

Homes, herbs & more

Spring into action for upcoming home and garden events

By MEGAN MIERS
World Scene Writer

If the yellow splashes of daffodils and recent mild weather haven't got your green thumb itching to get back in gear, then the next few weeks will surely hold the magic ingredient. Herb fairs, plant sales, garden tours — there's something for everyone. Here's a sampling of the garden festivities sprouting up in the Tulsa area.

Rich history

Come visit one of the city's historic and most elegant neighborhoods April 4 when the Maple Ridge Home and Garden Tour kicks off. The tour will be from 1 to 5 p.m.

It covers five homes and gardens. Locations featured include a 1920 brick cottage with a rooftop garden, 302 E. 29th St.; perennial gardens and an Americana-style yard with a Statue of Liberty replica, 1624 S. Detroit Ave.; a 1925 Spanish-style home with landscaped pool and yard area, 2502 Woodward Blvd.; a craftsman-style home with in-law quarters; and a 1930 residence with a solarium and art displays throughout the home and garden, 1234 E. 24th Place.

Advance tickets are \$8 each and are available at Floral Design Studios, 1210 E. 41st St. Tickets also may be purchased for \$10 each or two for \$18 at any of the tour locations on the day of the tour. Trolley service will be available from the parking lot of All Souls Unitarian Church, 2952 S. Peoria Ave.

