

SAN FRANCISCO/SAN MATEO

TODAY'S HOME

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Sneak Peek at Spring

IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO THE San Francisco Flower and Garden Show, this is the year to put your foot down about other obligations and get there. Held at the San Francisco Cow Palace March 15-19, you're guaranteed to catch a hefty dose of spring fever.

As you walk through the doors, you'll leave the gray, wintry, urban world behind and enter a lush, landscape paradise. This year, more than 360 exhibitors will show off 60,000 plants from more than 60 boutique nurseries, and 30,000 exotic plants. In addition, leading garden and landscape experts will present more than 70 free lectures and demonstrations.

Best of all, you'll be able to tour actual gardens and landscapes members of the California Landscape Contractors Association created. "From a designer's point of view, it's an opportunity to pull out all the stops and be as creative as you can," says Katey Mulligan, designer and owner of Liquidambar Garden Design in San Francisco. Katey plans to create a garden based on "Orange and Red Streak", a bold and vibrant painting by one of America's most revered floral and landscape painters, Georgia O'Keefe. "And for homeowners, the show is just so much fun. The possibilities are almost endless, no matter how tiny or large your yard."

Because the demonstration gardens are life-size renditions, it's easy to picture how the concepts will work in your own space. Katey's garden, for example, will include stucco walls, weeping trees, an oasis of lush multi-hued trees, a birch grotto and a cool waterfall emerging from the rock.

All together, the Cow Palace show floor and exhibit halls are the equivalent of about six acres of gardens.

There's a foundation of more than 1,200 cubic yards of mulch and 280,000 pounds of rock—all lit with more than 300 theatrical lights hanging from the ceiling. Every inch of the show is designed to give you a sneak peek at spring.

For information about how to get to the show, show times, ticket prices and a list of exhibitors and garden creators, log on to gardenshow.com.

The California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) is a nonprofit trade organization of state licensed landscape and landscape-related limited specialty contractors. CLCA's membership, which totals approximately 3,500 individuals, includes suppliers to contractors, landscape architects, educators, public officials and students. For more information, or to find a licensed landscape professional in your area, use the landscape contractor search engine at clca.org. **THM**

