



## TAIGA RESCUE NETWORK

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# Many learn about the Boreal

## The Boreal Forest Garden exhibit wins silver at Chelsea

The Boreal Forest Garden has won a silver medal in the 2005 Chelsea Flower Show. Judges awarded the medals early Tuesday morning as one of our exhibit construction volunteers awoke from sleeping in the exhibit's centrepiece – a large hazel basket set close to a pond designed for relaxation in a forest setting.

This collaborative project between the Taiga Rescue Network and LandLab, an ecologically-based landscape architect company in Scotland, came to Chelsea to raise awareness about the boreal forest, the threats it currently faces and the peoples who rely on it for culture and identity. Many people who visited were interested in a garden unusual for Chelsea, but some learned more than they expected.

Representatives from the Taiga Rescue Network, LandLab, the Metis peoples of Saskatchewan and the communities of Sakhalin Island – Russian Far East, have been offering information about the boreal forest to visitors – most of who have never heard of the boreal until this week. Those who have expressed an interest to learn more were presented with a non-timber forest product factsheet, a pamphlet on the Siberian taiga and a wealth of verbal knowledge from our on-site team.

Ric and Rose Richardson, of Saskatchewan, have been busy teaching people about the plants they use for medicine in Saskatchewan. Rose has been playing her welcome song on her drum to open people's minds to listen to her traditional teachings.

Alexei Zhukov, of Sakhalin Island, has been handing out examples of non-timber forest products from his area such as herbal teas and painted eggs. His message is that these products are available to the world, but are underutilized and being threatened by unsustainable resource exploitation such as commercial forestry and oil and gas development.

Visitors are witnessing a naturalized landscape that can be implemented in an urban setting, and most are seeing the boreal for the first time – a success in itself. By raising awareness about sustainable use of the boreal forest we are making a difference for its future.

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**Official Boreal Forest Garden webpage: [www.taigarescue.org/chelsea](http://www.taigarescue.org/chelsea)**

## Additional Notes to the Editor

### Boreal Under Threat

Destructive logging, unsustainable forest management practices, mining, and vandalism in the form of deliberate forest fires are major threats to the world's boreal forests. What threatens the boreal forest as a whole, threatens NTFPs and the survival of the more than one million aboriginal peoples and their respective cultures who make the boreal forest their home. European countries, including the **UK**, contribute to boreal forest destruction by consuming logged boreal forests in the form of **virgin fibre** office papers and toilet paper.

### Non-Timber Forest Product Facts (NTFPs)

- **NTFPs** are products of biological origin but do not include wood derived from forests and wooded lands.
- **In European Russia** – Each year, the forests of the Arkhangelsk Region have the potential to provide the local population with approximately 27 kg of berries and 13 kg of wild mushrooms per capita. However, these resources are considered to be grossly under-utilized, as recent berry harvests have not exceeded 2 kg per capita, suggesting that non-timber forest products are a largely untapped resource (Chibisov & Demidova, 1998).
- **In the Russian Far East** – Approximately 55% of the flora have documented human uses, the vast majority of which have been traditionally used in Russian, Chinese, Tibetan, Arabian, Indian and western European medicine. After medicinal plants, food plants and edible/medicinal mushrooms are the next most common categories of NTFPs. Despite this enormous potential, few species are being actively harvested or have official standards governing their sale. This lack of government involvement makes it very difficult to quantify the economic impact of non-timber forest products, but one estimate projects that non-timber forest products have the potential to inject 23.6 to 32.5 million US dollars into the Primorsky Region alone (Zakharenkov, 2003).
- **In Canada** – In the Yukon alone, country foods (meat procured through hunting and fishing, berries, wild eggs, mushrooms and native vegetables) were found to contribute CAD\$10 million to the local economy (Henry, 2002).
- **In Scandinavia** – The harvesting of non-timber forest products, berries in particular, has a long history in Scandinavia and has long been associated with the principle of "everyman's right," which excludes berries, mushrooms and other natural products from the rights of the property owner. For example, approximately 60% of all Finnish households engage in berry picking and, harvesting a total of 56.5 million kg or an average of 25.8 kg per household. While most of this picking was for personal use, 27% of the total harvest was for commercial purposes (Saastamoinen & Kangas, 2000).
- **In Scotland** - In the recent past NTFPs played an important role on a variety of levels. "Oak and birch bark, for example, were formerly gathered in large quantities for the tanning trade, and juniper berries were once exported to Holland for making gin." On the domestic level, "...woods provided significant supplies of food (e.g. game, nuts and berries), medicine (e.g. wild garlic), dyes (e.g. alder bark) and other essentials for rural dwellers until well into the 20th century." (Reforestation Scotland, 2005)

