

Durie out in search of antipodean plants for Chelsea show

By **DENISE GADD**
GARDENING EDITOR

AUSTRALIAN design is destined to be a horticultural show-stopper at next year's Chelsea Flower Show. So says a perennial contender for the coveted best-in-show garden, Monbulk nurseryman Wes Fleming, who has chosen celebrity gardener Jamie

Durie to create a design in the prestigious show garden category.

Durie, who starred in *Backyard Blitz* and *Best Backyards* and is now a regular on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, has incorporated the outback, beaches and local flora for his Australiana exhibit. He is in Europe sourcing plants.

This is Mr Fleming's fifth attempt at taking on English and Irish landscape designers at their own game — he has won two silver-gilt awards and two golds — and is confident the Australiana theme will impress the judges enough to get his team the top prize.

Durie's design features a wetland, large curved deck, fire pit,

layered stonework from the Kimberleys, textured walls and native plantings including melaleucas, grass trees and the beautiful bottle trees featured in the Children's Garden at Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens.

Some of the plants on Durie's wish list are hard to source, Mr Fleming said. "Only a portion of our requirements are likely to be

found in Europe which may mean, for the first time ever, we have to ship and quarantine plants from Australia," he said.

He conceded the judges usually favoured traditional English designs, but last year's award-winning dark and moody exhibit by New Zealand designer Xanthe White was far removed from an English country garden,

reflecting her country's unique landscape.

Each year, Fleming's Nurseries take on a different landscape designer and construction crew to create an antipodean show garden at the show. This ensured the Chelsea experience was shared throughout Australian horticulture. The show will be from May 20-24.