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THE BLOG OF SPENDID HOMES & GARDENS

Lights Up at the Boston Flower Show

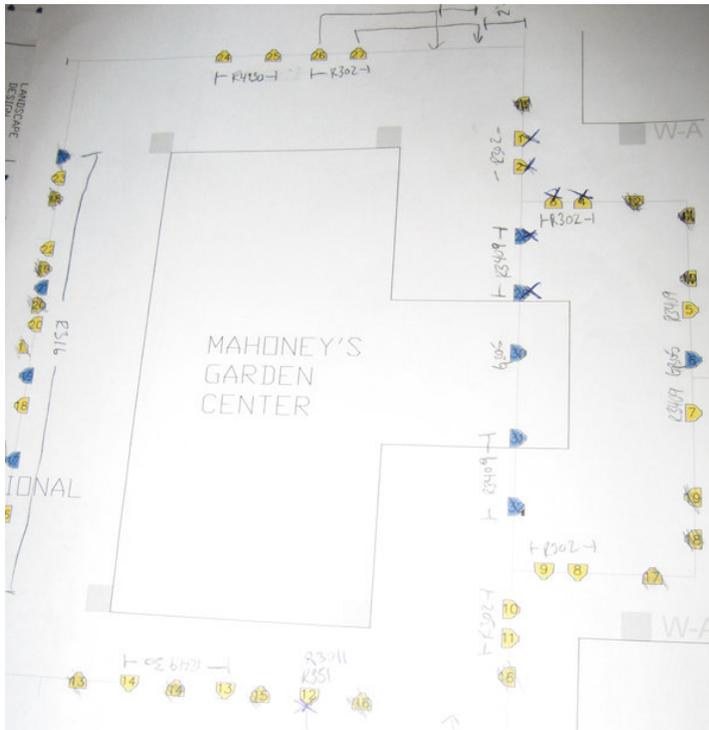
March 13, 2012 By Alyssa Lusky



Nancy Goldstein of Light Positive focuses on the subtle effect the lighting has on the plants and scenery.

The piney scent of bark mulch wafting through the air around the Seaport World Trade Center can only mean one thing — the Boston Flower & Garden Show is back in town. *Design New England* went behind the scenes

Monday night with illumination expert Nancy Goldstein of Light Positive to literally shed some light on the exhibit hall before the show's gala preview party Tuesday evening.



The lighting plan for the Mahoney's Garden Center exhibit is sketched out by Goldstein in advance of the arrival of the lighting crews and their equipment.

Coffee cup in hand, Goldstein, who's been lighting the show for 19 years, explains that she and her team started working Sunday and "We will finish tonight. We won't leave until we're done." That's a tall order but she has the experience, knowledge, team and equipment to complete the job.



Anne Dresbach assists Goldstein with analyzing floor plans, distributing filters, and summoning the crews and their scissor lifts with a walkie talkie.

With the help of lighting manager Mike Gottke, owner of Gottke Enterprise Inc. in Bellingham, Goldstein will take eye-pleasing garden displays to extraordinary new heights. Gottke pulls the crews together and is one of the most important people in Goldstein's book. "He does everything to make my vision happen," she says.



Dresbach and Mike Gottke watching the set up at the Mahoney exhibit.

Her vision combines hardcore technical expertise with an eye for nuance. The slightest difference between the colored filters she uses and the direction of the spotlights she installs makes a world of difference. Mahoney’s Garden Centers exhibit, for example, has three standout colors – deep purple, green, and orange. Finding the right colored filter to make each color “pop,” is her mission. “You have to add in the right tints,” she says, explaining that while one filter will enhance the lush purple petunias, it will make the greens in the shrubs and ground covers go flat.

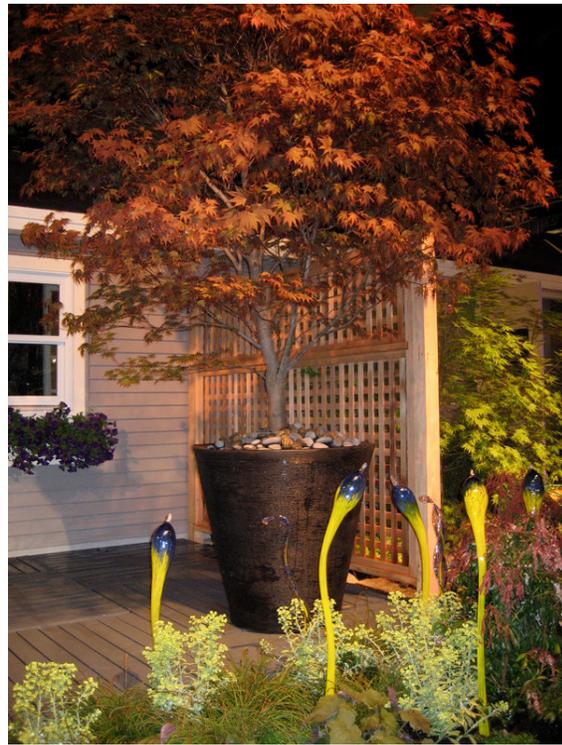


Deep purples, lush greens, and vibrant oranges pose a challenging lighting puzzle for Goldstein.

While Goldstein works her magic at the front of the hall, her assistant, John Cuff, a Boston freelance lighting designer, directs a second team at the back. Goldstein’s plans in hand, he directs his crew around the Massachusetts Horticulture Society exhibit calling out orders to “pan,” “flag,” and “lock” lights into place so that “every arrangement has a different mood or feeling.”



John Cuff direct crews around the Massachusetts Horticulture Society's exhibit.



The backside of Mahoney's exhibit after the lighting has been set.

Carolyn Weston, who manages the show for the Paragon Group, says exhibitors were asked to incorporate an “element of ‘WOW’ factor” in to their displays. Goldstein and her team make sure visitors see it in the best possible light.



A beautifully lit tree and bed of daffodils in the Heimlich's Nurseries exhibit.

The Boston Flower & Garden Show runs from Wednesday, March 14 through Sunday, March 18. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$17 for seniors, and \$10 for children 6 to 17. Information and tickets are at bostonflowershow.com. For more about Goldstein's work, visit lightpositive.com