

IT'S TIME TO PARTY

GARDEN SHOW | Hot trends are all about having fun and relaxing in a no-fuss environ

What are the highlights and hot gardening trends at the B.C. Home and Garden Show this year?

Well, the idea of the garden as an inviting outdoor party space — a natural extension of a home's comfortable interior — is the theme, with a continuing emphasis on desirable high-end features such as outdoor fireplaces and kitchens, top-of-the-line barbecues and attractive entertainment spaces.

You'll also find a strong accent on easy-care, no-fuss landscapes composed of mainly evergreen, low-maintenance shrubs such as nandina, skimmia, heather, pieris, euonymus and witch hazel.

Here's a look at the most striking garden features at the show, which runs through Sunday at BC Place Stadium in Vancouver.

Fire and rain. How's this for a touch of drama for your patio — a rectangular fire pit, with flames flickering up through glass blocks, crystals between two curtains of water?

It's just one of the stylish components of an outdoor "urban chic" entertainment space by John Van Kammen, of Jovak Landscape & Design in Chilliwack.

Ornamental grasses in pots and sun-yellow cushions on dark wicker patio furniture give the space a youthful, optimistic feel.

Better by candlelight. Garden lighting is moving back to the cosy glow of yesterday with tea lights in oval ceramic holders that can be floated in a pond or grouped in threes and fives on a table for romantic ambience.



BY STEVE WHYSALL
VANCOUVER SUN

Bruce Hunter, of Selects Nursery Supply in Langley, says his black metal lanterns and ceramic candleholders are part of the new desire for softer, more intimate garden illumination.

■ Gotta keep moving. You want great stuff on your terrace or balcony, but if you're renting, you might want to take all your neat stuff with you when you move.

This is how Steve Jones, of Urbanescapes, sees things and why he's designed a "portable" roof garden, complete with stylish bar and cube-shaped lights that can be packed up in an instant and moved when you move.

Floral artist Marlene Kumnick has added her signature to the scene with a tasteful bouquet of white fringed tulips and orchids.

A quote by comedian Robin Williams, etched on glass, says: "Spring is nature's way of saying let's party."

■ West Coast Zen. Two of the most engaging display gardens are located at the main entrance: a delightful walk-through landscape containing large, dim-

pled ceramic jar with water bubbling over the sides, and a garden with individual houses for a dog, rabbit, bees, bats, birds, ladybugs . . . and people.

Roy and Tamaka Fisher, of Wild West Gardens, are responsible for what they call a "West Coast Zen walk" and Anne Talbot Kelly and Ray Lachance came up with the homes-for-everyone idea.

■ Rock with attitude. A hot tub, artistically set in a grotto of sculpted concrete by Arcon Rock and Waterscapes, will capture the attention of women at the show, according to Arcon president Byron Wilson, but he reckons the enormous and luxurious \$4,000 stainless steel gas barbecue is what will most excite guys.

■ Water, water everywhere. Cascading over rocks or bubbling out of basalt columns, water is used in most displays, either to create a soothing background sound or to rush and splash in an eye-catching centrepiece.

In the evening garden "with an Asian overtone" designed by Rob Bouchard, of Coastal Creations, falling water finds a yin-yang synergy with the still, clean, calm lines of a wooden Japanese-style walkway.

And the pondless water course built by Brian Dougherty, of Horizon Landscapes in Langley, captured the mood of a West-Coast mountain stream. The feature is enhanced by a lavish planting of easy-care shrubs and perennials.

■ Eco-excellence. Check out the Aquascape RainXchange system, which allows you to capture rainwater and recycle it in your pond or water-feature, using a "sub-surface rainwater harvest storage system."

This installation is designed to relieve the strain on storm sewers as well as reduce the use of treated tap water, especially during droughts.

■ Hot plants. Not a lot has changed. Hellebores are still huge. Phormium and nandina won't let go of their grip on the landscape. And there's also room for more witch hazel, skimmia and pieris. But I would love to have seen more magnolias and Japanese maples, rhododendrons and azaleas. And whatever happened to heuchera and euphorbia? Next year, let's

Gardeners' Schedule

Here's the lineup of speakers at the Vancouver Sun Garden Show, the Home and Garden Show, this weekend:

TODAY

4 p.m. Steve Whysall — () Visits.

7 p.m. Brian Minter. Take it to the Next Level.

SATURDAY

2 p.m. Steve Whysall — () Visits.

4 p.m. Gary Lewis. Weirder than the Wonderful Plants of the World. Intriguing Options for . . .

7 p.m. Brian Minter. Take it to the Next Level.

SUNDAY

1 p.m. Steve Whysall — () Visits.

3 p.m. Gary Lewis. Weirder than the Wonderful Plants of the World. Intriguing Options for . . .



Gary Lewis of Phoenix

Show details

What: B.C. Home and Garden Show

Where: BC Place Stadium