

# Chelsea Flower Show hosts first ever wedding as Manoj Malde gets married on garden

Award-winning garden designer Manoj had a special ceremony on the garden that he's designed for this year's show.



BY OLIVIA HEATH

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RHS/TIM SANDALL

**The RHS Chelsea Flower Show has hosted its first ever wedding, as award-winning garden designer Manoj Malde married his partner Clive Gillmor on the garden he designed.**

Manoj, who was a designer on BBC's *Your Garden Made Perfect* and a judge on More4's *Garden of the Year*, is the RHS Ambassador for inclusivity and diversity and he's marked his first year in the role with a special garden – and ceremony – for Chelsea 2023.

Partnering with *Eastern Eye* newspaper, Manoj created an RHS Feature Garden with an uplifting message right at its heart. The *RHS and Eastern Eye Garden of Unity* has accessibility features (bright posts with sentences in braille) and an emphasis on sustainability (from peat-free planting to the use of reclaimed materials) and drought-resistant planting.

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Manoj and Clive's wedding took place on Monday morning (22nd May) in front of family and friends. On BBC Two's Chelsea coverage, Adam Frost said it was 'quite a beautiful place to get married'. Manoj agreed, replying: 'What an opportunity to design my own wedding venue as well!'



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Speaking about the wedding, Manoj previously revealed: 'I'm thrilled. We've had the outfits made in India and I've asked all the ladies in my family to wear saris, so it'll be really nice to have that tradition as well.

'How on earth is anyone going to accuse the RHS of being elitist when they are going to have the first RHS Chelsea wedding between a gay Indian man and a gay Irish man?

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A Chelsea Flower Show wedding is definitely a first (although there's been a proposal before, just cast your mind back to Mark Gregory's *Welcome to Yorkshire Garden* in 2019), but Manoj revealed that the idea to tie the knot at an RHS Chelsea garden was actually six years in the making.





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'In 2017 when I created my garden at the Chelsea Flower Show, called *Beneath a Mexican Sky* . . . Clive, my partner, had approached the RHS to see if we could get married on the garden that I had designed. Now, they were really up for it, the only thing was, time was against us. So this time when I was discussing the garden with the people at the RHS, at the end of the conversation I said, 'would it be possible for Clive and myself to get married on the garden?' And they were really up for it. This time, it's meant to be,' he said.



Manoj Malde's 2017 garden

JACK TAYLOR // GETTY IMAGES

Manoj, whose role as RHS Ambassador is to look into how the Society can ensure it is accessible to all, says his garden design is rooted in community, with the driving concept being that gardens and gardening are for everyone regardless of race, colour, creed, sexuality or disability.





**Garden designer Manoj**

RHS/OLIVER DIXON

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'I wanted it to be really, really inclusive so I wanted it to be about people who are less able bodied, people who may have poor eyesight, but also people who are from different communities as well,' he said. 'The Indian community, the Pakistani community, the Punjabis and the Sikhs, but I also wanted it to include the African and Afro Caribbean community, the Chinese community, even the LGBT community is really important for me, to make sure they're included as well.'



RHS/TIM SANDALL

A colour palette of orange and pink, inspired by Manoj's Indian heritage, is seen across the colourful timbers, creating a lovely backdrop to the planting – and there's *a lot* of plants. 'That's what I'm aiming for, that this garden when you're sitting in it, you feel immersed and protected,' Manoj said.

Meanwhile, hexagonal slabs laid separately are a representation of a broken society. 'But as we all know, when a broken society actually then starts coming together and works together as a single unit, that's when positive things start happening,' he concludes.

• **The RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2023, sponsored by the Newt in Somerset, returns from 23rd – 27th May. Visit [rhs.org.uk](https://rhs.org.uk) for ticket availability or [sign up to become a RHS Member](#) for reduced rate tickets to RHS flower shows.**

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Olivia Heath is the Executive Digital Editor at *House Beautiful UK*, covering tomorrow's biggest interior design trends and revealing the best tips, tricks and hacks to help you decorate your home like a pro. Week by week Olivia shares the most stylish high street buys to help you get the look for less and showcases the makeovers (who doesn't love a before & after?), as well as the hottest and most unique properties on the market.

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