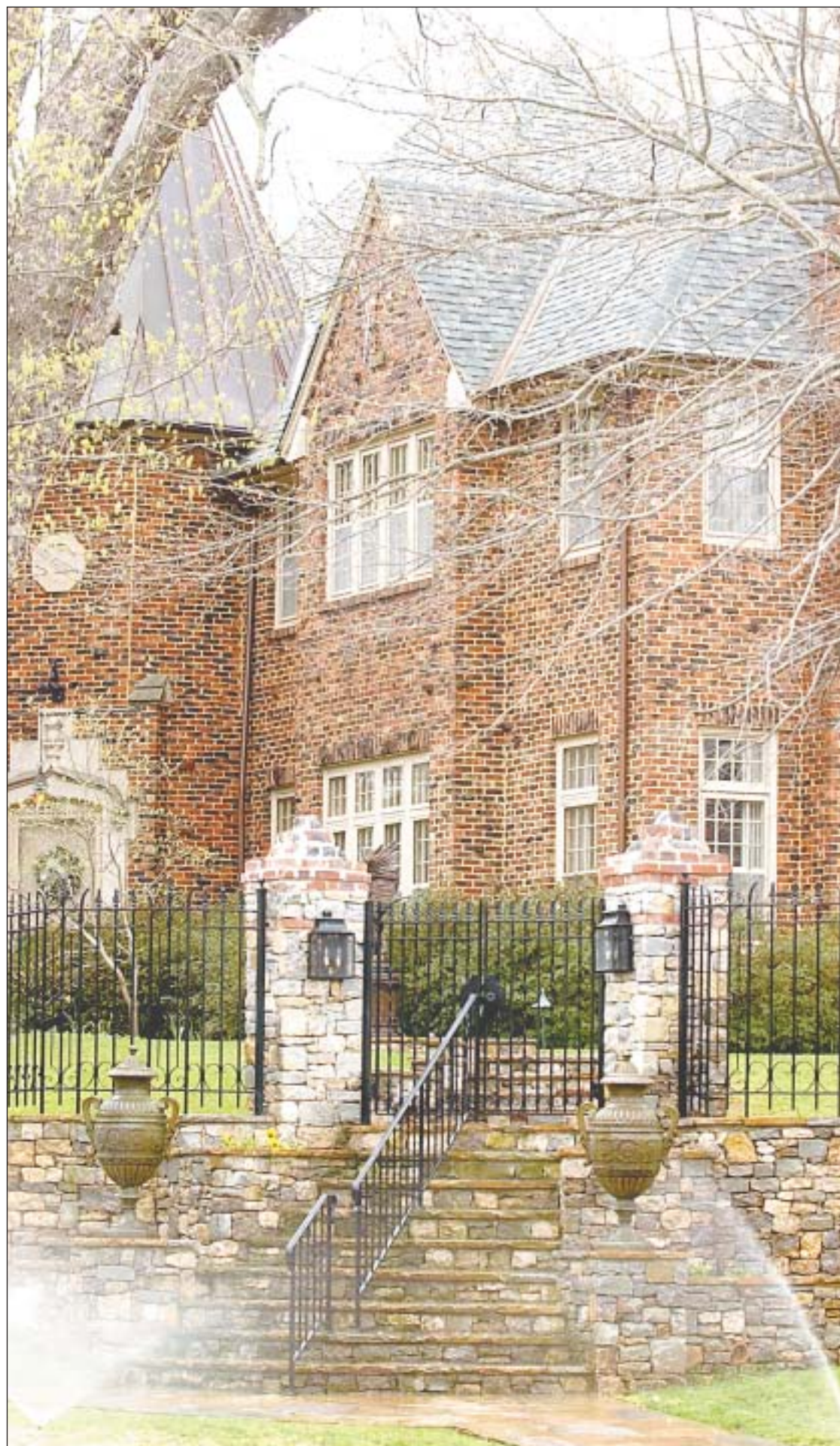
Herbal happenings

They're back. The T-Town-area herbal trifecta makes an encore appearance in April.

First comes the Herb Day in Brookside on April 10. The daylong event starts at 9 a.m. in the parking lot near Wild Oats, 41st Street and Peoria Avenue, and features tons of herbal goodies and plants for sale.

On April 17, An Herbal Affair kicks off in downtown Sand Springs. The event will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will include live entertainment, crafts, herbs, food, a kids' area and lectures. Parking will be available at Charles Page High School with trolley service provided. Admission to the event is free. For more informa-

SEE EVENTS D-10



Photos by JOHN CLANTON/Tulsa World

(Above) This 1930 brick home, 1234 E. 24th Place, is one of five residences featured on the annual Maple Ridge Home and Garden Tour, which benefits the Maple Ridge Garden Club's area beautification efforts. The home includes a bright, airy solarium (left).



Pier 1 Imports

Thom Filicia of "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" poses on the set of one of the Pier 1 Imports advertising scenes. National television ads featuring Filicia began airing this month.

'Queer Eye' designer Thom Filicia takes realistic, budget-minded approach

By GAILE ROBINSON
Knight Ridder Newspapers

They share the credit equally, but all things are not equal among the Fab Five, stars of cable TV's "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy."

In each one-hour episode, Bravo's five gay makeover (excuse me, "make better") experts take an average, schlumpy straight man and completely transform his lifestyle — his wardrobe, dinner-making skills, grooming practices, home environment — making him acceptable to his wife, girlfriend or even sick-of-the-mess male roommate.

The Eye who turns the house from a hovel into a sophisticated lair is interior designer Thom Filicia. Among the five "Queer Eye" specialists, he does all the heavy lifting. While the other four work the high-end ateliers and gourmet food stores, Filicia does much of his shopping at IKEA, Crate & Barrel, Hold Everything and Pier 1. He works with budget and mainstream retailers and is quick to point out that he doesn't mind — this is reality TV — because these are the stores in which most people shop.

Filicia's realistic, budget-minded approach obviously appealed to Fort Worth, Texas-based Pier 1 Imports. He's now the company's new spokesperson, supplanting three-year Pier 1 veteran Kirstie Alley and her fairy-godmother frocks.

Filicia recently began appearing in Pier 1's TV commercials; the print ads begin in May. In the TV spots, he appears as an in-store design professional offering shoppers (OK, actors pretending to be shoppers) decorating advice. He is not identified as a "Queer Eye" guy, or even as Thom Filicia. He was chosen — according to Pier 1's vice president of marketing, Phil Schneider — for his design acumen.

Filicia even admits to owning some Pier 1 furniture in his vacation home. He's no design snob. He certainly can't be for his work on the "Queer Eye" show — there isn't time. He has to produce a whole new look for a home in a little more than two days.

Chatting with him by phone from Ohio, where he was doing a gig at a convention center home show, Filicia says the show is requiring him to use "all the skills I've been honing for the last 15 years and redefine them to be used in the readily available, accessible world."

