

Acres of gardens, products, celebrities, plus a wedding

It's no coincidence that the first day of spring comes with the 76th annual International Builders Home, Flower and Furniture Show.

The event, sponsored by the non-profit Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan, is just the ticket to get homeowners in the spirit of the new season as they discover thousands of ideas for the home and garden.

The following are some highlights of the show:

The Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association will bring to life a bit of Texas with its Riverwalk Gardens. A 400-foot-long river modeled after the river gardens of San Antonio, will run through Cobo Center, surrounded by 86,000 square feet of landscaped gardens. To top it off, duck races will take place on the river each night, sponsored by the Rotary International District 6400.

As visitors stroll through the surrounding gardens, they will be inspired to put an artistic touch on their own gardens. The sounds of chirping crickets and babbling brooks, and visions of colorful water fountains and dancing butterflies as visitors pass through cedar gazebos along brick-paved pathways will set the mind in motion for a personal landscaping project.

Two national celebrities will make appearances at the Cobo Builders Show. Beverly DeJulio, widely known as Ms. Fix-It, will be at the show March 24 through 27, and Gury Koller,

a guest host of PBS's "The Victory Garden," will be on hand March 19 and 20.

DeJulio exhibits her expertise on the Discovery Channel's "Easy-Does-It" television program. She began her fix-it career out of necessity as a single parent with little money for home or auto repairs. It all began with a faulty sump pump and the rest is history, she said.

DeJulio has spent the past 15 years traveling around the country demonstrating that doing it yourself can be easier than most people think. Her lively personality, wit and positive attitude are contagious and will give average homeowners the confidence to tackle projects on their own.

Koller's career took root when his first-grade teacher gave him a black locust tree. That event sparked a lifelong interest in horticulture and landscape design. He is senior horticulturist at Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, a member of the faculty at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design and a partner in a thriving landscape design firm in Boston.

Koller inspires people to make the most of their own gardens without hiring professional designers. He helps people see that their yards can become additional outdoor living space.

Glenn Haegs, host of WXYT's "Ask the Handyman" show, will be on hand to answer home-improvement questions along with Joe Gagnon, WCAR's

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All in one place: Homeowners can find all the products and information they need for any home improvement project when more than 400 exhibitors convene for the 76th annual International Builders Home, Garden and Furniture Show at Cobo Center March 19-27.

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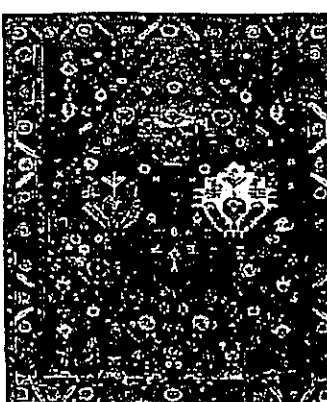
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