



MEDIA RELEASE

Capital District **GARDEN & FLOWER SHOW**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAPITAL DISTRICT GARDEN & FLOWER SHOW MARCH 27-29 AT HUDSON VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE “THE WILDWOOD CONNECTION”

The Capital District Garden & Flower Show is a spring time tradition that started 28 years ago by Wildwood Programs. Back in 1987 a group of dedicated volunteers and staff realized that Wildwood needed to create an event the community could participate in and benefit from by serving as a fundraiser to help support the many innovative programs for neurologically impaired and learning disabled individuals and their families. One passionate volunteer said, “Wildwood is a place to grow as is a garden show, it’s a perfect match.” After much research and taking the cue from the Boston, Philadelphia and New York flower shows, which are considered among the finest shows in the country, the first Capital District Garden Show was held at the New Scotland Avenue Armory in 1988. During the modest beginning, there were just five landscape exhibits, a handful of vendors and several generous sponsors. Though small at first with just 4,500 visitors, it was the start of something very important for Wildwood and this region.

The Garden Show soon took root and outgrew the capacity of the Armory. In 1991 the show moved to the Knickerbocker Arena, known today as the Times Union Center. At the same time the name of the show changed to the “Capital District Garden & Flower Show” to reflect the visitors’ budding interest in flowers. With additional space at the “Knick” the show was able to add a floral design competition and accommodate over 20 spectacular full scale garden exhibits and increase the number of garden themed retail vendors.

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The show offered a unique experience that dazzled the senses and drew crowds of over 20,000 from across the Northeast. Within five years the Capital District Garden & Flower Show had surpassed the original goals established by the planning committee. It was now one of the area's largest drawing events and became a significant fundraiser for Wildwood.

In 1998 the show saw another opportunity for expansion with a new venue. The 70,000 square foot McDonough Sports Complex at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy had more exhibit space and breakout rooms. A new layout allowed the show to feature garden exhibits, the floral design competition, more vendors and the lecture series. By grouping them together in one location it created a spectacular presentation that allowed visitors to easily flow through the entire show.

In 2012 the Capital District Garden & Flower Show celebrated 25 years and is now more vibrant than ever thanks to the following supporters and sponsors who continue to nurture it and allow it to flourish. Many have been with the show since the beginning and are responsible for its continued growth and success.

Cornell Cooperative Extension's vision and knowledge helped put together a speaker and demonstration series that enjoys a reputation among Garden Shows for excellence. Cornell Cooperative Extension is instrumental in securing over 40 hours of lectures which introduce visitors to trends, techniques and the vast possibilities of local gardening.

The Northeastern New York Nurserymen's Association has provided vision and industry knowledge continuously over the years. Their strong commitment to the field of horticulture and the green industry helped to establish high standards for the landscape exhibits as it pertains to design, construction, creativity and quality craftsmanship.

WM DesignScapes (23 year exhibitor), R&K Nursery (22 year exhibitor), Decker's Landscape & Aquatics (16 year exhibitor) and the many other committed landscape exhibitors use over 6,000 man-hours each year to create award-winning displays that feature a wide assortment of stylistic features and natural beauty. William Mitchell of WM DesignScapes says "I started in 1993 primarily as a way to support a great charity. Over the years, it has become that and more. Through the support of charity, the community of exhibitors have developed bonds, become friends and all work together to bring a standard of excellence to the show for the visitors to enjoy." To expand on Mitchell's sentiment, Jodi and Alan Decker wrote "Our favorite part of the show is seeing people's reaction and excitement as they enjoy the landscape displays. The timing is perfect as everyone is anticipating spring's color, fragrance and soothing sound."

The Floral Design Competition Committee, chaired by Michelle Peters, Ambiance Florals, is an invaluable resource. The committee puts in countless hours coming up with creative categories/classes and coaching the participants who are professional designers, amateur arrangers, garden club members and students. The committee's efforts, enthusiasm and high standards create a breath taking entrance to the show.

Since the inception, Price Chopper Supermarkets and the Times Union have sponsored the Capital District Garden & Flower Show and have graciously provided marketing and outreach support to help spread the word and keep visitors coming back.

Over the years there have been changes to match industry trends and consumer interest, however the one constant is the strong foundation and goals established by the event creators in 1987. The Capital District Garden & Flower Show gives the Wildwood staff and volunteers the chance to talk face-to-face with the general public about the programs they offer and gives the visitors of the show a chance to meet some of the people Wildwood proudly serves. A portion of each ticket sold helps Wildwood maintain their commitment to excellence in the support and services they provide to over 1,500 Capital Region individuals and families living with the challenges of severe learning disabilities, autism and other developmental disorders. You can visit Wildwood Programs at their booth at the Capital District Garden & Flower Show. There you will find plants raised on their farm and wood working projects they have created. You will see the pride that went into the effort!

After all these years, the Capital District Garden & Flower Show is the most important fundraiser for Wildwood Programs, although it is no longer produced by the organization. The event is a production of SpringThyme Marketing, a local firm committed to the original vision of its creators and contributes a portion of ticket sales to support Wildwood Programs.

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