

# Garden lover's art ready to bloom

By Gerald Frawley  
staff writer

**E**VERYTHING THAT can ever be done with flowers and gardens has been done.

Don't believe it. Nurseries, exhibitors, florists, designers, horticulturists and educators at the second annual Ann Arbor Flower and Garden Show will dazzle even the most skeptical neophyte horticulturist.

The event, April 11-14 at the Yost Ice Arena, is presented by the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens, said Judith Corkran Katch, show manager.

Show hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

"This year, the show has a totally different theme from last year's 'A Secret Garden,'" Katch said.

"Exhibitors and designers are being asked to depict gardens one might find in other areas of the world after this year's theme, 'A Gardener's Holiday'."

The theme is developed each year in a brainstorming session between her and Mike Hommel, show designer and production coordinator.

Varying themes is one of the things that separates the Ann Arbor show from others. "It is intended to make each show different and stand on its own," Katch said. "People may say, 'Well, I went last year.'"

"Yes, you did go last year, but this will be different from last year," she said.

**THE IDEA**, said Margaret Vergith, promotion coordinator, "is rather than leaving home, you can step into something different in your own back yard."

Seven elaborate gardens designed by nurseries and professional landscapers following the holiday theme — in this case they represent a trip to far away and exotic lands — will highlight the show.

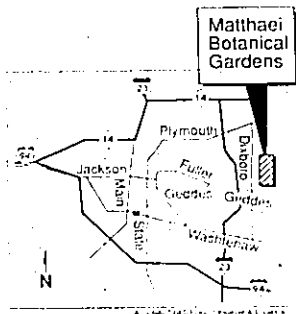
But there's far more to the Ann Arbor Flower and Garden Show than looking at the elaborate gardens of professionals.

Plant societies like the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan, the Garden Club of America and the Women's National Farm and Garden Association will showcase exotic flowers and plants from around the world.

But perhaps the biggest crowd pleasers are the amateur designers, individual and club-affiliated, who will demonstrate what can be done in even a small space with a little talent and inspiration, Vergith said.

Unlike the major exhibits, where designers have a large area to work with, designers in the smaller exhibition areas may be asked to depict a New Orleans or French Country Side backdrop against a very small area.

KAY BRIGGS of Farmington Hills



is building an exhibit called "The Seven Seas," an underwater design with partially submerged water plants and other materials.

Briggs said she got involved with flower design as a hobby after retiring seven years ago. Looking for a way to occupy her time, and always having enjoyed flowers, she joined a local flower club.

"It's a very enjoyable way, a relaxing way to spend our time," she said.

What began as a hobby, however, has become a passion. "The only way to get good at it is to practice," she said.

She went from an enthusiast to a practitioner. Now she is even a judge for the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan.

**FOR A** Bonsai enthusiast like Gordon Hoidalmen of Bloomfield Township, designing a miniature landscape was bound to be a challenge. "I must admit I'm not very experienced. This is my first one."

But that lack of experience doesn't make his efforts any less enjoyable. Hoidalmen said. In fact, he's combining his love of miniature trees with his project, a Japanese tea house surrounded by a landscaped Zen garden.

What's interesting about his current challenge is that a miniature landscape is taking Bonsai a step further. "You have to make everything to scale," he said.

Not only are the plants and shrubbery small, but they must look right next to the tea house, he said.

Hoidalmen said he enjoys attending and participating in flower shows because it's a way of discovering new things and getting new ideas. "And growing plants is fun and easy."

**GEORGE CROMER**, and his wife Julie Garcia of Southfield, are breaking new ground at the flower show. Married in life, they are marrying their hobbies.

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BILL BRISLER, staff photographer

"A French Countryside" is the title of one of the four back stoop design classes for this year's Ann Arbor Flower and Garden Show April 11-14. Flowers in this display include white lilies and trailing violas, sweet pea, dianthus, streptocarpus and geranium.

## Settings are varied: from urban to trails

Major Ann Arbor Flower and Garden Show gardens include:

- **"A Hydro-linear Garden"** by the Alexander Nursery in Mount Clemens — a modern garden in an urban setting, viewed from within a building. Designed as an abstraction of geometry using the elements of plants and water. Elements of water with vine walls replicate Muslim gardens of Spain circa 1300 A.D.
- **"An Oriental Oasis"** by Arbor Knoll Nursery in Ann Arbor — a Far East adventure in the glasons of nature uses large Japanese flowering plants, a wooden bridge arching over a dry stream bed and a tea house nestled in a pine forest.
- **"Welcome"** by John Hollowell & Associates — an entry garden ideal for use in office and business settings, incorporates a low stone wall and copper clad entry arch, which defines and encloses an intimate courtyard with a moving water sculpture with a

backdrop of hemlock and cherry trees and a garden floor covered with vibrant spring blossoms and soft green mosses.

- **"On 'Bear Mountain Trail'"** by Korzon Landscapes — a fictitious mountain trail with rock cliffs, hemlock, ribbon falls splashing into a bankwater, a feeling of pine trees, American wildflowers and shrubs.
- **"Help Wanted: Part-time Gardener"** by K.C. Runciman landscape architects in Milan — This leisure garden is the perfect choice for the low maintenance gardener, emphasizes natural elements as an integral and beautiful (though often unappreciated) part of the environment from saplings to decaying logs.
- **"A Vest Pocket Delight"** by Terrarima Inc. in Ypsilanti — an urban garden with the sights and sounds a water wall are juxtaposed against the tranquil qualities of a collecting pool.