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Merlin Olsen Celebrity Host

1989 LOS ANGELES GARDEN SHOW

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Merlin Olsen, television's best-known petal pusher, has lent his support to the ninth annual Los Angeles Garden Show. As celebrity host for the show, Mr. Olsen made a public service announcement distributed to major television stations and will speak at the California Arboretum Foundation's benefit Preview Party on Oct. 19.

The Los Angeles Garden Show, Oct. 20-29 at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum, has a new look in 1989. UCLA Landscape Architecture Student Association created the winning design to illustrate the Garden Show theme, "At Home in the Garden."

Instead of lining the grand walkway with flags or trees as in past shows, the designers have visitors enter through a 100-foot long house, one with the mere suggestion of a roof and floating windows. Walls are made of hedges and flowers to emphasize the close link between indoors and the garden in Southern California living.

The show originated at the Arboretum in 1981 as the inspiration of Arboretum director Francis Ching. The following year Cliff Comstock of Monrovia Nursery was named chairman, bringing with him the support of the Southern California nursery industry. With the industry's enthusiastic participation the show continues its steady growth. Overseeing the complicated logistics of staging the three-acre show is John Provine, Arboretum grounds superintendent. All three have seen the show grow over the years.

Mr. Provine said that this year Garden Show visitors will find about 25 model gardens, ones like those that in the past have made this the largest outdoor "idea" show on the West Coast.

Several of the designers who will create gardens for the show have released previews of their plans.

The garden built by Sam's Gazebo features a cozy space with picket fences enclosing a



Merlin Olsen, celebrity host for the 1989 Los Angeles Garden Show, uses the Tropical Greenhouse as a background for a televised public service announcement promoting the show.

waterwheel and a gazebo. At the other extreme, Monrovia Nursery's interpretation offers a view as wide as all outdoors with towering cedars and a glade bordered by rock plants to make visitors feel "At Home in an Alpine Garden."

Tropics Inc. plans a walk-through jungle; exotic plants will tower over both sides of the entrance to Ayres Hall of Environmental Education.

The 10,000 square-foot exhibit hall will again be filled with bold flower arrangements and tropical gardens overflowing with orchids, miniature trees and bizarre plants. Fifty Trade Mart vendors will offer gardening books, gadgets and plants from the exotic to the essential.

Novice or old gardening hands will learn from talks by experts every afternoon. Plant topics range from citrus trees to lawns and old fashioned roses. Or focus on improving home surroundings by finding out how to fight indoor pollution with houseplants and natural pesticides.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. As a bonus, visitors can spend all day enjoying the entire 127-acre Arboretum grounds when they purchase Garden Show tickets.

Tickets cost \$6 for adults with 50 percent discount to seniors, those 13-17 and students with ID. Under 4 years are free. For more information call (818) 446-8251. The Arboretum is at 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, three blocks south of the 210 Freeway.

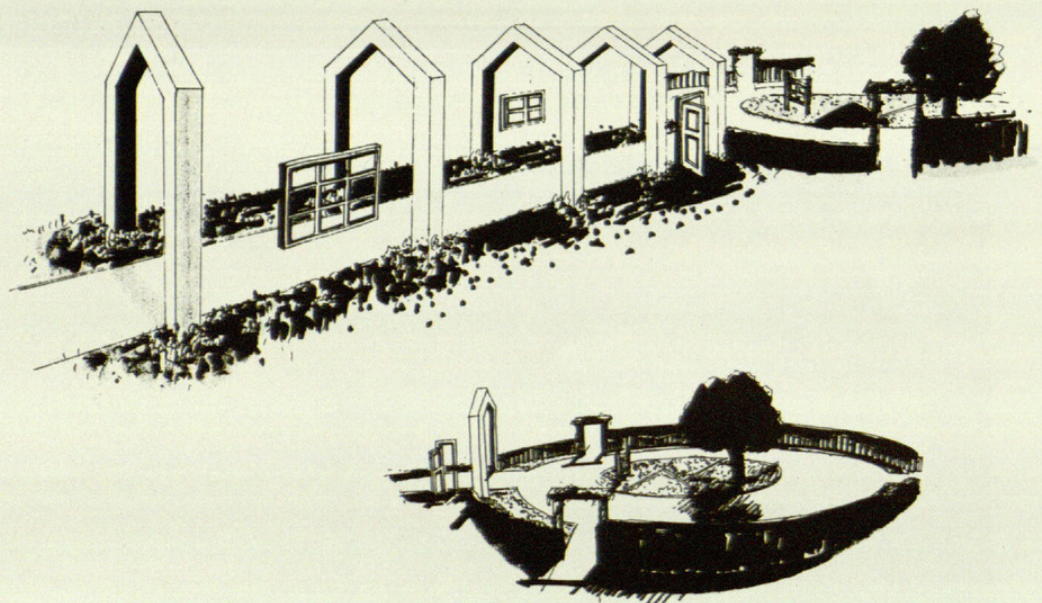
Gardening interest booms

Last year, attendance at the Los Angeles Garden Show increased 10 percent over 1987. This is great news for everyone who worked on the show, but the numbers are especially significant to exhibitors.

This means thousands of potential customers were introduced to exhibitors' products or services. For them the annual show at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum has become an unsurpassed showcase to supply the growing boom in gardening.

Several national magazines such as Time recently examined the gardening boom in terms of lifestyle and emotional rewards, but the Los Angeles Times explored the financial impact of gardeners in its business section. According to an August 1988 article, California is the base for all the nation's major growers (which handled \$1.36 billion last year) and major seed companies.

At the retail level, gardeners spent \$8.57 million in 1987, an increase of \$2.32 million over 1986. This is where the Los Angeles Garden Show has the most tangible impact. By exposing neophyte gardeners to fine landscape designs and materials, the show develops the market along more sophisticated lines. This in turn adds to the appreciation of exotic plants that are appropriate for testing at the public gardens.



Entry to the Los Angeles Garden Show leads through a minimalist house designed by UCLA Landscape Architecture Student Association.



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