

## fresh

THE LATE SHOW GARDENS 🕏 CUTTING EDGE: BRUNO DUARTE 🕏 WHEN IN VANCOUVER 🕏 JORGE SANCHEZ



tomorrow's garden A new garden show in Sonoma, California, is cutting through the green hum

by harmonizing issues like drought and global warming with highconcept sustainability and inspirational garden experiences. The Late Show Gardens has distilled the point of view among the top West Coast designers: No one's debating sustainability anymore. It is now the baseline for beautiful, thought-provoking design.

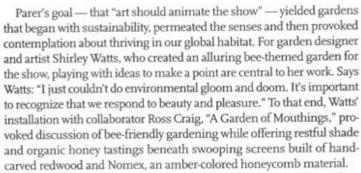
Taking the clear skies of a 2009 late-autumn day as its roof, the première run drew designers, artists, plant gurus, environmental advocates and a public hungering for garden sustenance to Cornerstone Sonoma, the wine-country gateway and garden showplace.

Commissioning from designers who are taking climate change, terroir, drought and resource reuse as their medium, the Late Show showcased what lead organizer Robin Parer calls "gardens of the mind": gorgeous works of art that explore and comment on sustainability. Throughout the three-day event, participants gathered for discussions with notables such as environmental journalist Mark Hertsgaard and landscape artist Topher Delaney.

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As soundscape, Watts played an audio loop that linked her reading of "The Beekeeper's Daughter" by Sylvia Plath (source of the garden's name) to music from "Flight of the Bumblebee" and a young girl's recitation of the impacts of the pesticide malathion. Concrete hexagons, glazed with honey-gold resin, provided a cool seat, while bees, butterflies and dragonflies zoomed in the air over a profusion of golden Echinacea,

Coreopsis and squash. Resting visitors

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read about colony-collapse disorder while inhaling scents of earthy grape-pomace mulch, honey and flowers. A tension between pleasure and predicament took the piece far beyond a garden mock-up.

Like poems in strict verse, many of the show's installations produced beauty from constraints. Collaborators Suzanne Biaggi, a sculptor and designer, and Patrick Picard, an ecological/permaculture landscape designer, welcomed visitors as guests to their "Future Feast in the Garden of Flow/Accumulation," with a concept inspired by architect Sim Van der Ryn's ideas about nature, its cycles and interruptions. Says Biaggi, "I wanted people to see they could use the principles of green design in a very contemporary design." In a classically symmetrical space, Biaggi





and Picard used green-roof technology to create a banquet table of 16 settings, positioning it at the center of nested rectangular beds edged in weathered steel and shadowed by charred, treelike branches. Organic greens surrounded place settings, and a central runnel spilled water from the table to a water garden, where it was to be recirculated for irrigation. Prompting thoughts about growth and stagnation, the experience was an alfresco party served from (and in) a sculpted permaculture garden.

"I need food for the soul, or the mind, when I go to garden shows," says Robin Parer. The Late Show's plein-air ensemble of provocative, intoxicating garden installations generated a days-long conversation about creating and growing beautifully within our means, and drew tremendously positive responses according to Parer. Its intensely local approach serves as a universal model for design confabs everywhere — as well as for all design in our environment. thelateshowgardens.org — JASON DEWEES