



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

# **Yorkshire-based garden designer champions hedgehogs at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show**

## **RHS gold medal winner Tracy Foster teams up with wildlife charities to help save hedgehogs**

The 2014 RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show will feature a hedgehog-inspired summer garden designed by award winning garden designer Tracy Foster, 51, from Roundhay, north Leeds. People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and The British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) work in partnership on their community project *Hedgehog Street*, and the garden they commissioned from Foster will showcase a number of hedgehog-friendly features to encourage gardeners to make the land on their doorsteps a haven for these prickly creatures.

Tracy Foster is a three-time RHS gold medal-winning designer based in Yorkshire who has been passionate about gardening since childhood. She holds a degree in Plant Biology and a garden design diploma, and spent a year volunteering in the gardens of Harewood House, Leeds. Foster has designed over 180 gardens, is a design tutor for distance based learning, runs short courses in Leeds and has been a judge at shows in Yorkshire. Her most recent show garden was an Artisan garden at the 2012 RHS Chelsea Flower Show which won a gold medal and the People's Choice award.

Foster says, "I was very pleased to be asked by PTES and BHPS to design their garden for the show. It has been an enjoyable challenge designing a multi-purpose space to inspire gardeners but also help hedgehogs. I was alarmed to discover that hedgehog populations are facing serious problems in our gardens, particularly in moving between garden boundaries to find food and mates. This design will demonstrate that practical access routes for hedgehogs need not come at the expense of aesthetic style."

Long-running PTES mammal surveys indicate that we have lost a third of our hedgehogs in the last decade. The *Hedgehog Street* garden represents an average street in Britain that will feature various elements that are beneficial to our native hedgehogs whose decline in numbers can partly be attributed to tidy,

fenced-in gardens. Tracy Foster's design separates the show space into three sections in three different styles, all of which will feature hedgehog-friendly aspects. These include nesting sites, tunnels and holes giving access into neighbouring gardens, safe water features and planting and vegetation to encourage other wildlife and prey.

One of the simplest steps gardeners in Yorkshire can take to help their local hedgehog populations is to link gardens in their neighbourhood by making a small hole in shared boundaries so that the creatures can roam freely. A hole that is 13cm<sup>2</sup> in size at ground level will be big enough for a hedgehog to pass through and will enable them to search a wider area to find food and mates.

Henry Johnson, PTES Hedgehog Officer says "We're delighted to have Tracy Foster on board to offer her skills and expertise as part of our *Hedgehog Street* campaign." Fay Vass, CEO of BHPS adds, "The hedgehog is known as the 'gardener's friend' and we hope to prove to professional and amateur gardeners-alike that it is easy and inexpensive to create a hedgehog-friendly space, no matter what type of garden you have."

For more information about *Hedgehog Street* and how to help hedgehogs in your garden and neighbourhood, visit: [www.hedgehogstreet.org](http://www.hedgehogstreet.org)

- ENDS -

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jane Bevan or Susannah Penn at Firebird PR on 01235 835297 / 07977 459547 or via email to [sp@firebirdpr.co.uk](mailto:sp@firebirdpr.co.uk)

#### **AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW**

- Tracy Foster, Designer, Tracy Foster Garden Design
- Henry Johnson, PTES Hedgehog Officer

#### **IMAGES**

An artist's impression by Phil Game of the PTES and BHPS Hedgehog Street summer garden is available upon request.

High resolution images of hedgehogs are available upon request.

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- The 2014 RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show is on from 8-13 July 2014.
- Wildlife charities PTES and BHPS launched *Hedgehog Street* in June 2011 to encourage hedgehog conservation action at a local community or neighbourhood level. Over 30,000 volunteer "Hedgehog Champions" up and down the country have registered to help to date and the campaign is ongoing, but we still need your help to make a difference.
- A long-term trend analysis by PTES based on their *Living with Mammals* and *Mammals on Roads* surveys shows that hedgehog populations have plummeted by over a third in the last ten years.

- The reasons for the decline in UK hedgehog numbers are complex, but are thought to be associated with the loss of hedgerows and permanent grasslands; the intensification of agriculture and larger field sizes; and the use of pesticides which reduce the amount of prey available. Urban and suburban areas are becoming increasingly important for hedgehogs, but the move towards tidy, sterile gardens isolated from one another by impermeable boundaries has also contributed to their demise.
- A range of academic research projects, funded by PTES and BHPS, also aim to further scientific understanding about the causes for the decline in hedgehog numbers and most importantly what can be done to reverse this threat to this iconic species.
- The public can view the Hedgehog Street summer garden at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show from 8-13 July 2014. Tickets for the Show are available to buy at: [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)
- The hedgehog was voted as Britain's National Species in a 2013 BBC Wildlife poll.

About PTES - [www.ptes.org](http://www.ptes.org)

PTES is a UK conservation charity created in 1977 to ensure a future for endangered species throughout the world. Working to protect some of our most threatened wildlife species and habitats, it provides practical conservation support through research, grant-aid and educational programmes, including wildlife surveys, publications and public events.

About BHPS - [www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk)

BHPS is a UK charity founded in 1982 dedicated to helping & protecting hedgehogs native to the UK. They run a helpline offering advice on caring for & encouraging hedgehogs in the wild and in gardens. They aim to educate the public on how best to help hedgehogs and fund research into the behavioural habits of hedgehogs to ascertain the best methods of assisting their survival.

About Tracy Foster Garden Design - <http://www.tracyfostergardendesign.co.uk/>

Tracy Foster is a Chelsea Gold Medal-winning garden designer who has been creating beautiful gardens since 2002.