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2010 Chicago Flower & Garden Show raises curtain March 6-14 on 'theatrical' gardens, a 'streetscape' and a horticultural competition

The **Chicago Flower & Garden Show**—the Midwest's premier gardening exhibition for professionals and consumers alike—returns to Navy Pier on Chicago's lakefront **Saturday, March 6, through Sunday, March 14, 2010.**

The show's theme, "Cultivating Great Performances," underscores Chicago's reputation as a great theater town by celebrating the Goodman Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Members of each theater's creative team have inspired engaging garden environments created by leading garden professionals, who fuse the drama of the stage with the artistry of horticulture.

The new show floor layout is designed by Terry Guen Design Associates, the acclaimed Chicago-based landscape architecture and urban design firm. And iconic stage plays including "Wicked," "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" and "Miss Saigon" will provide themes for gardens created by top landscape designers. In addition, Chicago's lauded theaters—Goodman, Lookingglass and Chicago Shakespeare—are the inspiration for the gardens.

Now in its 16th year, the Midwest's annual horticulture and landscape showcase is designed to inspire, educate and motivate visitors. It is sponsored by Belgard Hardscapes, a nationwide network of paving stone and garden wall products manufacturers, and produced by Special Events Management with the support of the Mayor's Office of Special Events and of Navy Pier.

Inspirational highlights

The 2010 Chicago Flower & Garden Show features 25 gardens designed by top gardening and landscaping companies. It also features a vendor Marketplace displaying garden and green products and services of more than 125 exhibitors.

The inviting, new 2010 floor layout is guaranteed to provide visitors with a decidedly unique show experience: a 'streetscape.' Terry Guen Design Associates, whose projects include Millennium Park and the Chicago Riverwalk, has added a meandering boulevard punctuated by cul de sacs.

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A series of central planters, as well as a grove of trees selected by the Chicago Tree Initiative, will also raise awareness of long-living species indigenous to the Midwest.

"This year's show floor will have the fresh look and feel of public and outdoor spaces. Visitors should not expect a traditional linear trade show floor design," says Tony Abruscato, director of the Flower & Garden Show.

Abruscato also adds that spotlighted in each garden will be three unique elements of that garden such as: Prominent Utilization of Recycled Products, Water Conservation, New Landscaping Concepts and New (or Unique) Horticulture Specimens.

In keeping with the show's 2010 theme, "Cultivating Great Performances," participants will fashion gardens that reference the delights of the theater. Moore Landscapes will collaborate with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Christy Webber Landscapes will team up with Lookingglass Theatre for an "Alice in Wonderland" garden.

The Chicago Park District's "Best of Show" installation will reveal, on a small-scale, how flower shows at the Garfield Park and Lincoln Park conservatories are produced. In addition, landscape architect Greg Pierceall will explore all-new plant, flower and vegetable varieties in a garden that references the popular musical, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences will showcase children's theater with an activity garden and readings of tales including "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Little Red Riding Hood," "The Three Pigs" and "Billy Goat Gruff."

Aquascapes, Collegiate Landscape, West End Florists and J&L Supply will collaborate on building an expansive, colorful garden as they take their inspiration from "Miss Saigon." District 8 Garden Clubs will pay homage to Elphaba and Glinda, the wonderful witches of "Wicked." And Leisurewoods and Cypress Group take their cue from "State Fair," with an emphasis on urban and suburban chicken farming.

Educational highlights

As always, the Chicago Flower & Garden Show includes a dynamic lineup of educational speakers covering a range of topics. Seminars are free with show admission. Highlights include:

Author, syndicated columnist, radio host and television personality Joe Lamp'l will tell visitors how he fed his family for an entire summer with "The Twenty-Five Dollar Victory Garden" (11 a.m., March 7).

Authors Jean Ann Van Krevelen and Amanda Thomsenco will also delve into the vegetable garden with their talk, "Plant or Purchase: Which Edibles and Why?" (1 p.m., March 7). Massachusetts radio host C.L. Fornari offers "Perennial Maintenance—The Need to Do, The Nice to Do and The Nuts to Do" (2 p.m., March 7). →

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Dr. Jim Ault of the Chicago Botanic Garden will discuss his work breeding lilies; Tim Pollak, CBG outdoor floriculturist, will present "Unusual Annuals for Seasonal Color"; Greg Bartoshuk of the University of Illinois will deliver "Perfect Perennials for Perpetual Color for Real Lazy Gardeners"; and his colleague, Dr. Tom Voigt, will discuss ornamental grasses.

In addition, among the show's several hands-on workshops are popular "Potting Parties" held several times daily where, for a nominal charge benefiting charities, visitors can plant and take home their own plants and container creations.

