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Press Release

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Foreign & Colonial Investments' Garden looks to environmental legacy

Foreign & Colonial Investments' Garden, a Show Garden designed for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2009 by award-winning designer Thomas Hoblyn, has a strong environmental theme – but the 'green' won't wilt once the Show is over.

The garden, inspired by the wetlands of North Carolina and East Anglia, highlights the fragility of these natural habitats with some highly specialised and in many cases rare and endangered plants (grown from UK-sourced seed), alongside more adaptable species that are better placed to cope with the rapid pace of environmental change.

The garden is the second collaboration between Thomas Hoblyn and the 141-year-old Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust, following on from the 2008 Gold Medal-winning Urban Garden, 'Tempest in a Teapot'. This year's design features a wealth of environmentally friendly materials, with walling made from 'eco blocks' (98% recycled materials), sheep's wool furniture, and a boardwalk and 'waves of change' sculpture fashioned from a giant redwood tree that fell in a storm in 2006.

After the show the garden – including the wooden sculpture, the furniture and a copper-mesh statue representing humanity as the 'Guardian of the Environment' – will be relocated to Suffolk, where it will occupy part of a 12-acre site. But some of the plants have a quite different destination, forming part of a community gardening project Thomas Hoblyn is designing and supporting on land near the village of Sipson

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in Middlesex. The RHS Chelsea Flower Show is committed to recycling as much as it can from the Show's gardens, and in recent years many organisations, from schools to hospitals, have benefited.

The environmental message of Foreign & Colonial Investments' Garden will not be lost during the show. The garden highlights the plant species that are most adaptable and also most vulnerable to sudden climatic change. Normally those species that we now consider most at risk would have generations to adapt to climate change, something they have done for thousands of years. Unfortunately, owing to the sheer scale of man's activities, both plant and animal species are being wiped out. This garden, with its 'Guardian of the Environment' statue, represents the role all of us inhabiting this beautiful planet must now embrace.

The garden, sponsored by Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust, which has been helping investors plan for the future for more than 140 years, demonstrates that adaptability and sustainability is key. But with man's influence stepping up the pace of change in the natural world, humanity has a duty to give nature a fighting chance of coping with this change. Without action, many plant species, animals and communities will not be around in another 140 years.

To help reinforce the message of the garden, Zac Goldsmith, former editor of The Ecologist magazine, an environmental adviser to the Conservative Party and parliamentary candidate for Richmond Park, will be attending a photocall at 12.15pm on the RHS Chelsea Flower Show's Press Day, Monday 18 May. Zac said: "I'm pleased to be supporting Thomas Hoblyn's climate change garden. This is a clear reminder that climate change is the greatest threat facing the planet. This garden, with its 'Guardian of the Environment' statue, represents the role we must all embrace. So many of us are already doing our bit, but Governments must play their part in saving the planet too."

Also appearing at Foreign & Colonial Investments' Garden on Press Day will be up-and-coming singer-songwriter VV (Vanessa) Brown, who will be performing at 11.30am and 12.15pm. Brown has been tipped for success on both sides of the Atlantic, and is described by the BBC as "a 24-year-old modern-day doyenne of doo-wop, giving the sound of vintage girl groups a 21st Century twist with a quirky, savvy, squeaky sheen".

Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust was founded in 1868 to "give the small investor the same advantage as the large institution by reducing the risk of investing through a spread of investments". Since then it has adapted, survived and thrived through more than 140 years of social, political and economic upheaval to become one of the biggest investment trusts in the market today, with £1.7bn of assets as at 31 March 2009, more than 108,000 shareholders and a place in the FTSE 100 index. The Trust is managed by F&C Management Limited and invests globally with the aim of providing both capital and income growth, and is available through a range of F&C savings schemes including an ISA and a Child Trust Fund.

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Mark Loveday, chairman of Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust, said: "We are delighted to be sponsoring a garden at the Chelsea Flower Show again this year, following our success last year with Thomas Hoblyn's Gold Medal-winning garden. The theme this year is adaptability and sustainability in the environment, which is such a vital issue for us all and which fits in well with our history and long-term approach to investment."

- Ends -

For more information on the garden, or to arrange an interview with Thomas Hoblyn, please contact Sarah Didinal on +44 (0) 7952 307707 or sarahdidnal@yahoo.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust

- Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust PLC (FCIT) is one of the largest global growth trusts listed on the London Stock Exchange, with assets of £1.7 billion as at 31 March 2009 and over 108,000 private investors owning 83% of the shares. It is in the FTSE 100.
- The objective of FCIT is to secure long-term growth in capital and income through a policy of investing primarily in an internationally diversified portfolio of publicly listed equities, as well as unlisted securities and private equity, with the use of gearing. Approx 30.5% of FCIT's assets are invested in the UK, 19% in the USA, 11% in Europe, 12.5% in Emerging Markets, 6% in Japan, 5% in Developed Asia and 15% in Private Equity.
- Over the years FCIT has helped finance a diverse range of projects and industries such as North Sea Oil, Cats (the musical), the Independent Newspaper, the Channel Tunnel and, more recently, Resolution Life.
- FCIT is run by an independent Board of Directors responsible for governance, strategy and results, while management of the investments is carried out by F&C Management Limited under contract.
- FCIT owns the name "Foreign & Colonial" and F&C Asset Management PLC owns the name "F&C". There are no cross-directorships, no cross-holdings and no conflicts of interest between FCIT and its Manager, F&C.

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F&C Investments

- F&C Asset Management (F&C) is a London Stock Exchange listed asset management group which traces its origins back to 1868 with the launch of Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust, the first ever publicly listed investment fund. Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust remains a client of F&C.
- F&C now manages £92.7 billion (€100.1 billion) of assets* for a diverse range of institutional, insurance and retail clients across all major asset classes – equities, bonds, cash and property – as well as alternative and specialist product classes such as Socially Responsible Investment funds, hedge funds, private equity funds and Liability Driven Investments. F&C invests globally and has been a longstanding investor in emerging markets. The firm acts as fund manager for 15 investment companies.

* As at 31 March 2009.