



“Swimming” Beauties

In the Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew there is also a conservatory devoted exclusively to water lilies: “Waterlily House”. The “Waterlily House” offers the warmest and most humid living conditions in Kew Gardens and apart from the water lilies it also contains many other tropical plants.

Experiencing Green Highlights with the ELCA in London

Kew Royal Botanic Gardens – Olympic Park – WorldSkills 2011

The autumn study trip of the European Landscape Contractors Association (ELCA) went to the British capital London on the occasion of the 41st International Skills Competition “WorldSkills”. In comparison to the usual ELCA study trips only a small group of 30

experts from Belgium, Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Hungary had chosen a tight study trip program.

On the first day of the study trip a visit and guided tour of Kew Gardens as well as a visit to the

apothecaries Chelsea Physic Garden was scheduled. In the afternoon the plan was to visit the Olympic Games grounds but this – due to the heavy London traffic – was only possible on the public access paths. The second day was committed to the International Skills

Competition “WorldSkills 2011”. Like during past International Skills Competitions the work sites of the landscape gardeners proved to be a special public attraction. The afternoon was free to go on a tour of London of your own choice.

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Kew Gardens – Pure Fascination

The Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew (Kew Gardens) are a famous park with striking old and new conservatories. Kew Gardens is one of the oldest botanical gardens of the world. You can find plants there that can be found nowhere else in Europe. Approximately one million visitors per year let themselves be fascinated by this.



With Ten Climate Zones

The modern and imposing Princess of Wales Conservatory has ten different climate zones with plants ranging from small orchids to giant water lilies as well as cacti and carnivorous plants up to rare species of fish. The Princess of Wales Conservatory is one of the three big conservatories and was opened in 1987 by Princess Diana.

Banana Trees in the Greenhouse

In the oldest still existing Victorian greenhouse, the Palm Tree House, constructed between 1841 and 1849, you walk with high humidity and temperatures between cocoa plants, banana trees (see the photo), papaya, yam, giant palm trees, mango trees and many other plants whose fruits and products you usually only know from the supermarket.



Bonsai with Autumn Colours

Many visitors to Kew Gardens are interested in the Bonsai collection that apart from conifers, pine trees, rhododendrons, beech trees and oaks also includes a maple tree, the "Japanese maple, acer palmatum". For many years this Japanese Maple has been especially cultivated in Japan as an ornamental tree and frequently also as a bonsai. Originally the "acer palmatum" came from North East China, Japan and Korea.



Olympic Park with Observation Tower

Centrepiece: Olympic Stadium

The Olympic Stadium in London will be the centrepiece of the Olympic Summer Games 2012. It can accommodate 80,000 spectators, which makes it the third largest stadium in Britain and London, after Wembley Stadium and Twickenham Stadium. It will be the venue for the opening and closing celebrations as well as the athletic sports competitions. After the games finish it will be converted into an athletics stadium with 25,000 seats and a sports medicine centre. The construction work started in May 2008. Unfortunately the ELCA group was unable to see the interior of the stadium.



Olympic Tower and Stadium

Having a look around the site of the Olympic Summer Games 2012: The ELCA study group in front of the Olympic Tower (on the right) and the new Olympic Stadium (on the left).

Controversial Steel Sculpture

The observation tower currently under construction, that will later be 115 metres high in the Olympic Park in Stratford, London, will be called "ArcelorMittal Orbit". The steel sculpture is to be a permanent legacy of the Olympic Summer Games 2012. The tower is located between the Olympic Stadium and the Aquatic Centre. Visitors will be able to oversee the complete Olympic Park from the two viewing platforms there. When the media published the first details about this project in October 2009, Britain's richest citizen, Lakshmi Mittal (Chairman of the Arcelor Mittal Steel Company), was interested in financially sponsoring this project. The orbit was designed by Anish Kapoor. The Olympic Tower is regarded as controversial in Britain as on the one hand it is seen as insignificant and on the other hand it is described as looking like a rollercoaster.