He's what every girlfriend, wife and mother has been wanting as her boyfriend, husband and son — a man with a discerning eye, a paintbrush and a can of Comet.

For the first 13 shows that premiered during the summer of 2003,

SEE FILICIA D-10

Thom's tip FAB 5 THINGS

"Pick five favorite things from around the house. Could be anything — a picture frame, a souvenir, or a ceramic vase you picked up at a garage sale. Then choose five favorite articles of clothing. Whatever they are, I guarantee you that when you lay these things out, a lot of information about you will come through. Use the objects to help you begin to cultivate your sense of style and interests, and the clothing as a springboard to help determine your color palette."

"Don't focus on what 'goes' with what; instead, figure out what you like, and chances are they will go together."

So far, it's a great spring for flowering trees

What an awesome spring. Mild, sunny weather in early March allowed flowering cherries, plums, pears and quince to put on quite a show. Even Claude Monet would be impressed. With redbuds, crabapples and dogwoods waiting in the wings, the second act should be even more impressive.

Apparently, area gardeners are enjoying the floral extravaganza. Lots of folks called the Tulsa Garden Center in early March wanting to know the identity of the stunning pink and lavender flowering trees blooming around town. Many were surprised to learn that the gorgeous trees were Saucer magnolias, a type of deciduous magnolia.

Saucer magnolia (*Magnolia soulangeana*) and its close cousin, Star magnolia (*M. stellata*), are spectacular bloomers when, as this year, their tender buds escape. They are simply breathtaking when their smooth gray branches are covered with large 3- to 4-inch wide flowers.

A graceful shape and a modest, mature size (only 15 to 25 feet) make

barry
FUGATT



garden world

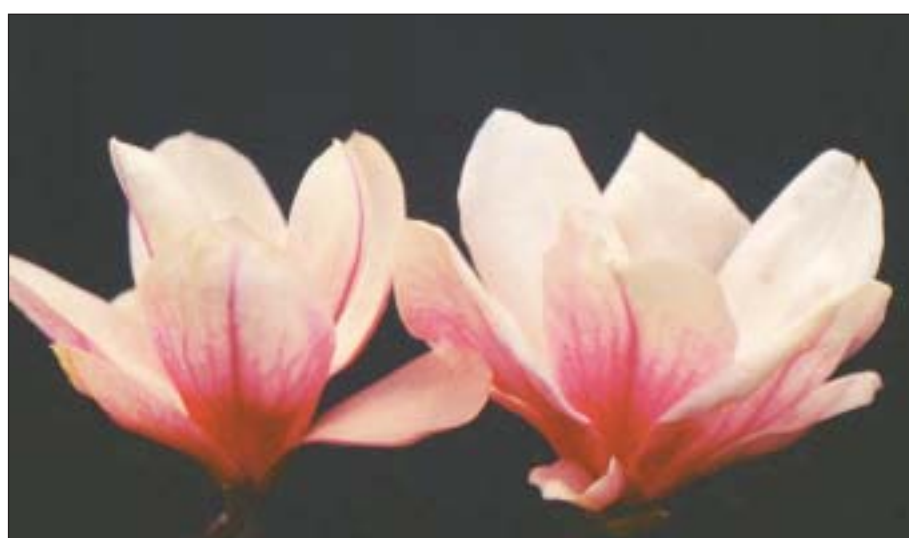
deciduous magnolias outstanding plants for use near decks, patios and entries.

Consider buying Saucer and Star magnolia when you visit a local nursery this spring.

Also, consider buying Oklahoma State University's "Proven Winners." Each year university horticulturists and nurserymen name four exceptional plants (a tree, a shrub, an annual and a perennial) to their Proven Winners list.

The 2004 list includes the following four winners:

► Shantung Maple (*Acer truncatum*) is



Barry Fugatt

Saucer magnolia

a small drought-tolerant Asian maple that quickly grows to 25 feet. Its star-shaped leaves emerge with an attractive purple tinge.

Fall foliage is excellent, ranging in

color from deep yellow to blazing red-orange.

► Winter Jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*)

SEE SPRING D-10