



TURF TRIM: Steve Porter gives Tina Hammond's hat a bit of a snip.

Fashion goes back to grassroots

It may not be Gucci or Prada, but yesterday it was confirmed that green is most definitely the new black this season.

And what may surprise fashion editors everywhere is instead of yards of silk or satin, the new fabric in which to be seen is grass. Modelling the unique outfit made of living turf was Tina Hammond, head gardener at Felbrigg Hall, near Cromer.

The dress is part of the National Trust's stand at the Chelsea Flower Show, where head gardeners from around the country were on hand to give advice on greener gardening. Along with a turf two-piece suit worn by fellow head gardener Steve Porter, the

outfits were part of the trust's push to get Britain's 27 million gardeners to stop using peat and prevent environmental damage caused by commercial peat extraction.

The grassy garb was grown by Gloucestershire-based artist Shelley Campbell in environmentally friendly peat-free compost.

With each costume designed to last a day in front of the cameras, Miss Hammond, who has been at Felbrigg for 18 months, said: "It's actually quite a nice dress, but very damp and there's a bit of a draft up the back.

"We keep getting sprayed to keep us fresh and we have been getting all sorts of comments."

Miss Hammond said the reopening of Felbrigg Hall almost a month ago after the lifting of foot-and-mouth restrictions had brought in many visitors.

"It's going really well and we hope to continue to work on the gardens and have got a lot of projects coming up."

Yesterday the trust also revealed results of year-long scientific trials aimed at finding an alternative to peat, 66 per cent of which is used by amateur gardeners in grow-bags and multipurpose compost. A new compost has been developed using composted wood fibre, bark and soil and will be available in National Trust shops.