



## ‘Transitions’

The display garden at the Christchurch City Council’s (CCC) Rebuild Central offices in Lichfield Street uses elements of Landcare Research’s award-winning garden at the 2012 Ellerslie International Flower Show.

The Crown research institute won the Supreme Award for Horticultural Excellence for its exhibit, entitled *‘Transitions: from broken city to new beginnings - embracing nature and history.’*

The inspiration for the Ellerslie entry came from the pocket park concept proposed by CCC for the inner city rebuild, and residents’ desire for green spaces in the central city, keenly expressed through the ‘Share an Idea’ consultation process.



The pocket park’s purpose is to provide peace and tranquillity in the midst of hustle and bustle.

Our interpretation used a totally indigenous palette (160 species in the original exhibit) to demonstrate the wider application of native plants and how much richer they are than the usually restrictive range found in conventional garden shops.

Our exhibition concept was a derivative of the ecological park of Europe. It resonated with the natural and cultural heritage of our country and specifically Christchurch and Canterbury.

You can read about the full Ellerslie display at:

<http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/science/living/cities,-settlements-and-communities/rebuilding-christchurch/ellerslie>

## CCC Display Garden

The CCC display garden in Lichfield St incorporates many of the plants and elements from the Ellerslie exhibit – notably the ‘tapestry lawn’, the bush garden, shrubbery and a few components of the wetland/swale.

As with the Ellerslie exhibit, the style of this display garden follows landscape architecture Professor Joan Nassauer’s ‘Messy ecosystems, orderly frames’ concept.

As in nature, it is not perfection close up, it has blemishes; there is life and death, flowers, fruits, seeds and regeneration, but it is in a state of becoming; where patterns become discernible; sequences, functions, spatial dynamics, life cycles and food webs become legible when one focuses in and out, framed by tidy edges or curving reeds.

We are part of the ecosystem and our long term survival depends on learning from, designing with and mimicking nature.

Fundamentally, it is a living system. It was raw for a few months, now it is growing into the site, and finally it will need to be managed to maintain a dynamic equilibrium of life and death according to the style desired – lawn, fernery, bush garden and border shrubbery.

It is about diversity and sustainability (low maintenance); it is not obsessively native versus exotic – there are some exotic weeds always coexisting.

As French writer Jean Cocteau said, art is science made clear. We have endeavoured to show how scientific knowledge about plants, ecosystems and natural processes can be combined with design and aesthetics to reveal nature’s patterns, beauty and lessons for sustainable cities.

Plants have been supplied by Waiora Landscapes Nursery, Trees for Canterbury Nursery, Fern Factor, No-Mow, PGG Wrightsons, Landcare Research Nursery and CCC.

Many of the plants used in this garden are identified on the following pages.

For more information contact:

Landcare Research Landscape Ecologist, Dr Colin Meurk

Ph: 0-3-321 9740

Email: [meurkc@landcareresearch.co.nz](mailto:meurkc@landcareresearch.co.nz)







