

## Trends in Sustainable Design: *The Late Show Gardens*



Gardeners relate to our planet more intimately than most, with their hands in the dirt and their eyes on the weather. So who better to speak to environmental concerns like climate change? [The Late Show Gardens](#), which took place this weekend at Cornerstone Sonoma, invited landscape designers to create gardens around the theme of sustainability...

The gardens featured at [The Late Show](#) were not just beautiful spaces, but also potent reminders of how we treat our land and the imminent consequences of our behavior. Some gardens posed thoughtful solutions, offering landscapes of hope and change, while others seemed like bleak prophecies of what's to come.

For some thought-provoking design, and possibly some inspiration for your own outdoor space, take a little tour of some of our favorite gardens from the show:

#### FIRST ROW

- **1 and 2** *Over Growth*, by Beth Mullins of [Grows Green](#), offers a post-industrial aesthetic, juxtaposing the insistent commercial imagery of our culture with natural forms and beautiful furnishings made from discarded industrial waste.
- **3** *The Grow Melt Project*, by [Peter Good](#), [Liz Einwiller](#), [Adam Greenspan](#), [Sara Kuehl](#), and [David Fong](#), actively demonstrates the effects of climate change. The designers built an ice wall that steadily melted over the first day of the show, flooding a bed of sculpturally dramatic cacti.
- **4 and 5** *A Garden of Mouthings* by [Shirley Watts](#) celebrates the honeybee, with a lovely, soaring honeycomb structure, plantings designed to attract bees, and concrete stools varnished with a honey-colored resin.

#### SECOND ROW

- **6** *Black Soul*, by [Monica Viarengo](#), turns our stereotypical associations with the color black on their heads. While black in a landscape generally connotes burn damage and plant death, here the dark colors are used to create a dramatic living palette.
- **7** *The Oak and the Olive*, by [Nick Thayer](#) of [Late Afternoon Garden Design](#), explores the connection between our California climate and that of the Mediterranean. A fountain made from recycled wine-making materials seems perfect in the Sonoma setting.
- **8** *The Hermit's Garden*, by [Kate and Ben Frey](#), depicts a bleak future for our natural landscape, where trash grows on trees. Starkly gorgeous.
- **9** *Meditative Remediation*, by [Emmanuel Donval](#) and [Lisa Lee Benjamin](#), demonstrates how gardens can be used to *conserve* water rather than waste it. The cattails and other native grasses, planted in grape bins, are a gray water system at work, a natural filtration system to convert wastewater for re-use.
- **10** We liked this willow archway, so delicate and lovely even though it's growing out of trash cans.

#### THIRD ROW

- **11 and 12 ... IN THE AIR**, by [Conway Cheng Chang](#), consists largely of tillandsias, or air plants, lashed to bamboo stakes and driftwood sculptures. With these plants whose roots grow in the air, the garden emphasizes the importance of preserving our air quality. Playful touches, like a trampoline, encourage a multi-sensory experience within the "air" theme.
- **13** *Below Above*, by [Stephen Glassman](#), built this structure within the surrounding meadow precisely to cause visitors to form a footpath by entering the meadow to observe it.
- **14** *Future Feast in the Garden of Flow/Accumulation*, by [Suzanne Biaggi](#) and [Patrick Picard](#), includes a table with a living surface and a recycling water feature that feeds the plantings.
- **15** *After the Fall*, by [Jack Chandler](#), demonstrates the likely and disastrous consequences of polluting behaviors, with a lush green garden interrupted by pathways of garbage.

To learn more about [The Late Show Gardens](#), and to see photos of other gardens not pictured here, click over to [The Late Show website](#).

(Images: Susie Nadler)