Motivational highlights

Returning to the show after a two-year hiatus are the Horticultural Competitions. Presented in conjunction with the Chicago Botanic Garden, individuals, garden clubs and businesses will showcase their passion for horticulture in three categories: Flower Houseplants, Window Boxes and Photography. A limited number of entries are accepted in each category.

Blue-ribbon juries of professionals will select top winners in each shortly before the show opens. These winners, in addition to all entrants in each category, will then be showcased at spectacular exhibits for visitors to enjoy during the Flower & Garden Show.

And, Master Gardeners from the Illinois Master Garden Program will be on hand to answer visitors' questions and conduct tours of the show, highlighting points of interest and talking about the various trees and flowers planted in the gardens.

Also new in 2010...

- A "New Plant Varieties" exhibit will showcase all-new plant, flower and vegetable varieties.
- Several daytime programs will be extended for the benefit of after-work visitors into evening hours from 5-8 p.m. These include educational seminars, cooking demonstrations and container garden sessions.
- Also debuting in 2010 is the Chicago Flower & Garden Store, where visitors can pick up show-themed wearables, journals and coffee mugs.

Returning show highlights

•The popular (and creatively lush) **Tablescapes** will include "Playbill by Design," created by individuals in the retail, hospitality and interior design fields; "Theater Theatrics," fashioned by professional florists and event planners; and "Green Room," designed by non-professional groups, clubs and individuals.

Tablescapes participants include Anthony Gowder Designs, City Scents Flowers & Gifts, Phillips Flowers, Flower Cart, Simply Elegant Florist & Event Co., Good Earth Greenhouse, Stylish Stems Inc., HGTV personality Lynn Kegan and Whole Foods Market-South Loop.

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● **Garden Gourmet** culinary sessions, held several times daily, will feature some three dozen chefs who will demonstrate cooking techniques and recipes using natural and home-grown ingredients. Participants include Tru's Gale Gand, Randy Zweiban of Province, TV personality Bill Kurtis with Harry Caray's Restaurant chef Paul Katz, Berghoff Catering's Carlyn Berghoff, Socca's Roger Herring, Hell's Kitchen season 6 contestant Tony D'Alessandro from Big & Little's, Mana Food Bar's Jill Barron, and the Park Grill in Millennium Park's Bernie Laskowski. Free with show admission, demonstrations end with bite-sized tastings and are at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30, 3:30 and 6:30 p.m. each day.

Social events at night

Friday, March 5—Preview Benefit The 2010 Chicago Flower & Garden Show debuts with a Preview Benefit from 6-9:30 p.m. on Friday, March 5, the night before the show officially opens. Themed "An Evening in Bloom," the benefit's proceeds will be donated to four local green organizations: the Parkways Foundation, Friends of the Parks, Chicago Gateway Green and the Chicago Botanic Garden. When buying tickets, people will be able to designate which organization receives the proceeds.

Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and his wife, Maggie, are serving as honorary chairs. Tickets are \$135 per person and include cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, live entertainment and the opportunity to preview the show floor.

Friday, March 12—Mix & Mingle Party Visitors can wind down a hectic work week at this unique 5-8 p.m. Friday night social gathering. The show floor will provide the perfect ambience for romance, or to simply socialize with friends and other singles. Mix & Mingle also features music and a cash bar.

About the show

Show hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays. Adult admission is \$15 weekdays and \$17 weekends. Tickets for children 4-12 years are \$5 every day. Tickets can be ordered online at www.chicagoflower.com, where no service fee is charged. They also can be purchased at the door.

Group discounts start at 15 or more tickets. They can be ordered by calling 773-435-1250, or by downloading a Group Reservation Form at chicagoflower.com, which also has information on special hotel packages.

For more information on the Chicago Flower & Garden Show, visit www.chicagoflower.com or call 773.435.1250.

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All-day discounted parking is \$14. For details about CTA bus service, call 836-7000 (any local area code) or visit the CTA Web site at transitchicago.com. For Metra travel information, go to metrarail.com for train schedules and phone numbers of the various rail lines serving downtown Chicago.

About Special Events Management

In 1988, Special Events Management, the show's producer, was established as an event planning and production company. Since that time, the company has grown to become the largest full service producer of special events in the Midwest. In addition to the Chicago Flower & Garden Show, it produces more than 100 runs/walks, street/art festivals and sporting events annually. It also provides exhibit/trade show booth consulting, design and construction as well as marketing/public relations and graphic design services.

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FYI To access high and low-resolution images for the Chicago Flower & Garden Show, please paste this link <ftp://FGS10:images@Files9.cyberlynk.net> into Windows Explorer or Internet Explorer and search for an image. For more detailed instructions, please see the attached easy-to-follow instruction page.