

**ThisWeek Community Newspapers (Columbus, OH)**

## **BIA Parade of Homes to feature herbs**

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Capitalizing on Gahanna's status as the herb capital of Ohio, the **Building Industry Association's 2008 Parade of Homes** will offer "An Herbal Experience," June 14-29. Gahanna's **Manor Homes** development, a 40.42-acre subdivision at Clark State and Reynoldsburg-New Albany roads that features 60 single-family homes valued at an average of \$500,000, will be the site of the 2008 Parade of Homes.

Experts from the Ohio Herb Education Center (OHEC), managed by Gahanna's Department of Parks & Recreation, are assisting the parade with herb gardens and programming.

Each of the seven parade homes will feature an herb garden and herbs will be integrated into the landscape design in common areas.

A tent pavilion will be centrally located at the parade with daily herbal demonstrations and hands-on activities. Seven presenters will participate including OHEC and local merchants who have incorporated herbs into their products.

Local chefs will present cooking demonstrations in select parade kitchens using herbs to enhance culinary creations. The Parade of Homes preview party June 13 will feature herbs in a variety of dishes.

BIA president Jim Hilz said the parade is more than just promoting homes and builders. "It is about promoting the community in which the parade is held," he said. "The herb garden idea and theme fits very well with the parade."

Hilz said herbs will not only be incorporated in the landscaping, but visitors will have an opportunity to learn how to use herbs as part of parade programming. "This is just a great fit," he said.

Parks director Tony Collins has been working with the BIA to help establish the herb gardens. He said developers were diligent about protecting the environment when completing their plans, including moving the entire development to protect trees.

For the parade of homes, parks officials provided resources to the building industry, sharing ideas on how to make the herb garden work in the landscaping. The parks department also linked one builder with the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District to help establish a rain garden. Visitors to the parade of homes will have an opportunity to see that a rain garden can be done in a nice way, Collins said.

Homebuilders are also eager to participate in special programming for the parade. The entertainment venue benefits participants and the builders, Hilz said.

Fischer Homes landscape architect Gayle Frazer said the herb garden is in the rear of the yard, right of the terrace, but fairly visible from the home because it is inclined.

"A lot of herb gardens have themes," she said. "The theme is actually scarlet and gray." Landscapers put a scarlet concrete block "O" in the middle of the garden and all of the plantings are silver and gray, with different textures.

"It was a project that I was definitely looking forward to," Frazer said. "I'm a landscape architect. I've done many herb gardens."

During the Parade of Homes, Frazer will give a couple of presentations on how to develop a strong herb garden theme or idea.

Manor Homes president Brad Yates said parade organizers were contacted last year by Ohio Herb Education Center director Bunnie Geroux, who was looking for a way to incorporate herbs into the 2008 event.

"She wanted to do something great," he said.

Yates said the Manor Homes house has a lot of shade and he was concerned about how an herb garden could work. But his home features an 8-foot by 2-foot back door garden.

Manor Homes has also volunteered to participate in the chef cooking demonstrations, he said. Manor Homes' Village at Hannah Farms includes an extensively landscaped entrance, two wetland reserve areas and a leisure path that connects to the city of Gahanna's Hanna Farms Park. Many of the parade homes will back up to the reserved open space.

For more information, visit the BIA Parade of Homes Web site at [www.paradeofhomesideas.com](http://www.paradeofhomesideas.com). Parade dates are June 14-29, Monday-Saturday, noon until 9 p.m. and Sunday noon until 6 p.m. Ticket prices are \$10 at the door and \$6 for groups of 15 or more.

Geroux said she worked with Yates to develop the herb gardens for the Parade of Homes.

"We are the herb capital of Ohio," she said. "I thought it was a marvelous idea to put the herb gardens in."

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