

# Club has flower power at garden event

By Joy VanderLek

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HARTFORD — Awards flowed like water for the Suburban Garden Club of Cheshire with this year's 35th Annual CT Flower and Garden Show. SGC members receiving awards included Ginny Donovan and SGC President Linda Broker, and of special note, SGC's Tony Poitras who took home multiple awards.

The event, the epicenter of everything gardening and growing, was held at the CT Convention Center in Hartford, Feb. 18-21. Within the venue, elaborate garden displays, popular speakers, educational seminars, vendors and flowers galore, was the attention-grabbing oasis created by the Federated Garden Clubs of CT.

Entered under the Federated umbrella, many clubs, including the Suburban Garden Club of Cheshire, enter show-stopping works from their members. This year's theme was "In the Spotlight!" an over-the-top, fun and fantastical take on entertainment, including movies, the circus, the opera and Broadway.

In all, Poitras was awarded a total of eight blue ribbons, five in horticulture, two in photography and one for design.



"Fire Eater" by Tony Poitras. Using tropical plant stems in shades of orange, yellow, red and blue, the design represented fire in color and shape.

The floral designer was elated when he went on to receive not one, but two "even more prestigious awards."

One was an award of merit in horticulture. To follow was a section award for petite design, which means "the design was not only the best in its class, but best of all the de-

signs in that entire section of category," said Poitras.

The theme for petite design pictured, was "Jazz it Up." "I made a saxophone with a single flower emerging from the horn. The requirements call for a design which must not exceed eight inches in all directions. It also had to be an angular design," he said.

By the rules, the angles were to be acute or obtuse, not right angles. "I stylized the saxophone to have angles rather than curves and the burst in the background, to represent music, was all angles," Poitras said. For an underlay and background complement, he stylized sheet music specific to jazz saxophone. The design was then staged in a cubicle and lit from above.

Poitras said the design he most enjoyed was the small design "Jazz it Up." "Mostly because I was able to work with and refine it weeks before the show since it contained a single dried flower."

The most challenging was a large one called "Fire Eater" and that was because the flowers arrived only hours before the show. He had about an hour to make that one. In all, Poitras was "surprised and humbled by winning so many blue ribbons, and did not expect to be so successful this year."