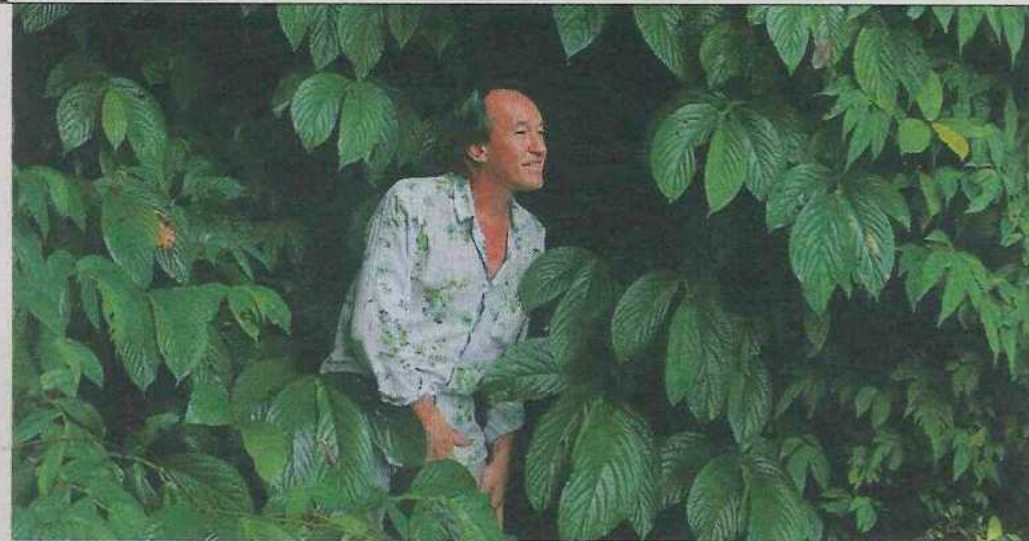


 GARDENING

 Cheryl Maddocks

Bloom time

An iconic Sydney park hosts a show to inspire novices and experts alike.



Upwardly mobile: French vertical gardens expert Patrick Blanc will lecture at the Sydney show.

Move over Melbourne, Sydney is about to strut its horticultural stuff. Every year thousands of Sydneysiders make a pilgrimage to the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, considered by many as one of the southern hemisphere's best.

Now Sydney has its own event, with the Australian Garden Show Sydney (AGSS) making its debut in Centennial Park on September 5.

Organisers decided the park's sweeping landscape was an ideal backdrop for the show's garden displays. Fittingly, the event coincides with the park's 125th anniversary.

There should be a keen audience for a stylish, creative garden show in such an iconic setting. The enthusiasm of NSW gardeners is already reflected in the exceptional standard of the Open Garden Scheme, which showcases properties around the state.

The AGSS heralds the start of a statewide series of spring floral and garden shows, including Cowra's Sakura Matsuri Cherry Blossom Festival, Tulip Time in the

Southern Highlands, and the Leura Gardens Festival in the Blue Mountains.

AGSS director Anthony Bastic, who is also director of Sydney's Vivid festival, says there is no competition with Melbourne's garden show. "Sydney and Melbourne are big cities, so there's room for two shows," he says. "I see this show as being practical and inspirational. Like Vivid, one can look and touch lightly."

Bastic says the show has been planned for two years, and organisers expect more than 20,000 to attend. It will be an interactive event, with a lively line-up of talks and workshops by landscape designers, gardening experts and food personalities.

Indira Naidoo, author of *The Edible Balcony Garden*, is curator of the 1000-square-metre sustainable kitchen garden, which will demonstrate how you can grow, eat and compost your own crops, and even incorporate aquaponics into your backyard. It features an edible native garden and pedal-powered sprinklers.

Phil Dudman and Julie Ray will present

Garden2Kitchen cooking demonstrations, Graham Ross will host a garden clinic, and workshops include floral arrangement and photography. French vertical gardens expert and botanist Patrick Blanc will give two lectures at the show. Blanc designed the world's tallest vertical garden, a 150-metre-high living tapestry at Sydney's Central Park.

Bastic aims to inspire experienced and novice gardeners alike with 16 display gardens planted around a variety of themes. He wants visitors to see a landscape display and think "I can do that", whether they have a balcony or a large backyard.

The AGSS will feature a floral pavilion, at least 70 retail displays, a potting tent for children and a plant creche for storing purchases. In the evenings, bars and restaurants will open, and the Centennial Park landscape will be illuminated by spectacular light projections.

The AGSS runs from September 5-8, see australiangardenshowsydney.com.au.

It's time to ...

- Feed strawberries and mulch with lucerne.
- Divide chives.
- Prune hibiscus, feed with a complete fertiliser and mulch with lucerne.
- Trim grevilleas when they finish flowering.
- Clean out garden ponds.
- Remove old winter crops from the vegetable garden and dig in lots of compost or well-rotted manure to prepare for spring planting.
- Spend sunny days this month revamping the outdoor furniture. It's amazing what a coat of paint can do.