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July 26, 2008

10 things to see

The Singapore Garden Festival is held over two floors at the Suntec Convention Centre. Here's what to look out for on Level 6

1. Painting With Nature: An Everchanging Landscape by Dimitri Xenakis & Maro Avrabou from France

Award: Silver in Landscape Gardens

This could well be the most colourful display. The designers say it creates a link between the arts of painting and gardening.

Bright blooms include lavender and hydrangeas.



2. Ryokufu Tei 'The Green Breeze' by Kazuyuki Ishihara from Japan

Awards: Best of Show and Gold in Landscape Gardens

Ishihara says he is recreating his childhood hideaway in this garden, a mix of tropical plants such as a frangipani tree and native Japanese plants including bonsai and moss.

3. Season Of Mist by Diana Williams & Robert Cantley from Sri Lanka

Award: Silver in Fantasy Gardens

Carnivorous plants such as these pitcher plants never fail to wow. These are from Mindanao island in the Philippines, are about 30cm in length and can hold about 4 litres of water. Festival visitors will also have a chance to have a pitcher plant named after them in a lucky draw.

4. Seeking Shangri-La by Peter Cheok from Singapore

Awards: Best of Show and Gold in Fantasy Gardens



Cheok says his underwater garden shows what may happen to the mythical location of Shangri-La if it is drowned by glaciers which have melted from global warming. Plants include sarracenias which resemble coral reefs.

5. Imbizo Yase Afrika by David Davidson from South Africa

Award: Silver in Fantasy Gardens

Get up close to 'giraffes' and flora from South Africa. Among the display's unusual flowers are African natives such as proteas, coneflowers, pincushions and heathers. Davidson also creates a sense of Africa with the use of a beehive-style dome roof, typical in traditional Zulu homes.



6. Memories Of A Water Village by Song Xiaogu from China

Award: Gold in Fantasy Gardens

Travel to a traditional Chinese village without leaving Singapore. Song's garden is reminiscent of a traditional farmer's home in Jiangnan, south of the Yangtze River. Besides flowering plants such as sunflowers and morning glories, there are edible greens such as chilli and tomatoes.

7. Rose Of Glendalough by John Cullen from United States

Award: Gold in Fantasy Gardens

Cullen's garden has a chapel ruin that was inspired by an actual chapel in Glendalough, Ireland, where he proposed to his wife in 1999. Special lighting gives the effect of seeing the garden at different times of the day. The garden gives the feeling of the four seasons passing, yet all its greenery, such as a plumeria tree and oncidium orchids, are tropical.

8. The ModGod Garden by Ng Sek San from Malaysia

Award: Silver in Fantasy Gardens

Be sure to get your picture taken with Marilyn Monroe and Mao Zedong - well, in garden form, at least. Creator Ng pays homage to these two 'gods' of the modern era, representing them on two 6m walls. Mao is depicted using artificial grass while Monroe is made up of plants placed vertically.

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ST PHOTOS: ALPHONSUS CHERN

GARDEN HEAVEN

It's a visual feast at the Singapore Garden Festival, so take along your camera



Tay Suan Chiang

IF THE parks and shopping malls seem empty of people this weekend, it may be because there is another attraction in town – the Singapore Garden Festival.

The festival, being held at the Suntec Convention Centre, began yesterday and will run till next Friday, with 200,000 people expected to attend.

It is an extravaganza of blooms and greenery that appeals not only to plant lovers but photography buffs as well.

Life! spotted some keen snappers yesterday setting up tripods to capture their fave flora.

The gardenfest is organised by the National Parks Board and held once every two years. The first one was in 2006.

On display this time around are 32 show

gardens – at Level 6 – created by award-winning garden and floral designers from 17 countries.

Among them is an underwater garden created by Singapore's Peter Cheok of Far East Flora, which won a Best of Show and gold awards in the Fantasy Gardens category.

Another popular attraction are two 6m walls by Malaysia's Ng Sek San on which artificial grass and plants create images of Mao Zedong and Marilyn Monroe. His creation, called The MadGod Garden, won a silver award, also in the Fantasy Gardens category.

Over 200,000 temperate and tropical plants and about 60,000 stalks of cut flowers from over 20 countries are on display.

Orchid lovers get a double bonus as they can visit the Singapore Orchid Show, which is part of the festival and is held at Level 4. On show are over 8,000 cut orchids and 10,000 orchid plants.

Shopaholics will be smiling as well – there is not only a store selling festival souvenirs such as T-shirts, bags and umbrellas, but there is also the MarketPlace with 120 stalls selling flora such as orchids and pitcher plants and gardening-related products.

Be prepared to spend at least five hours

taking in all the gardens, orchids and stalls. But if you haven't got the time, here are 10 must-see displays.

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➤ The Singapore Garden Festival is on at the Suntec Convention Centre till next Friday from 10am to 10pm. Tickets are at \$5 (weekday) and \$12 (weekend) for adults, and \$3 (weekday) and \$5 (weekend) for children, students and senior citizens. Family tickets for two adults and three children cost \$18 (weekday) and \$36 (weekend). They are on sale at the Suntec Convention Centre. The Straits Times Life! is the Official Print Media Partner of the Singapore Garden Festival.

➤ Urban Jungle has been held over due to a lack of space. It will return next week.