



PRESS RELEASE

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Britain's chief doctor prescribes gardening at AIPH Green City Conference

Gardening is the solution to wider issues such as obesity, flooding and air pollution, which can all be improved through urban greening. This was the message to come out of the International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) International Green City Conference held at One Great George Street earlier this week on 1st April 2014, in London.

The conference, themed 'Growing green and healthy places', shared what the world could and should be like through the views of many great UK and international speakers. Prescribing gardening; Town and country must be married; 'Non-obese-a-genic' environments, and Making sure the power of brick does not overcome the power of green, were some of the insightful topics addressed.

Matthew Pencharz, Environment Advisor to the Mayor of London, told how green infrastructure is a key component of the city's plans. £400 million has been invested since 2009 which has included parks and pocket gardens. By 2025, the aim is to increase London's green space by 5% to make a quarter of the city green.

Annemarie Jorritsma, Mayor of Almere, The Netherlands, challenged people to participate in the search for the ideal green city. She shared of the green principles behind the building of Almere: cultivate diversity, connect place and context, combine city and nature and anticipate change.

Prescribing gardening for improved health, Sir Richard Thompson, President of the Royal College of Physicians, advised how and why green gardens are good for you. "A few minutes of viewing a green garden can improve a person's physiology", he said and added "There's a gym outside your window," referring to gardening as a form of exercise. The benefit of trees, particularly the ability of a single tree in an urban park to remove 48lbs of particulate matter from the air daily, was also highlighted.

Tom Butterworth, Natural England, discussed the benefits of green infrastructure surrounding issues such as air quality and flooding. 2.5% of all deaths, amounting to 48,000, are attributed to urban outdoor air pollution caused by particulate matter, which compares to 18,000 attributed to drugs and alcohol. In addition, 5.2 million houses which are currently at risk of flooding could be helped, as 50-62% of surface water caused by storms can be reduced by a single street tree.

People's gardens make up 50% of the UK's urban areas, highlighted Leigh Hunt, Principal Horticultural Advisor at the Royal Horticultural Society, adding that 90% of the UK's residents live

urban gardens. Collectively, using these gardens, people can make a difference to health, city temperature, bio-diversity and flooding.

Sponsored by Headline Partner, Frosts Landscape Construction Ltd, the day gave insight to the likes of planners, local authorities, health authorities, and the horticultural industry, as they gathered to understand the benefits of plants and flowers, and to find the tools and ideas to take away to make their own cities greener.

“Too many people are living in cities that are the definition of what a green city is not. It is a false economy to cross off landscape investment for which future generations will pay the price. If we all take on board and apply what we heard at this (AIPH) International Green City Conference, we can make a massive improvement to this world,” comments Victor Krahn, President, AIPH.

For more details visit www.greencity-events.org.

The conference and dinner were supported by a wide range of partners including:

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Notes for Editors:

International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH)

AIPH is a co-ordinating body representing horticultural producers' organizations all over the world. It was set up in Switzerland in 1948 to stimulate the international marketing of flowers, plants and

landscaping services. Currently membership consists of 26 organisations from 19 countries. For further details visit www.aiph.org.

Further information on the International Green City Conference

Visit www.greencity-events.org for more information on content, venues, partners and hotel accommodation.