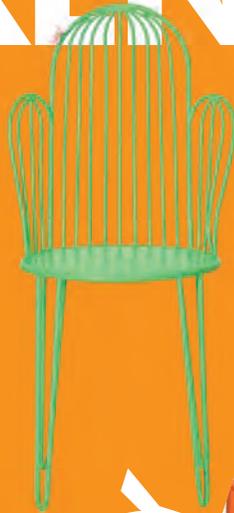


THE TREND

Tough exteriors



Garden bench, £69.99
homesense.com



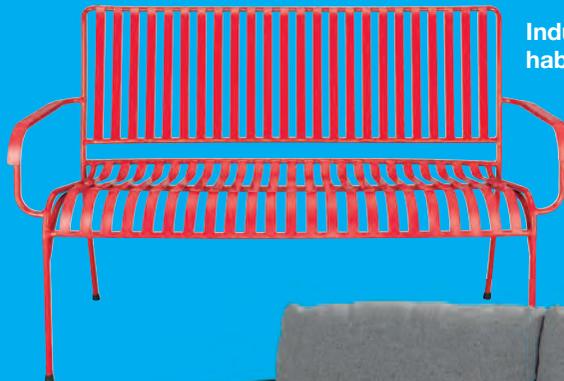
Cactus chair, £59
oliverbonas.com



Salsa outdoor chair, £50
johnlewis.com



Seletti Industry garden armchair, £175
amara.com



Indu bench, £250
habitat.co.uk



4 Seasons Premium 2-seater, £799
johnlewis.com

IT'S FUNKY



Chair, £420, side table, £125
outthereinteriors.com



Oxyo Weekend garden bench, £380
vivalagoon.com



Champagne cork side table, £170
chelseagardener.com

IT'S THRIFTY

IT'S RITZY

Compiled by Jane Stevens



ON WITH THE SHOW!

In advance of this year's Chelsea Flower Show (24-28 May) the RHS has announced some plant trends and stand-out themes at the world's most famous gardening event.

The exotic peony, a design favourite, is set to be star of the show and roses will feature prominently alongside other popular flowers – alliums, achillea, foxgloves, irises, lavender and geum.

Pastels predominate as a colour. Look out for David Austin Roses' new peach-coloured English shrub rose, 'Roald Dahl' (above), which marks 100 years since the storyteller's birth and acknowledges Roald's 'James and the Giant Peach'. The new royal baby is celebrated with the 'Princess Charlotte' chrysanthemum.

Box hedging features in eight gardens but many clipped alternatives, such as yew and bay are also used. There is generally a healthy amount of green in many of the gardens, some with rich plantings of the forgotten ferns. Others have turned to Bracken and Horsetail, and even weeds such as wild garlic, to add beauty to a garden. Everyone good gardener knows a weed is just a plant in the wrong place!

The show has even more of a theatrical feel than usual. At first glance, the 'Harrods Eccentric British Garden' designed by horticultural showman, Diarmuid Gavin is a gentle garden of terraces and topiary until it suddenly puts on a performance with mechanical buzzings and whirring, a tower that erects, box balls that bob up and down and conical bay trees that begin to twirl.

Leading designer Peter Eustance has created an Artisan garden for disability charity Papworth Trust which becomes a musical instrument. A water marimba – a giant set of musical bars – generates an acoustic pulse, while soft planting creates a diaphanous, dancing screen that will sway to the music.

To buy tickets for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, visit, rhs.org.uk/flowershows

4 UP

>>MAT RIGHT Keeping in step with the ubiquitous green 'fitted carpets' of perfect artificial grass, it's time to roll out the outdoor rug to complete that garden living space. Pueblo outdoor rug, £49.95, www.cuckooland.com

>>DARLING BUDS The latest royal baby has inspired growers to produce a new chrysanthemum – Princess Charlotte. Another retro bloom to join the dahlias.

>>SEA SURE Fishy things are quite a catch interior-wise this summer. Time to reel in all things maritime. Lobster cushion, £20, www.johnlewis.com



>>LOUD AND PROUD There's nothing subtle about Katie Earey's new range for IKEA. The first of a series of fashion designer collaborations, the limited range includes fabrics and accessories splattered with eyeballs, flying fish, cats, brains and teeth. Giltig mugs £4 each, www.ikea.com



>>BOXING CLEVER Not really! Those hanging balls of plastic box topiary may not need watering – or clipping – but they're not much of a contribution to England's green and pleasant land.

>>SUITE SORROW Inside meets outside in the garden 3-piece. But fake rattan sofas are not sitting pretty on the patio.

>>HANGING OFFENCE The bane of garden designers' lives – can anyone come up with a truly stylish alternative to those dangling baskets?

>>LINEN SHEETS It's taken us a while to love them – all those creases don't sit well with the tidy-minded! Not everyone is enamoured – the verdict is they're not cool to sleep in.

By Jane Stevens

4 DOWN