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CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2022

PRESS RELEASE

After two years the Burncoose Nurseries show team are delighted to be back again at the Chelsea Flower Show with a stand in the Great Pavilion (GPF200).

There may not have been a Chelsea show in 2020 but Burncoose Nurseries did still win the online virtual Chelsea Plant of the Decade competition with *Viburnum plicatum* 'Kilimanjaro Sunrise' being the public's choice. This *Viburnum* won the Plant of the Year competition in 2015 and will again feature on the stand this year as well as being available for sale at the show itself.

This year our stand will feature large clumps of *Iris siberica* 'Fran's Gold' which has also been entered into the 2022 Plant of the Year competition. It is a world first in terms of breeding with ground breaking chartreuse yellow spring foliage to brighten the garden for a full four months from March to July. The stunning blue flowers emerge in late May, last for several weeks, and are excellent for bees. This yellow leaved iris was first discovered as a single shoot 20 years ago in Jim & Fran Clarke's garden in Co. Kildare in Ireland. After Chelsea it will, for the first time, be widely available for sale in the UK and, initially, from Burncoose only by mail order.

The Burncoose Nurseries stand will again feature many of the rarer and more unusual ericaceous trees and shrubs for which our website based mail order business is so widely known. Some of the key plants which we hope to exhibit can be previewed in the Chelsea section of our website. What is different this year is that all our herbaceous plants have, for the first time, been grown entirely in a peat free soil medium manufactured from green waste produced in Cornwall close to the nursery.

The RHS have decided that by 2025 no plants can be displayed at Chelsea UNLESS they have been grown in peat free soil. The theme of the Burncoose stand this year is to encourage debate with the media and with the public as to exactly how this can be achieved. The camellias, rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias and many other ericaceous plants which we have propagated and grown at Burncoose for decades require an acidic growing medium with a pH of 5 to 6. Only peat based soils can provide this at present. Peat free composts all have an alkaline and a much higher pH level. Ericaceous plants CANNOT be grown in these types of peat free compost as our nursery trials have repeatedly proved but, as yet, there are no alternatives.

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Burncoose Nurseries is fully supportive of the drive to ban sales of bagged peat compost from the nursery itself in line with the government's stated objectives. However we wanted to use Chelsea to highlight awareness and understanding of the need for an RHS and government derogation in the move towards zero peat use for the specialist ericaceous plants which we grow.

If this does not happen (and if no viable non peat medium for growing rhododendrons etc emerges in the next few years) then Burncoose Nurseries' 40 years of Chelsea exhibits may, sadly, be coming to an end.

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