a silver-gilt award.

The following year Jack Merlo and Total Landscape Construction (TLC) won gold, as did Dean Herald and Rolling Stone Landscape Design in 2006. Earlier this year Mark Browning and Kiama Landscapes received silver-gilt, taking Australia's overall tally to four prestigious awards from as many attempts.

Travel company Trailfinders joined Fleming's as a major sponsor in 2007. Trailfinders has confirmed it will give its backing to the project again next year.

Others already committed to supporting the project include the Victorian Government, Etihad Airways, Orica Woodcare, Van Schaik's BioGro and Atkinson Pontifex.

Contact Web: <www.flemings.com.au/chelsea2008>.