



The Prince of Wales chats to workers preparing his garden at Chelsea yesterday. It will include a small, inscribed stone memorial to his grandmother

Prince dedicates garden to Queen Mother

Chelsea Flower Show exhibit of healing plants aims to promote complementary medicine, reports Neil Tweedie

THE Prince of Wales has dedicated a garden designed by him for the Chelsea Flower Show to the memory of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. The Healing Garden, which has been entered for a medal at the show, grew out of the Prince's desire to promote greater awareness of homeopathic medicine, of which he has long been an enthusiast.

The garden contains 125 varieties of medicinal herbs and shrubs, promising help for maladies ranging from bruising to stress. There is even one, hornbeam, promising relief from procrastination – as long as the sufferer can make the time to take it.

In an interview with *The Daily Telegraph*, the Prince, who was visiting the garden to check on progress before the start of the show, said he decided on the personal tribute shortly after the death of his grandmother at the age of 101 in March. The garden will now include a

small stone memorial inscribed with the words "In loving and devoted memory" flanked by the "ER" of the Queen Mother and the three-feathered crest of the Prince of Wales.

"It seemed a nice idea," said Prince Charles. "My grandmother relied on homeopathy all her life. I thought that she would appreciate the purpose behind this garden."

The garden was the result of eight months of consultations between the Prince and the garden designer Jinny Blom. He stipulated that the design should be naturalistic, with no straight lines or angularity.

The Prince, president of the Foundation of Integrated Medicine, said: "I liked the healing garden idea. What I wanted to do was remind people about the medicinal properties of so many plants and flowers and trees. I've always been interested in homeopathy. We treat all the cattle and sheep on the farm at

Highrove homeopathically and it works incredibly well and helps to reduce the cost burden."

Among the homeopathic remedies he uses are creams derived from arnica (*Arnica montana*) for bruises and calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) for cuts.

The Prince's appearance at Chelsea coincided with the start of a scheme to encourage greater use of complementary medicine in primary healthcare. The Integrated Healthcare Initiative will seek to increase the availability of services for people who cannot afford to pay for alternative treatment.

Prince Charles said it was vital that as many species of plant as possible were saved from extinction, not least because of the potential benefits for mankind. "In the rain forests of South America, for example, we are losing rapidly all sorts of plants that have possible medicinal applications

– just as there is a huge resurgence in interest in studying the medicinal properties of plants that we have used for thousands of years."

He also criticised the attempts of some companies to gain control of beneficial species, such as the Neem tree, native to the Indian sub-continent, through the patent system.

The Healing Garden, sponsored jointly by Laurent-Perrier and *Harpers and Queen* with plants from the homeopathic supplier Nelson Bach, will not be considered for Best in Show at Chelsea, but is in contention for a medal. The Prince is not raising his hopes, however. "They'll never give me a gold medal because they'll be accused of oiling up," he joked.

Miss Blom, 41, said it had been a wonderful experience to have worked with the Prince. "He gave me a really interesting brief with a lot of threads in it," she said.