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**For Immediate Release**

**Agapanthus “on Steroids” ~ at Chicago Flower & Garden Show**  
*Exactly How DO You Pack and Ship an Agapanthus?*

**CHICAGO (Feb. 7, 2012)** – As delicate flowers go, this is one big baby!

Picture an agapanthus sculpture that’s 14 feet tall, 11 feet wide and 1,100 pounds of forged steel and glass. How do you pack up a piece of art like that and ship it overseas?

“I spent three days wrapping the glass elements, which fit into wooden crates. It was actually a bit of a squeeze to fit all the pieces in place,” says Jenny Pickford, a blacksmith and the sculpture’s creator, who grew up on a farm and is now a rising star in Britain’s art world. Her work will be on display at the Chicago Flower & Garden Show, March 10-18, at Navy Pier.

In all, 25 stylized display gardens will present the latest in garden design and beauty during “Hort Couture,” the show’s 2012 theme, which reflects the influence of fashion and design in floral, plant and landscape creations. The sculpture will highlight the entrance garden, where visitors will step through a corridor of decorative living walls and emerge to gaze upon the “wow” of the show, says Tony Abruscato, director of the Chicago Flower & Garden Show and president of Flower Show Productions, which presents the nine-day event for the first time.

When it’s placed outdoors, the agapanthus sculpture takes advantage of shifting natural light to change the look of its glass features. Indoors, the piece creates a stunning effect.

“I have always been inspired by the natural world,” Pickford says. “The huge scale of this sculpture gives a change of perspective and a feeling of Lewis Carroll’s ‘Alice in Wonderland.’”

An agapanthus, which is often called a lily of the Nile or African lily, is a purplish flower grown from a bulb. Depending upon the variety, the flower can grow to four feet in height. The agapanthus sculpture, which is valued at approximately \$34 thousand, has been displayed at the

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## **Chicago Flower & Garden Show / Agapanthus / Add One**

Chelsea Flower Show and several other shows in Britain. Pickford says she's excited to be adding the Chicago Flower & Garden Show, her first U.S. collaboration, to the list of sites where she has exhibited.

Female blacksmiths are quite rare in England, but Pickford, a leader in this field, was not deterred from working in the medium, and actually fell into it by chance. She has been self-employed as a sculptor-blacksmith for the past 10 years.

"I originally studied fine art sculpture but took a course in blacksmithing and immediately loved the malleability of the material," she says. "When I later studied glassblowing I found another material that excited me, and since then I have been combining the two in all my pieces."

Pickford is an award-winning artist, having received the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust to study glassblowing at the Pilchuck School of Glass in Seattle, Washington. She also won the Allan Alcard Cup from the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths. In addition to unique sculptures, she creates artistic water features and other architectural ironwork.

With a legacy that can be traced to 1847, the Chicago Flower & Garden Show welcomes upwards of 60,000 visitors to Navy Pier annually. Show tickets are available at the Navy Pier Box Office and discounted tickets are available online at [www.ChicagoFlower.com](http://www.ChicagoFlower.com). Weekday admission is \$15 when tickets are purchased online; \$17 at the box office. Weekend admission is \$17 and \$19 respectively. Tickets for children ages 4 through 12 are \$5. Discounted parking at Navy Pier, group rates and tours are available.

For more information about the Chicago Flower & Garden Show – including the Evening in Bloom preview benefit for Chicago Gateway Green and Friends of the Parks from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Friday, March 9 – please visit the website, at [www.ChicagoFlower.com](http://www.ChicagoFlower.com).

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### ***About Flower Show Productions, Inc.***

*Flower Show Productions, Inc. is the production company for the annual Chicago Flower & Garden Show at Navy Pier, and for grand-scale public events that celebrate sustainable living and eco-friendly lifestyles. The company provides year-round messaging, education and information about the benefits of earth-friendly choices to our yards, neighborhoods, communities and the planet. For information, please visit <http://flowershowproductions.com>. For information about the Chicago Flower & Garden Show, please visit [www.chicagoflower.com](http://www.chicagoflower.com). Also, find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/chicagoflower](http://www.facebook.com/chicagoflower) and on Twitter at #chiflower.*