



The 2007 Collection Fashion Forward

The GCA's Fashion In Bloom event in September will have attendees living the great life in the mid-Atlantic states.

by Ellen C. Wells

Fashion In Bloom, previously known as the Eastern Performance Trials, will hold its second annual event Sept. 20-22. Sponsored by Garden Centers of America (GCA), a national trade association for independent retail garden centers, the event is a yearly forum for plant companies to showcase the hottest new genetics for 2007.

"We designed this event to do for gar-

Need to Know Info

GCA's Fashion in Bloom begins Sept. 19 with Media Day at all six locations.

Sept. 20-22 will focus on industry and trade and Sept. 23 all locations will host Consumer Day.

Registration is now open online at www.fashioninbloom.com.

For more information on the event, visit the Web site or contact Kim McCloskey at 440-602-9115 or kim@clearwindow.net.

dening and horticulture what Fashion Week has done for the apparel industry," says GCA's Clint Albin, project manager for the event. "It's a one-week focus on new introductions for all categories – annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, foliage – all shown simultaneously."

Albin and the GCA have looked for the best of the newest introductions for retail 2007, and believe they have found a winning collection of plants representing the latest consumer trends. "We do believe that

the products in the collection represent 90 percent of the most profitable genetics that will be sold through independent retail garden center channel in 2007," Albin says.

Fashion In Bloom is an opportunity for retail owners, buyers and growers to gather information about the industry's upcoming live and hard goods, giving them everything they need to know to make informed buying decisions for 2007. "Trends change," says Albin, pointing out that there are some significant changes in trends from last year to this year. For example, he says, attendees will see some unique plant material combinations, as well as gardens with more of a floral emphasis, using non-plant materials as part of the design for landscapes and containers.

A Show for One And All

While growers, buyers, and owners will recognize lots of industry faces, this event is not held solely for grower and retailer personnel. The GCA is communicating regularly with 6,000 people from the horticulture and allied-trade industries. One of their major targets is garden writers.

"We feel the benefit is that on the exact same day the garden center buyer looks at the product, the garden writer will look

at the product," Albin says. "Individual plants that garden writers write about in the spring of '07 will actually be on the shelves of the garden center at the same time."

Albin adds the GCA will be speaking directly to writers at the annual Garden Writers Association symposium held this year in Philadelphia at the end of August. He also points out that last year's Eastern Performance Trials received coverage from a wide range of media outlets, from the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and local Mid Atlantic newspapers to ABC, NBC and Fox affiliates.

The GCA also is marketing Fashion In Bloom to specifiers, architects, landscape contractors, visitors bureaus and the associated field. Through the media outlets, consumers from the areas surrounding the six host locations will be encouraged to attend Consumer Day, held Saturday, Sept. 23.

Gearing Up

As an event showcasing trends in



gardening and horticulture, the Fashion In Bloom event is designed and detailed around a theme, this year being “Living the Great Life, Indoors and Out.” Each of the event’s six locations has designed the overall displays around different takes on this theme (see “Locations, Themes, Participants”).

Just A Few Highlights

To **Homestead Gardens**, Davidsonville, Md., the “great life” is definitely nautical given its proximity to the Chesapeake Bay.

With its theme “Come Sail Away,” Homestead will celebrate all things nautical, with sails draped along the roof line and anchoring elements such as buoys, crab pots and pier pilings. Fans will blow toward the sails, lending movement and texture that will complement the décor of the plants. A large water feature also will be included.

“Not only do we want to have plants, but we also wanted to have the sounds and the motion of water around the nautical theme,” says Tim Hamilton, Homestead’s marketing director.

Homestead’s landscape designer Judy Joyce, who also developed last year’s design, has decided to simplify the concept this year, giving everything a more linear, clean look. “We’ve found the theme works really well with our facility and everyone can tie into that, so each participant can have their own personal flavor,” Hamilton says.

McDonald Garden Center, Virginia Beach, Va., will feature “Al Fresco: The Art of Outdoor Living” for its theme. Dave Caprood, McDonald’s store manager, says they will feature “concepts in life” – relaxing, playing, living, entertaining – all within the garden setting. All of McDonald’s five participants will use that theme for their own designs.

