

14 Fragrant flowers

YOUR Home

SECTION D

THURSDAY APRIL 11, 2002



Standard Flower Show chairwoman Karen Woytowich uses red roses, white baby's breath and blue stars to create an Americana-themed arrangement.



First District Director Beatrice Nicholson arranges carnations, sea lavender erigeron and monte casinos for a display to fit the specifications of the "Mayflower Compact" competition, which calls for a Thanksgiving setting for two.

ADVANCE PHOTOS ■ JAN SOMMA



With "Military Might" as its title, this arrangement by Lee Gugliada incorporates black wisteria, dried kane rose and palmetto palm spray-painted black to mimic missiles.



For the miniature competition, arrangements must be under five inches tall. Purple gypsy bloom recalls "purple mountains majesty" and sprigs of grain symbolize "amber waves of grain" in this miniature arrangement by Lee Gugliada.

Behind the blooms

The road to the annual Standard Flower Show is no walk in the greenhouse

By KATHLEEN LUCADAMO
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

To the visitor, the gala flower show is a pretty, carefree display of colorful petals and clever arrangements. But behind the bushy shrubs, beneath the seductive orchids and between the prickly cacti lies the show's real roots: A competition that is the culmination of a year's worth of meetings, planning, and planting.

But garden club members don't mind getting their hands dirty.

"You get hooked," said Karen Woytowich of the Annadale Garden Club, "especially if you don't win."

The borough's six clubs — Annadale, the Castle Manor Garden Club, Richmond Ever-Green Garden Club, Great Kills Garden Club, South Shore Garden Club and the Staten Island Garden Club — comprise the First District Federated Garden Club of New York State. And while many of the clubs sponsor individual shows, as well as scores of beautification projects throughout the year, in April they unite to produce a boroughwide flower extravaganza.

This year's First District Federated Garden Clubs of New York State Patriotic Standard Flower Show will be staged next weekend at Sea View Hospital Rehabilitation Center and Home, and Island garden club members are anxious to put their best blooms forward. But as any one of them can tell you, the road to the annual show is not a walk in the greenhouse.

First, a chairperson must be chosen. Then, before dates are determined, sites scouted and the brochures printed, the pointperson must select a team and choose a theme. This year's First District Federated Garden Clubs' show theme, which was determined soon after Sept. 11, is "America the Beautiful."

Inspired by the newfound patriotism after the terrorist attacks on the U.S., organizers centered the 10 horticulture and design sections around lyrics from "America the Beautiful." The cut specimens/perennials section, for instance, is labeled "Above the Fruited Plains."

Red, white and blue plant breeds no doubt will be seen in abundance, but entrants are free to interpret the theme according to their own vision. Lee Gugliada of the Great Kills Garden Club, for instance, will create a display she calls, "Military Might." It incorporates black wisteria, dried kane rose and palmetto palm spray-painted black to mimic missiles.

Ms. Woytowich is chairing the show this year. She designed the program, which lists competition categories, provides a floor plan and includes show rules. Yes, rules. Pretty flowers or not, this is, after all, a competition. And the competition begins with the program, which is mailed to the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, of which there are 9 other districts.

The districts compete against each other for best standard flower show in the state. They submit a scrapbook with pictures of the show, a description, rules and the program guide. Staten Island's First



Blue delphiniums, red roses and white wax flowers complement an indigo tablecloth in this patriotic arrangement by Karen Woytowich.

District has captured first place in the past and seized second in 1998.

Following the rules is crucial to success. One primary rule: All flowers must be real. Dried blooms are OK, but plastic is a no-no. Silk flowers, stuffed birds and butterflies also are out, but entrants may spray paint vines and leaves.

Horticulture entries must be home-grown and container plants must have been in the exhibitor's possession for at least 90 days. Endangered plant materials, such as American holly, are forbidden.

"The rules constantly evolve as does the conservation list" noted Beverly Dyrack, show co-chairwoman and member of the Great Kills Garden Club.

Arrangements must adhere to size requirements

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Just the blooming facts

What: The First District Federated Garden Clubs Standard Flower Show.

When: April 19 and 20.

Where: Colony Hall, Sea View Hospital Rehabilitation Center and Home, 460 Brielle Avenue.

Hours: Friday, from 1 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Admission: Free



Discussing preparations for next week's Standard Flower Show are, from left, Beatrice Nicholson, Karen Woytowich, Beverly Dyrack and Lee Gugliada.