

# Tony Smith



This, the first of a trio of gardens designed by Tony Smith for sponsor Quilted Velvet, explores the sense of touch. Look out for the other two in the triptych at Hampton Court Palace Flower Show and Tatton Park in July.

**PLOT:** Royal Hospital Way 31  
**SPONSOR:** Quilted Velvet  
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Although more accessible than his winning conceptual garden, *Ecstasy in a Very Black Box* for Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in 2008, this garden maintains artist Tony Smith's reputation for a certain playfulness and a flooding of the senses. "A real garden could be seen as a symphony in many movements and infinite variations, whereas a show garden is more like a 3-minute pop song. If it's good it's catchy, profound, even moving, and means something different to everyone." The garden opens with a series of stepping-stones above a sea of pink Busy Lizzie (*Impatiens* 'Cupido Pink'). The steps, made of Welsh blue slate topped with grass, lead to a sunken seating area with luxurious velvet cushions. There is a raised level planted with *Yucca*, *Cordyline* and *Astelia* just above the seating area. "You are surrounded by sharp plants but they can't get you," explains Tony.

**INSPIRATION** "I wanted the feeling of being snug and warm in a car with wind and rain hammering on the outside."

**COLOURS** a restricted palette of pink and purple with silver and green. ▷

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## KEY PLANTS

- 1** *Cupressus arizonica* 'Pyramidalis'  
A group of three plus one trees is used to represent Quilted Velvet's commitment to planting three trees for every one tree used.
- 2** *Yucca gloriosa*, *Y. recurvifolia* and *Y. x floribunda*. These ferociously spiky plants vary in the stiffness and silvery bloom to their leaves.
- 3** *Cordyline australis* Although often used with bedding, Tony has used this small tree here for a 3m-high hedge.
- 4** *Astelia chathamica* Wonderful silvery-blue clumps that look sharp but are harmless.

