

# Dynamic Planting For Public and Garden Spaces

## WORKSHOP REPORT

Wednesday 22 September 2010



With 300 attendees, Palmstead Nurseries Ltd's Soft landscaping Workshop drew praise from both delegates and speakers for its dynamic focus on planting. The event, in its third year, was held at the Ashford International Hotel on Wednesday 22nd September 2010. The audience was made up of industry professionals including; landscape architects, garden designers, public space managers, landscape contractors, press and members of the Olympic Delivery Authority.



The speakers chosen for the 2010 event were: Paul Bramhill, Bert Griffioen, Sarah Price, Andrew Wilson, and Matthew Wilson.

Nick Coslett, Palmstead Nurseries' Marketing & Sales Manager, and a face well known to the industry, welcomed the delegates and spoke passionately about biodiversity and change. He said; 'Change is coming; there should be no doubt that man's activities are changing the globe. We can do something about it though; we can eat less meat; eat more vegetables and we can utilize a diversity of species in planting in order to add to biodiversity. The more diverse the planting, the more bio diverse the organisms; we don't have to stick to native planting - some of our native shrubs and plants are boring! Let's be diverse. There is ample evidence from the "BUGS" study that gardens are amazingly bio-diverse and colourful'.



Nick also spoke about Palmstead itself and the developments the nursery had pursued, propagating most of their plants themselves and expanding in order to do more from seed. Nick spoke about Palmstead's desire to grow with a soft footprint and went on to explain how the best part of three quarters of a million pounds had been invested in the new propagation glasshouse (the size of Wembley Stadium) and how the nursery had invested in mechanisation wherever possible in order to produce over a million plants in pots per year. These plants include; shrubs, perennials, grasses, ferns and trees.




Nick spoke about the future of public planting and his fears that spaces are becoming ever more robust and plantless, he called for more planting at every opportunity and dynamic planting too.

## Bert Griffioen: An innovative approach to dynamic planting



Bert Griffioen runs an innovative nursery supplying the main markets in Norway, Germany, France, Belgium and Holland. Griffioen provided the most eye opening talk of the day as he showed how his 'system' had revolutionized public planting and brought perennials to the fore across Europe'. Griffioen described energetically how he had organized meetings with local authorities to ask 'why are perennials not being used?'. He said that the three main answers that came back were 'maintenance, maintenance, maintenance'. He was left wondering – is there an answer to solving the maintenance problem?





After much thought, Griffioen decided; 'yes – there is an answer'. He said; 'I put together a system to follow; a list of directions on soil preparation and maintenance' which Griffioen stated must be followed 'to the letter of the law'. His system included; knowledge of the area requirements, soil handling, choice of assortment, design with block planting areas per sort, dense planting at 8-9 plants per square metre and then cutting back the plants each spring to promote a fuller flush of sturdy growth which will smother weeds. Maintenance thereafter was a maximum of 5 hoes/visits per year (maximum of 5 visits – especially in the first year) and closed canopy had to be achieved by the end of June. He said that when followed the system was unbeatable. He says that he now just receives repeat orders from local authorities and had 130,000 square metres established with this system.

Many notes were taken on Griffioen's innovative 'system' which he designed in order to make perennials profitable for local authorities and attractive for those attending public spaces.

Griffioen's figures for maintenance of £1.10 per square metre per year drew intakes of breath and nods of approval from the delegates who questioned him intently on his brutal cutting or 'mowing' of the perennials and of the fertilizers used. Many of the leading industry figures in the audience, including Andrew Wilson and Matthew Wilson admitted that they'd not thought of taking his unusual and innovative approach, and had learned a lot.

## Conclusion:

Nick Coslett, Marketing & Sales Manager at Palmstead, and organiser of the event said: 'Events like this put plants back on the agenda. People try to knock them off, but the event shows there's many common threads and a desire for cross pollination of ideas. I'm delighted by the numbers attending today and grateful to the speakers for their enlivened discussions on dynamic planting. I'd also like to say a huge thank you to everyone at Palmstead for their continuous hard work in producing such a fantastic product and giving our customer's the service they deserve. It makes selling such a joy. A splendid day!'



On the following pages you'll see just some of the lovely comments you have made about our Workshop. We all thoroughly enjoyed making it possible for you and we're already looking forward to next year!

In the meantime, if there is anything we can help you with, please contact the sales team on 01233 813340 or visit our website at [www.palmstead.co.uk](http://www.palmstead.co.uk).

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Coslett". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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