In addition, McDonald Garden Center will put on an interactive merchandising display activity. Attendees will be given product they can merchandise in five different display settings, Caprood says, and they will give prizes for the winning displays. McDonald’s also will offer programs on merchandising for attendees. Caprood says the Saturday event for consumers will offer them a chance to interact with combination containers and merchandising.

“Plant Hunters – Plant Discoveries” is the theme at **White’s Nursery & Greenhouses**, Chesapeake, Va., and the location will play host to one of the most

Locations, Themes, Participants

GCA’s Fashion In Bloom Theme:
Living the Great Life, Indoors and Out

The Conard-Pyle Co., West Grove, Pa.
Outdoor Living – With a Twist

The Conard-Pyle Co.
Fischer USA
Greenleaf Nursery
ItSaul Plants
North Creek Nursery
Novalis Network of Growers

American Horticultural Society, Alexandria, Va.

*America’s Garden Celebration:
Decorating Inside Out*

Centerton Nursery
Cherry Lake Tree Farm
Goldsmith Seeds
Proven Winners
Saunders Brothers

Homestead Gardens, Davidsonville, Md.

Come Sail Away

American Takii
Benary
Hines Horticulture
Homestead Growers
Savvy Succulents/John Greenlee Collections
Selecta First Class
Suntory

Virginia Growers, Montpelier, Va.

From Sea to Shining Sea

Bailey Nursery
Ball FloraPlant
Ball Seed Co.
Dümmen USA
PanAmerican Seed
Prides Corner Farms

McDonald Garden Center, Virginia Beach, Va.

Alfresco Style Living

Beds & Borders
Kraft Gardens
Monrovia Growers
The Scotts Miracle-Gro Co.
Valleybrook Gardens

White’s Nursery & Greenhouses, Inc., Chesapeake, Va.

Plant Hunters - Plant Discoveries

Biancheri Ranunculus
Farmen Seed
Murakami Seed
Plug Connection
White’s Greenhouse & Nursery
Wollemi Pine North America

exciting introductions to hit the worldwide horticulture market. The Wollemi pine, native to Australia and in the Norfolk Island pine family, is one of the oldest and rarest tree species on Earth.

According to Josh Schneider of Wollemi Pine North America, the Wollemi pine was thought to be extinct until found in the Wollemi National Park, outside Sydney, in 1994. Fashion In Bloom will mark its introduction to the U.S. market.

“They thought this tree was extinct 20 million years ago,” Schneider says. “It’s a really exciting specimen, and it’s going to allow people to participate in the saving of a species, as a percentage of its sale goes to preserve and restore its native habitat.”

The pine will be released in the holiday edition of the *National Geographic* catalog under the *National Geographic* brand, and will be available through independent garden centers for the first time in the spring/summer of 2007.

Along with the Wollemi pine, White’s will also host Farmen Seeds, based near Naples, Italy and The Plug Connection of Vista, Calif.

The **American Horticultural Society’s** (AHS) River Farm headquarters in Alexandria, Va., will again be a host location. Considering the history of the location and its function as a public garden or the AHS, its theme is appropriate – “America’s Garden Celebration: Decorating Inside Out.”

“The idea of ‘decorating inside out’ is to look at the idea of blurring the boundaries of indoors and out,” says Tom Underwood, AHS’s director of member programs and interim president. “It’s not only having a beautiful garden but also having a place that is welcoming, and a place where you live, entertain and relax in the garden.”

Underwood says visitors will find some unexpected items in the garden that will help create and reinforce the idea of “inside out.”

The AHS will offer daily presentations on the topic, along with special displays and a photography exhibit that complement the theme. The final day will culminate with AHS’s annual fund-raising gala, also based on the theme “America’s Garden Celebration.”

Homestead’s Hamilton is looking forward to the upcoming September event, as well. “This year is going to be absolutely fantastic because of our experiences last year,” he says. “We think this year will eclipse last year, and last year was a raging success.”

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