

How can this year be almost over? And if this year is coming to a close that means there are only seven more weeks until the Northwest Flower and Garden Show. This year's event is February 6 through 10 at the "Newly Expanded Convention Center."

Tickets are available locally at Carter's Garden Center, Valley Nursery, Bay Hay and Feed, Peninsula Gardens and Bainbridge Gardens. If you buy your tickets before February 5 the cost is fifteen dollars. It's eighteen dollars at the door and \$59 for an "all-show" pass (admission as many days as you choose). Groups of fourteen or more can book fourteen dollar tickets in advance by calling 206-789-5333.

New this year is fifty percent more space gained by the Washington State Convention Center expansion. Aisles will be wider and visitors can explore 28 fully-landscaped display gardens, more than 400 commercial exhibitors, and the "Orchid Pavilion" with 20,000 orchids on display and for sale. New additions are: the "Cool Plant Corner" with specialty nursery plants for sale; "Meet the Plants" get a sneak preview of the new plants you'll see in nurseries this year; a theatrical reading event featuring the work of English garden writer Beverley Nichols; "The Art Gallery" featuring floral-themed artwork; "The Gate Show" a "functional" art show of garden gates; and the "Garden Club Competition" back after a four year hiatus.

One of my favorite parts of the show is the free talks and demonstrations. This year will not disappoint; you'll have 105 choices. Each day features activities beginning at 9:30 and continuing through 8 p.m. You'll find presentations and demonstrations by Kitsap County gardeners Ann Lovejoy (New Organics), Dan Hinkley (Growing plants from Turkey, China and Nepal and Best Plants for a Healthy Garden), Little & Lewis (Some Reflections – water features in limited spaces), Gerard Bentryn (Growing Wine Grapes in Western Washington), Charlotte Lombard (Living Wreaths and Creating a Container Garden) and me (A Child's Garden).

Ever wonder about a few of the show's statistics? Did you know that 415,000 pounds of rocks and boulders are placed in the show gardens each year by Marenakos Rock Center? Some of the boulders weigh 3-1/2 tons each. Sixty dump trucks from Sawdust Supply bring in fill dirt and mulch to form the foundation of the Show gardens. This year three of the gardens (Molbak's, Flower Growers of Puget Sound and Monrovia) will force 9,197 flowering and foliage plants for the Show. More than 85,000 visitors are expected to attend. Last year gardeners purchased 10,000 orchids. Amazingly all the gardens you see are created inside the Convention Center in three and a half days.

Dan and Diane (CORRECT SPELLING) Robinson and their family from Elandan Gardens have designed and will create "A Passage to Reflection" an urban sanctuary for a family who rarely sees it in the daylight. It's a place to decompress after a stressful day. The focal point is a Japanese Red Pine, a carefully trained specimen providing a feeling of timelessness and security. Also featured is a collection of Dan's signature Bonsai.

Heronswood and Little & Lewis Water Gardens have teamed up to feature "On the Eaves of the World: In the Footsteps of Wilson." Their garden represents a realistic slice of nature as might have been experienced by E. H. Wilson and other Western botanical explorers traveling the high mountains of the Sichuan and Yunnan provinces in Western China in search of plants in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Step back in time but also experience the present in this show garden featuring plants hardy in USDA Zone 8 or less. As always Hinkley and Little & Lewis will inspire us to create small mirrors of their displays. We will never equal their expertise but they always give us hope for our own gardens.

Designer Jay Knode of Design Northwest, Hansville has teamed up with Derek Randles, Randles Landscape & Design, Tahuya, to create "The Charm of a Woodland Glade: A Small Backyard Garden." Their creation will

take us into a cozy realm with the essence of a forest glade featuring maple, pine, a rock outcrop covered with blooms and a shaded grotto with a brook and pool. Visitors will be tempted to linger in this quiet respite.

More information on the 2002 Northwest Flower and Garden Show can be obtained by calling 206-789-5333 or visit the website at www.gardenshow.com. What are you waiting for? Get those tickets and don't forget to come see me on Saturday at 5:15 in the Hood Room.