

Down the primrose path at Phila. Flower Show

BY JOYCE BUPP
Staff Correspondent
PHILADELPHIA — If physicians had to prescribe a cure to the March winter-weary woes, few remedies could beat a visit to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's annual extravaganza at the Civic Center, the famed Philadelphia Flower Show.

From the green vines dangling from miles of wire criss-crossing the ceiling to the fresh blades of grass in yards of neatly trimmed sod, the March 9-16 Flower Show was a five-acre bursting explosion of life, color and fragrance.

Attendance matched the masses of plants and crowds of visitors a half-dozen deep elbowed for room before the impeccably groomed landscapes of hills, trees, blooming shrubs and splashing waters.

Established as an educational event, the displays included sections by various horticulture groups, educational institutions, floral and landscape nurseries, and a large trade mart with 130 commercial sales booths.

A special feature each year is the creation of a unique entrance display, which greets visitors as they step off the escalator that drops down from the street level floor to the main exhibit floor. Planners outdid even themselves this year, coming up with not one, but four, major eye-catchers

Allied Florists, an industry organization, staged a giant floral fountain, ten feet high and cascading into three descending tiers overflowing with fresh Spring blooms in every shade of the rainbow. There were islands of brilliantly colored delphiniums and primroses and a pool freshened daily with one hundred glistening white gardenia blooms.

But visitor's flashcubes popped most frequently at a carousel of topiary animals. Designed in ivy that had been trained over mesh wire, the delightful animal shapes included a giraffe, alligator, spouting whale, peacock, coiled snake, and squirrel, with a revolving Winnie-the-Pooh character, complete with "hunny pot," in the center.

Plant hobbyists from Pennsylvania, Delaware and

New Jersey competed in a variety of houseplant and floral arrangement classes in the Hortcourt. Many of the fresh designs were judged and changed daily, in order to allow as many entrants as possible to complete in the eight-day show.

Lines of visitors are the rule at most of the displays, but one of the longest queued up past classed of miniature landscapes. Displayed in eye-level glassed enclosures, the intricately detailed scenes are scaled to a one-twelfth size in 40-inch-wide by 18-inch-deep by 30-inch-high niches. Down to tiny picket fences, vegetable plants and hanging baskets, the scenes include live rooted plant materials, all selected and grown to the scale of the landscape.

Several educational groups constructed exhibits of a teaching nature. Penn State University focused on the concept of Integrated Pest Management, with demonstrations of the use of non-chemical garden pest controls. Insect traps and natural pest predators, like ladybugs, are key ingredients in bug battling with IPM techniques.

Philadelphia's Water Department showed visitors the use of a recycled garden aid. Dubbed "Phylorganic," the soil additive is a by-product of the city's municipal wastewater treatment plants, and can be used on both indoor and outdoor plants.

Horticulture students at the Lincoln High School constructed a visual display which they labeled "Support Your Local Plant," featuring simple methods of staking trees and perennials for better growth.

Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture's horticulture majors filled a walk-through section with a myriad of ways to preserve and use dried plant materials.

Especially popular with the thousands in the crowd were the orchid displays. At the exhibit staged by Waldor Orchids of Lunwood, New Jersey, several dozen types, blooming in a range of colors, were integrated into a re-created Old Mission of San Juan, backed by the giant bells of Capistrano.

Vick's Wildardens of



While the wind howled and the snow flurried outside the Civic Center, thousands of visitors to the Philadelphia Flower Show oohed and aahed

over beautifully landscaped flower and vegetable garden displays, like this brilliant bed of annuals by Burpee Seed Company.

Gladwyne presented the complete concept of energy saving underground housing, complete with a planted roof, set among rhododendrons, ferns and a pond.

And, for gardeners with an eye to the future, other displays included a solar greenhouse, and a raised deck complete with a hot tub.

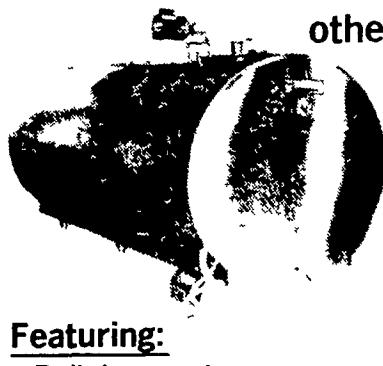


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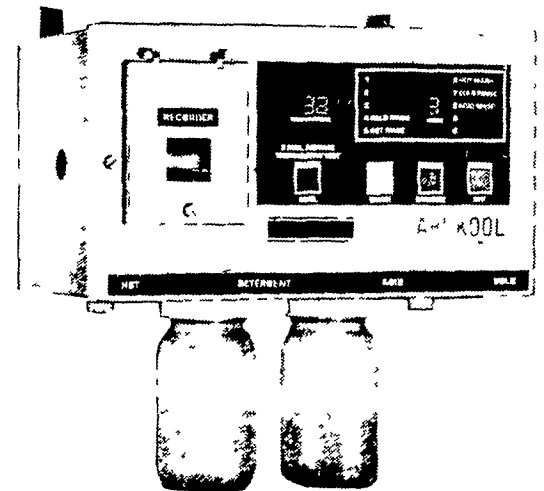


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