

HOME

Garden

FB San Francisco Chronicle

Try out some garden grasses, test a few new tools

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structure and landscape over flowers.

The theme of this year's show, "Living and Loving the Garden: Life," the melding of indoors and out, of beauty in the functional, is visible in three core show areas: display gardens, exhibits and seminars. The show, which features an opening-night benefits gala Tuesday and runs through Sunday at the Cow Palace, has been reduced in size to make it more manageable for one-day visits, according to show producer Kay Hamilton Bates.

Display gardens

Twenty-one designers have landscaped in the main display hall, four large container gardens complete the effort.

Ingo McClood and Beek Hamaker demonstrate their knack for tight city spaces with "Limited," their first fully display garden. The garden, which is 10 feet by 10 feet, is a mix of plants and structures of the rooftop garden they designed at 181 O'Farrell St. That garden is an inviting space with a perforated, rusted steel wall, copper wall fountain and recycled metal planters that host grasses and ferns. Warm, rusted tones soften the space, as does the splash of water that quiets city noise for the residents of the building's 29 units.

The show display is designed to create a "serene retreat" in the midst of the city and works the inside-out angle. A three-sided wall wraps around one-third of the display area. It's not to be confused as simply part of the house, light filters through a translucent, plastic roof — the area seems neither inside nor out. A 16-foot-tall fountain projects life-size translations



Left: Bates/177; The Chronicle Staff

Last year's home and garden show featured "Orange and Red Struck" by Katey Mulligan of Liquidambar Garden Design and Damien Martin of Martin Masonry, both of San Francisco.

space, as well as to the garden, and a tall white birch tree pokes through the rock blurring edge. Somecass surrounded a fire pit, and a "daisy lounge," custom steel light and planter boxes bring harmony comfort to this backyard.

Garden Design magazine takes the notion of outdoor entertaining back to the 1950s with "Modern Modern." In a woodland hideaway surrounded by dogwoods, an outdoor deck awaits with built-in furniture, kitchen, fireplace and martini bar.

If you've followed the dialogue over lawn, you've probably heard John Greenlee's name. Author of "The Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses," Greenlee has been

on a crusade to educate gardeners about alternatives to conventional grass lawns, which are serious water guzzlers and polluters.

In his display garden for the show, called "The Metropolitan Modern: Driving Towards a Solution," Greenlee teaches us to "walk more softly on the planet" with drought-tolerant, low-maintenance and pesticide-free ornamental grasses. Have an open space you'd like covered in green? A meadow planted with grasses *Melica nitra*, *Carex tenuifolia* and buffaloes grass, along with small flowering bulbs, might just be the ticket.

George Hull and his students from Arizona State University's

College of Design return to the show with "The Garden Above." A rooftop garden made from recycled tank beds through-tolerant desert natives and soft native grasses that bound a shaded retention pool. The garden's boundaries are clearly marked by thorny plants and barbed wire.

James Pennington and Sean Stout of Organic Medicines like plants in particular plants that don't drain the planet's resources. "Under the Sea" illustrates this preference. With drought-tolerant cacti and succulents, they fantasize about all types of water gardens.

Also, be on the lookout for Marjorie Gardening & Design, Andrea Hart's exhibit contains gar-

San Francisco Flower & Garden Show

9 a.m.-6 p.m. Wed.-Sat., 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sun., Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave., Daly City. Tuesday night opening party benefits the San Francisco Botanical Garden. Go to sfbotanicalgarden.org for details.

Tickets: Adults \$20, youths 16-17 \$4, students (younger than 16 with student ID) \$8, children 15 and younger free. Two-day pass \$29. Cost of admission included in general admission. Information: (800) 580-2582 or www.gardenshow.com.

den, which features vegetable, fruit, medicinal and culinary herbs and native and ornamental plants.

Exhibits

About 260 commercial exhibitors will sell products related to horticulture. Many will cater to flower passion. Names include Digging Dog, Annie's Annals, Geraniacae, Passinal and Sweetwater will have booths. The Lily Pad bulb farm can provide fragrant lilies, dahlias, even tree peonies. For dahlias, there are Corneil's Dahlias, Corralitos Gardens and Dan's Dahlias.

Want your garden to be part of Greenlee's solution? Plant a meadow in place of that lawn. St. Helena's Wildflower Seed Company has a low-growing meadow mix of annuals and perennials such as yarrow, basket of gold, wallflower, rocket larkspur, thistle, dwarf foxglove and stock.

If you need a hat to wear in your new meadow garden, Sunday Abernethy stocks it. Need a shade plant for that other part of your garden? Naylor Creek Nursery will be there with hulas. Or it orchids that you list for? Out on a Limb Orchids is one booth of many.

There are also educational exhibits. Stop at the New Plants exhibit at the California Horticultural Society's booth. Wholesale

and local retail nurseries and some plant propagation nurseries that breed plants donate to the booth. This year's focus is plants that are both edible and ornamental. The society doesn't sell plants, but a plant list with information about how the public can obtain them will be available. Also look for the American Inra Society, and, for natives, check out California Native Plant Society.

Seminars

Fergus Garrett, one of the year's show judges, leads the seminar pack, speaking Wednesday, Friday and Saturday about his years as head gardener at Britain's Great Dixter House and Garden, working with Christopher Lloyd. On Friday, Scott Kunt will talk on "Heirloom Bulbs" and how to track down those small bulbs for your own meadows. Kathleen M. Brunel, editor of *Smart Western Garden Book*, takes up the "Garden Living" theme and will present "Ideas for Enhancing Your Outdoor Space" on Thursday. To start yearning ones planning their carrot seeds early, Sproutopia and the SproutStage will gear gardens and activities toward children.

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