



Press Release

30 March 2007

300 years of naming nature RHS Chelsea Flower Show celebrates the tercentenary of the birth of Carl Linnaeus

Carl Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist who laid the foundations for the modern scheme of nomenclature, is being celebrated with a show garden and lifelong learning exhibit at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, sponsored by Marshalls plc. With the 300th anniversary of his birth falling during show week, the world's finest flower show is the ideal place to showcase the debt that natural science owes to Linnaeus. The RHS Chelsea Flower Show takes place on 22-26 May 2007 (22 & 23 May: RHS members only. 22 May all day tickets now sold out). Tickets must be booked in advance on **0870 247 1226** or at **www.rhs.org.uk/flowershows**

Linnaeus left a rich heritage: his image is depicted on Swedish banknotes, locations on the Moon have even been named after him and a complete era of scientific history bears his name. The Linnaean era is characterised by the naturalist's ambition to catalogue, organise and give names to the whole natural world and gave rise to the naming convention known as the "binary nomenclature". Linnaeus introduced the consistent use of binomial names for both plants and animals, validly publishing over 9,000 plant names.

Designer Ulf Nordfjell honours 'The Father of Taxonomy' with his show garden that is an embodiment of Linnaeus' curiosity and passion for nature. Simplicity is the key to this garden, which reflects Swedish 18th century heritage and expresses this through a contemporary design. The garden has been commissioned by the Swedish Government and coordinated by the National Tercentenary Committee in Stockholm.

Traditional materials and simple plants express the Swedish love of nature. Using Swedish durable living materials such as granite, steel and timber in combination with simple plants including some specific Linnaean plants from Linnaeus' summer estate, this garden creates an enthralling setting.

The garden highlights different seasons; plants in simple arrangements create a spring feeling; white and icy shades of blue and yellow provide a winter atmosphere and summer is brought to the garden with common Swedish purple and green plants. A deep forest atmosphere is created by clear water trickling from a spring, framed in a circle of golden maidenhair. Linnaeus' affection for maidenhair has been well documented; he used it as a mattress and cover when he slept in woods during journeys across Sweden.

The Linnaean plants used, which grow in Carl von Linnaeus' garden in Hamarby, include *Lilium martagon* 'Album', *Asarum europium*, *Fritillaria meleagris*. Taking place of honour is Linnaeus' signature flower, *Linnaea borealis*, commonly known as twinflower.

The twinflower also takes centre stage in the exhibit 'Linnaeus Legacy – 300 years of naming nature' by the Linnean Society in the Lifelong Learning section of the show. The focal point of this exhibit is a new bronze bust of the young Linnaeus examining a butterfly, created by the artist and zoologist Anthony Smith. The display focuses on four themes that are expressed in the use of plants. Plants named for their uses develop a theme of human health and the centrality of plants to medicine. Plants named for places explore the theme of exploration and conservation of biodiversity, and plants named for people focus on the future of naming nature. The unifying theme of the exhibit will be the continuing legacy begun by Linnaeus – the naming of plants and their importance and relevance in today's world.

The RHS continues its celebration of the Linnaeus tercentenary with a Linnean Society/RHS session at the RHS Lindley Library, led by Brent Elliott, RHS Lindley Librarian and David Cutler, President of the Linnean Society (14 September 2007)

The Linnaean Tercentenary is being commemorated internationally throughout 2007 by the Linnean Society and includes a comprehensive programme of exciting promotional events, scientific meetings, awards, exhibitions and projects featuring the digitisation of the Society's Collections. For more information visit www.linnean.org

Ends

For more information contact: Hannah Talbot in the RHS Press Office on 0207 821 3043 or email hannahtalbot@rhs.org.uk

Photographs of the 2006 RHS Chelsea Flower Show are available to download at: www.picselect.com. Register online free of charge.

Please note: Press pass application forms for the 2007 RHS Flower Shows can be downloaded from www.rhs.org.uk/press. The deadline for receipt of application forms is 30 March 2007.

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2007

22 - 26 May 2007 (22 & 23 RHS members only days)

In the grounds of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London, SW3

Ticket Hotline (Public)

☎ 0870 247 1226

RHS Show information

☎ 0207 649 1885

Online bookings & show info

www.rhs.org.uk/flowershows

Ticket prices range from £12.50 - £44

All tickets must be bought in advance

Notes to editors:

1. For more information, photos, or to arrange interviews with Dr Sandy Knapp, Botanical Secretary Linnean Society, please contact Judith Diment on +44 (0)7860 162313 or Elaine Shaughnessy Head of Development, Linnean Society on +(44) 020 7434 4479 www.linnean.org

Founded in 1788, The Linnean Society of London is the national academy for biology and the oldest such organization in the world. The Society holds Linnaeus's original library and collections. It is named after the great Swedish naturalist, Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) who developed the system of binomial nomenclature. This system today provides the fundamental framework for knowledge of the biota of the Earth, supporting effective conservation measures and the sustainable use of biodiversity. Our more than 2000 Fellows come from all walks of life, and represent the range of professional scientists to amateurs interested in natural history. The Fellowship is international and includes world leaders in each branch of biology who use the Society's premises and publications to communicate new advances in their fields. At the same time, the Society reaches out to future UK biologists through schools and educational programmes. For these reasons, the Linnean Society has been aptly described as '*A Living Forum for Biology*'.

About the RHS

The RHS is the UK's leading gardening charity dedicated to advancing horticulture and promoting good gardening. Its charitable work includes undertaking scientific research into issues affecting gardeners, holding plant trials and educational events and activities.

RHS membership is for anyone with an interest in gardening. Support the RHS and secure a healthy future for gardening. For more information call: 0845 130 4646, or visit www.rhs.org.uk

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