

Topiaries and Outdoor Kitchens Bloom at Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival Through May 18

Mike & Sulley's Monstrous Garden, Flower Power Newbies and More

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Kermit the Frog will find it *is* easy being green when his artfully-crafted character topiary debuts during the 21st Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presented by HGTV March 5 to May 18, 2014 at Walt Disney World Resort. With flamboyance to spare, a floral Miss Piggy will join Kermit and his blooming banjo in the World Showcase topiary display.

Urban Farm EATS will be the new Outdoor Kitchen on the promenade with a sustainable garden featuring tilapia, eggplant and other farm-raised treats. Guests can try new menu items including The Land pavilion-Grown Eggplant "Scallop" with Romesco Sauce, Ghost Pepper Dusted Tilapia with Winter Melon Salad and Mango Chutney, plus red and white vegan wines and gluten-free beer.

The festival's nearly 100 whimsical topiaries and its 11 tantalizing Outdoor Kitchens with sweet and savory indulgent bites are reason enough to visit the 75-day flower and garden extravaganza. Yet the park will be packed with so much more as it transforms to a rainbow-hued wonderland of sweeping gardens and exhibits. Stars of HGTV, including Alison Victoria of "Kitchen Crashers" and Matt Blashaw of "Yard Crashers," will appear each weekend at the Festival Center, Audubon will debut its new Hummingbird Garden and Mike & Sulley's Monstrous Garden opens as a fun-filled play land.

More Festival News . . .

- **Goofy, Donald Duck and Daisy Duck topiaries** will appear in a new Epcot **front entrance garden** vignette celebrating spring with a butterfly hunt adventure. The topiaries will have a new computer-generated look while telling an entertaining story. Goofy's butterfly net will prove useless as topiary butterflies light on the back of his floral garb. A topiary bee buzzes on an exasperated Donald's head. The garden will feature a real waterfall and pond with water lilies.
- Now in their second festival year, the festival's 11 food and beverage garden marketplaces have been dubbed **Outdoor Kitchens**, where chefs will be cooking a variety of new and popular returning menu items, including vegetarian and gluten-free dishes, in 2014. At **The Smokehouse: Barbecue and Brews** Outdoor Kitchen, Piggylicious Bacon Cupcakes and Smoked Turkey Ribs are on tap with a lineup of great brews. Last year's top menu picks like the Watermelon Salad with local baby arugula, feta cheese, pickled red onions and balsamic reduction will be back for an encore at the **Florida Fresh** Outdoor Kitchen.
- A new **Mike & Sulley's Monstrous Garden** welcomes families with a whimsical play land of activities. Dozens of additional character topiaries, including **Mickey Mouse** and **Peter Pan** will surprise guests beyond the park's iconic Spaceship Earth.
- The **Flower Power Concert Series** welcomes two new acts in 2014: **Gary Lewis and the Playboys** ("This Diamond Ring") March 14-16, and **The Alan Parsons Live Project** ("Eye in the Sky") May 16-18. During opening weekend, the series kicks off at America Gardens Theatre with fan-favorite band The Guess Who ("American Woman") March 7-9. Other pop acts set to perform include Chubby Checker & the Wildcats, The Village People and Paul Revere & The Raiders. (Entertainment is subject to change).
- **Hummingbirds at Home**, a new exhibit presented by the National Audubon Society, will feature walk-through **hummingbird gardens** and tips on how to attract the magical creatures that migrate to Florida from Central America each year.
- For the second year, **illuminated gardens** will cast a festive glow across the park when the sun sets each

evening.

- **Mater** of the Disney-Pixar “Cars” film hit is back by demand with the new **Mater’s Parts, Plants and Play Garden**. **Tinker Bell’s Butterfly House** will be aflutter with hundreds of the winged beauties and a fairy topiary of Tinker Bell.
- At the **Festival Center** in the park’s Future World, twice-daily interactive gardening workshops will set the stage for outdoor do-it-yourself inspiration, and gardening guest speakers will appear daily. Fridays through Sundays, **HGTV design celebrities** will host home, garden and design seminars.

As they sample from marketplace menus, guests can wander among multiple themed gardens and children’s play areas. Dozens of Disney-crafted “flower towers,” herb gardens and beds of multi-colored blooms will add to the floral splendor of the park’s landscape. Disney’s garden gurus estimate 70,000 bedding plants will surround the Future World east and west lakes alone; on the water, 220 mini-gardens will be set afloat. Several special weekend happenings, including the popular Art in the Garden Weekend, will be scheduled.

While Disney guests celebrate spring, they also can explore the reimagined, design-centric Test Track Presented by Chevrolet, the hang-gliding sensation of Soarin’ and other high-tech Future World marvels. In World Showcase, the spotlight will shine on topiaries of Disney princesses, storybook characters and even pandas and trolls, guests can discover the attractions, shops and restaurants that represent cultures and cuisine of 11 countries. **Spice Road Table**, which debuted in January at the Morocco showcase, will be open for lagoon-side noshing on tasty tapas.

For more information about the 21st Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival, call 407/W-DISNEY (934-7639) or visit www.epcotinspring.com. The festival, including all gardening programs and exhibits, is included in regular Epcot admission.

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