All about the ELCA Meeting

Beforehand the ELCA-Presidium had had a meeting together with the Secretaries of the ELCA member associations under the chairmanship of Emmanuel Mony. The central topics were the successful ELCA Research Workshop in Brussels as well as the ELCA publication about this, which is well worth reading, and the ELCA patronage of the "Green City". Apart from financial topics the Presidium also concerned itself with new directives from Europe, including stricter regulations for pesticide approvals, sealing of soil surfaces, the waste regulations of the countries, EU biodiversity strategy, EU lobby register as well as the ecological value of green spaces. At the end the short country reports also were part of this one-day meeting.



Welcome in London

ELCA-President Emmanuel Mony (on the right) and his daughter (on the left) welcome the ELCA study group in London that had come for the occasion of the "WorldSkills 2011".



Colourful Rapture

Assuredly a tupelo tree (Tupelo Nyssa Sylvatica of the dogwood family, Cornaceae) had the prettiest autumn colours. The botanical species name refers to its water requirements and is the name of a water nymph, Nyssa. Most Nyssa species are evergreens, but the Nyssa Sylvatica is deciduous. The slow growing tree can grow from ten to 20 or even 30 metres tall and fascinates due to its magnificent orange red to bright scarlet autumn colours. It therefore ranks among the most effectfull of trees with autumn colours.



A Place in the Autumn Sun

Antoine Berger, Chairman of the ELCA-Committee of Firms enjoying the autumn sun in the Chelsea Physic Garden.

In the Chelsea Physic Garden

In the noble London district Chelsea there is one of the oldest botanical gardens, the Chelsea Physic Garden. The garden was founded in 1673 as an apothecaries' garden. The Chelsea Physic Garden is often called one of the "secret" gardens of London. Here they are still committed to researching the properties, origins and conservation of more than 5,000 plant species. The garden is not only known as the venue for the annual Chelsea Flower Show held every May, when it opens daily at midday, but also for its numerous exclusive events and premieres in the course of the year. Due to its central location the garden is ideal for visitors who want to escape from the turmoil of the city.



International Skills Competition “WorldSkills”

All Hand-Made

The task was, within 22 hours – split over 4 days – to construct a small garden with a functioning stream, with a wooden bridge, a Celtic natural stone wall, a seating area, wooden fencing and of course a complete planting with trees, bushes, lawn and flowering plants. The wood deck as well as the stile had to be hand made. Approximately nine tonnes of natural stone had to be used for the wall. For all teams it was a special challenge to observe the time limit and still deliver good quality. The photo shows the winning garden of the Swiss team shortly before completion.



Plants crown Worldskills Garden

World Champion: Andreas Stadlin (pictured) and Christoph Schweizer harmonised well and demonstrated good work performance. The team that won the Swiss championship last year had been prepared for the world championship in special courses by JardinSuisse, the entrepreneurial association of gardeners in Switzerland. The planting work usually is part of the final work just before finalising the competition tasks.



Fans support the German Team

German fans ensured a boisterous atmosphere during the last day of the competition in London and also by waving flags spurred on their team of the landscape gardening apprentices Christopher Bäuerle and Jonas Rombach.

Gold for the Swiss Team – Silver: Sweden and Great Britain

The gold medal and as such the World Champion title of the 41st “WorldSkills” was won by the Swiss team with 557 points. Christoph Schweizer and Andreas Stadlin won with a good margin ahead of the Swedish

team (Stefan Allansson / Mikael Andersson, 529 points), who together with the hosting British team (Simon Abbott / James Cuffey, 528 points) won the silver medal and place 2. Place 4 went to South Tirol (Italy,

520 points), closely followed by Norway (5th place, 516 points) and the Germans with 513 points in sixth place (see the magazine “Landschaft Bauen & Gestalten”, edition 11/2011). The ELCA congratulates all participating

teams and especially the winning team from Switzerland.

The next “WorldSkills” will be held in Leipzig from 2nd till 7th July 2013.