

PRESS RELEASE

7th May 2009

David Bellamy counts down to opening of conservation showcase attraction - Future Gardens

**- Phase I of £27m Butterfly World opens in 4 weeks -
- Eco-planting to attract butterflies and bees & improve biodiversity -**

Today, Professor Dr David Bellamy got his hands dirty helping out in the final stages of the eco-planting for the world-class new conservation showcase, Future Gardens which is set to open on 5th June this year.

Future Gardens is the launch-pad of the ground-breaking £27m Butterfly World Project near St Albans. The event will feature awe-inspiring gardens including 12 showcase contemporary designer gardens from some of Europe's best known designers as well as some new faces to the gardening world. The majority of planting throughout the 27 acre former Low Grade agricultural land has been specifically chosen to attract wild-life such as butterflies and bees.

David Bellamy is a patron of the project. He says:

"This is a hugely exciting conservation project set to inspire everyone and get them thinking about how they can affect the environment we live in. Everything in this project has been carefully designed so it will shine as a beacon of bio-diversity. As well as creating a unique destination for days out, it will form the base of a fantastic and lush habitat for a variety of creatures including butterflies and bees, which are in worrying decline. Future Gardens is the first stage of this highly important conservation programme echoing a stark message about our environment."

The Future Gardens event will showcase highly creative and forward-thinking designs for four months every year. Visitors to the site near St Albans will be able to see and appreciate how gardens mature and evolve through the seasons. They'll also experience a fascinating journey through a variety of thought-provoking contemporary landscapes which will include permanent gardens with a real difference. Each permanent garden is an acknowledgment of the anatomy of the butterfly, such as land art 'antennae' walk-ways and a spiral 'proboscis' walk*.

Ivan Hicks is the lead designer and is responsible for developing the innovative landscape for Future Gardens - Phase I of Butterfly World. He adds:

"Everything is taking shape and looking great. We can't believe its only four weeks until the public will be able to come and explore this new world. It seems like yesterday when this was a blank canvas. The aim is to create gardens that are fun and informative, designed to spark an interest in gardening and the natural world and offer a clear environmental message."

Each designer garden within the much anticipated Future Gardens event has an inventive and individual theme, with many inspired by nature's offering. All the garden designs demonstrate that sustainability and innovative, contemporary design can co-exist and be mutually beneficial.

There is a 13th show garden – *Harry's Garden*, a charity garden being designed by landscape, garden and horticultural designer, Fern Alder.

An anticipated highlight among the permanent gardens will be the three leaf-shaped gardens; 'Through the Flowerpot Garden' will allow visitors to see the world from an insect's eye view, 'Spangle Gall Garden' is a series of ten garden installations on different themes, that will

engage children in designing gardens which will sit in butterfly egg-shaped beds, and the 'Theatre of Insects' will show how even the strangest of man-made objects can create an ecologically sensitive habitat for insects.

British Butterfly Garden will display the most up-to-the minute research into caterpillar food and nectar plants.

* The walled spiral 'proboscis' walk is a permanent feature garden designed in the form of a spiral path shaped like a butterfly's proboscis and sown with international cornfield annuals. At the centre of the spiral proboscis walk is the Dame Miriam Rothschild Nectar Garden. It has been designed by Ian Forster as a permanent memorial to the late scientific advisor for Butterfly World.

- ENDS -

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Notes to Editors:

Future Gardens press day will be on 4th June 2009, one day prior to the opening.

Visitor information:

When: 5th June to 4th October 2009

Where: Future Gardens
Phase 1: Butterfly World
Miriam Lane
Off Noke Lane
Chiswell Green
Herts AL2 3NY

Exit the M25 at junction 21a and head towards the A405 towards St Albans. Take the first left hand junction before the roundabout, called Noke Lane. The entrance to Future Gardens is on your right.

Opening times: 9.30am – 6pm seven days a week

Ticket prices: Adults £12.50
Children (under 16) £5.00
Senior/Conc £9.50
Family (2 ad/2 ch) £32.00
Groups (10+) ad £11/conc £8/ch £4.00 Group bookings must be made at least one week in advance.

Under 3's free

Contact: Tel: 01727 869203
visitors@futuregardens.org; www.futuregardens.org

Key people involved in project:

- Butterfly World Project Founder: Clive Farrell
- Co-Founder: John Calvert
- Ivan Hicks: Chief landscape designer
- Therese Lang, Director, TJM Associates Ltd
- Future Gardens selection panel:

- James Alexander Sinclair
- Andrew Fisher Tomlin
- Cleve West
- Ivan Hicks
- Therese Lang
- Clive Farrell
- Butterfly World Project Ltd is the company responsible for delivering **Phase I** of the Butterfly World Project.
- Project Patrons:
 - Sir David Attenborough CH FRS
 - Professor Dr David Bellamy OBE
 - The Marquess of Salisbury PC DL
 - Emilia Fox
 - The Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, The Countess Verulam
 - Baroness Helena Kennedy QC
 - Professor Jeremy Thomas
 - Professor John A Pickett CBE DSc FRS
 - Martin Lane Fox FRICS VMH
 - Allan Titchmarsh MBE VMH DL
 - Rosie Boycott
 - Priscilla Rattazzi-Whittle
 - Ian Worlock
- It is anticipated that the construction of The Butterfly World biome will commence early 2010 and will take 2 years. It will be home to 10,000 tropical butterflies and moths and will include hummingbirds, scorpions, spiders and giant leaf cutting ants.
- Timings:
 - **Phase I** – Future Gardens opens to public 5th June 2009 and closes on 4th Oct 2009. Also open to the public will be the ‘antennae’ walk-ways and spiral ‘proboscis’ walk, the leaf gardens and a stunning butterfly garden feature.
 - **Phase II stage I** - Future Gardens opens to the public 4th June 2010 and closes on 3rd Oct 2010. The tropical biome will be constructed and ancillary structures and environmental controls installed. The biome will showcase tropical gardens and a live butterfly exhibit.
 - **Phase II stage II** - Anticipated 2012 : Butterfly World is complete. The biome and walkthrough experience will include reproduced Mayan ruins, a vibrant living rainforest, a kaleidoscope of up to 10,000 tropical butterflies and many beautiful hummingbirds will be on display
- www.butterflyworldproject.com and www.futuregardens.org