

Birmingham's heritage transformed into Show Garden at BBC Gardeners' World Live

Birmingham's 'roots' will be on display at this year's BBC Gardeners' World Live show, as the city's industrial and rural history are brought back to life in the form of a specially curated show garden.

The 'Made in Birmingham' garden is being built to pay homage to the foundations of the city, incorporating the historical railway network, the picturesque rural landscapes of the Forest of Arden and the strong brewery culture of the Black Country.

The focal point of the nostalgic plot will be a fully operational steam train carriage, laid on real railway tracks, and set against a purpose-built platform. The Pullman dining carriage will be transported from Vintage Trains in Tyseley to the NEC, where the exhibition centre's grounds will be excavated to lay tracks for the carriage to arrive into the show garden.

The railway embankment will feature a scenic cut-flower patch, which designer Paul Stone will be growing and planting with the help and guidance of Solihull Mind, a local mental health charity. This will sit next to a busy allotment of prize produce, which were common place along the turn-of-the-century Birmingham rail lines. Both the cut-flower garden and produce display are a salute to the city's historic fruit, veg and flower market.

In a nod to the region's small breweries and brewpubs, a field of barley and hops will surround the carriage installation, along with craft beer samples being served from the garden by Smethwick-based producers, Davenports Brewery.

Paul Stone, designer and landscaper of the Made in Birmingham garden, said: "Birmingham and the BBC Gardeners' World Live show are synonymous, and I really wanted to pay respect to the amazing history of the host city. The Pullman carriage is a throwback to how Birmingham brought the country together through the Grand Junction Railways, and how the nation needed this city to trade and commute. It's also been amazingly rewarding working with Solihull Mind, and I hope this project can show the benefits gardening can have on mental health."

Bob Sweet, horticultural director of BBC Gardeners' World Live, said: "This is the first time a fully operational steam carriage has been used in a show garden, and what an incredible idea it is. Paul's design is very imaginative, growing a lot of plants which aren't in season, but the designs are flawless and they really capture the spirit of Birmingham from years gone by."

The Made in Birmingham garden will be on display for four days at BBC Gardeners' World Live at the NEC, from 14th – 17th June. Tickets include access to the BBC Good Food Show, and can be purchased from www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com