



THE POETRY LOVER'S GARDEN



Poetic licence

Fiona Cadwallader's first Chelsea garden is inspired by a romantic poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

This artisan garden is inspired by the 18th century poem *This Lime Tree Bower My Prison*, a piece of work with a strange background. It centres on the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge being confined to his garden, after an accident that saw his wife spill boiling milk on his foot. He wrote the poem to express his feeling of imprisonment in his garden while incapacitated, as his friends – among them the poet William Wordsworth – embarked on a nature ramble, one of his favourite pastimes.

“I love Coleridge’s poetry and the poem is a particularly touching story,” says Fiona. “The garden will be full of detailed colour from the poem: lime greens, dark purples and true blue. Delphiniums, trilliums and broad bean plants in flower, referenced in the poem, will also be included.” A stainless steel fountain alludes to the waterfall in the poem and brings contrasting sparkle to the garden.

Fiona’s aim is for the garden to be inspired by the poem, rather than a recreation of the garden that

Coleridge was in when he wrote it. At the end of the garden is a gate, with the suggestion that another garden lies beyond, to encourage viewers to gather ideas from the garden to implement in their own spaces at home.

“To exhibit at Chelsea is a privilege for any garden designer and I believe my re-imagining of Coleridge’s poem will demonstrate how each of us can create our own retreats,” explains Fiona.

“The garden is conceived as a safe and spiritual place. It alludes to a world beyond itself, while creating a meditative space in which nature, the poem and the imagination are united.”

The garden will be lined with ivy-clad dry stone walls, a reference to the area around the Quantock Hills in Somerset, where Coleridge’s friends went rambling while he penned the poem. “Coleridge’s garden was linked to his friend’s, and Coleridge was a very sociable person. He wanted to be able to get out of his garden in order to escape into the world around him,” Fiona says.



KEY PLANT

Common lime

Umbrella-shaped lime trees (*Tilia europaea* ‘Euchlora’) will provide a stately entrance to the garden, dappled shade below and a focal point for the space, setting the scene for the bower.