

# Garden festival to highlight importance of green behavior

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Special to The Daily Star

BEIRUT: This year's Garden Show and Spring Festival aims to celebrate what it is to be Lebanese and highlight the responsibility that Lebanon's citizens have to their environment, organizers say.

The fifth edition of the Garden Show and Spring Festival will open its gates Tuesday from 4-10 p.m., and will run until June 14 at the Hippodrome Park under the patronage of Beirut Mayor Abdel-Monem Ariss.

The event will not only showcase the usual exhibitors, plants, music and art, but will also stress, in a series of workshops and conferences the importance of green behavior, promoting sustainability in tourism and the

environment, said the program.

The theme "sweetness of life in Lebanon" will be evident throughout the 20,000 square meters of green space which will present a multitude of flowers and plants that will also be on sale during the festival.

Visitors will be able to stroll through the gardens and peruse more than 100 stands as well as attend various events, listen to music, watch demonstrations and enter competitions.

This year the festival is supporting the awareness campaign launched by the Association for Forest Development and Conservation. The organization has collaborated with the Environment Ministry, advertising agency Grey Worldwide and Green Cedar Lebanon to raise awareness about forest protection and

the prevention of forest fires.

In continuation of this green, eco-friendly theme is the official launching of *World Environment* magazine, and a series of events called Authentic Lebanon designed to encourage visitors to come together to form a responsible Lebanese community.

Food is also a major part of the festival, and its objective is to unite people through tradition and a common identity.

"Souk al-Tayeb, created with The Garden Show in 2004, is Lebanon's first farmers' market of natural, seasonal, traditional and organic food products based on quantity not quality," Kamal Mouzawak, the founder of Souk al-Tayeb told *The Daily Star*.

"Food is a way of perpetuating what it is to be Lebanese – there are 15 million Lebanese

living outside of Lebanon, three times the amount actually residing here, and food is a tradition that all Lebanese can share, wherever they are in the world," Mouzawak added.

One of the festival's main attractions is United Tabouleh of Lebanon, which will be held on the last day of the Garden Show, co-organized by Souk al-Tayeb and the United Nations Development Project.

United Tabouleh of Lebanon, part of Food and Feast 2008, is designed to encourage inter-community exchange and celebrate the country's cultural diversity and wealth, the Food and Feast program said.

The Garden Show and Spring Festival organizers said they expect to welcome more than 24,000 visitors.