## Contact Details

**Taiga Rescue Network** (TRN) of Jokkmokk, arctic Sweden, is a network of over 200 participant organizations, whose participants exist in boreal producer (Scandinavia, Canada, Russia) and consumer countries (central Europe, USA, Japan, China). TRN is the Boreal Forest Garden exhibitor.  
Damien Lee, Information Coordinator, Office: +46 971 17039, Mobile: +46 (0) 73 093 2368

**LandLab** – A group of artists, ecologists and landscape architects based in Scotland; Boreal Forest Garden designer and contractor. [www.landlab.co.uk](http://www.landlab.co.uk)  
John Kennedy, Office: +44 (0) 1 556 505 970, Mobile +44 (0) 7841 483 157

**Chelsea Flower Show** – After making it through a rigorous selection process TRN and LandLab saw off over 60 other applicants to win a place for their Boreal Forest Garden at the 2005 Chelsea Flower Show May 23 – 28, in London, England. The Boreal Forest Garden is one of the 20 “Show Gardens in the Open” which are the main attractions at the event.  
Royal Horticultural Society, Administrative Offices: +44 (0)20 7834 4333

### Sponsors to date (ordered alphabetically by organization where possible)

Arts fundraising expert **Janet Dunnett** of **Arts and Business North West** has provided consultancy time and helped find sponsors and sources of support for the project. [www.aandb.org.uk](http://www.aandb.org.uk)

**British-Russian Eco-cultural Network** (BREN), a UK based network aiming to foster the exchange of ecological-cultural initiatives taking place in, or between, Russia and Britain. BREN provided vital support in ensuring native representation for the boreal garden from Sakhalin Island, the Russian Far East. For further information on BREN's work [www.brenweb.org](http://www.brenweb.org) or e-mail [info@brenweb.org](mailto:info@brenweb.org)

**Michael Wickenden** of Cally Gardens Nursery, Gatehouse of Fleet has generously given time and expertise with the selection and growing of the herbaceous perennials. [www.callygardens.co.uk](http://www.callygardens.co.uk)

The **Canadian Boreal Initiative** has provided funds to support Canadian aboriginal peoples attendance at the Boreal Forest Garden, and other project costs. [www.borealcanada.ca](http://www.borealcanada.ca)

**Elevate** East Lancashire are sponsoring some of LandLab's design work to help promote and develop new businesses from East Lancashire.

UK haulage experts **Gilbraith**, of Lancashire are providing help and support with transportation and storage. Tel. 01254 581727. [www.gilbraithtranstore.co.uk](http://www.gilbraithtranstore.co.uk)

**Laurieston Estate**, Scotland, have provided coppice materials, advice and assistance to help build and transport the hazel sculpture.

Scottish artist **Lizzie Farey** has specially made a willow sculpture for the garden.

**Lorberg Nurseries of Berlin** are providing large (up to 10m high) specimen trees for the garden. [www.Lorberg.com](http://www.Lorberg.com)

Builders and stone masons **Ren Wallbank and Co.** of Lancashire are providing assistance as main contractor helping to build the garden, especially with project management, stone sourcing, and hard landscape construction. Contact LandLab above for further details.

**Snabba Tryck**, a Swedish printer with strong environmental ethics are sponsoring the printing of our official Non-Timber Forest Product fact sheet that will be available to interested visitors and media during the Show. Thomas Rosén, Snabba Tryck: +46 (0)31 51 00 53, [info@snabbatryck.com](mailto:info@snabbatryck.com)

**United Utilities**, an operator of electricity distribution, water and wastewater networks in Northern England and a UK leader in environmental sustainability are providing some of the materials for the construction of the Boreal Forest Garden at the Chelsea Flower Show.  
Mark Donaghy, United Utilities press office +44 (0) 1925 233 328