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Landscaper earns kudos at Canada Blooms

AURA LANDSCAPING OWNER ACKNOWLEDGED FOR USE OF NATURAL STONE IN GARDEN

BY SCOTT ROSTS
STAFF

Participating in Canada Blooms blossomed into a great opportunity for Scott Duff.

The St. Catharines entrepreneur, who operates Aura Landscaping, recently earned accolades on a national stage. For two weeks last month the landscaper participated in Canada Blooms at the Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place, in Toronto.

The event, Canada's largest flower and garden festival, featured 15 feature gardens, and Duff had the privilege of designing one of them. He not only had the opportunity to showcase his work in front of a large audience, he even brought home the Upper Canada Stone award for outstanding use of natural stone for his garden.

"It was a great honour to be recognized for my work," he said. "It was really a fantastic experience."

His entry, Urban Passions, was a 600-square-foot creation that incorporated more than 68,000 lbs. of stone into its design. The entry, which he described as "where architecture and nature converge," included art deco-inspired stone walkways, including a stone feature to resemble stained glass, to waterfalls coming out of natural stone walls and trees and flowers.

Duff didn't just exhibit his work at Canada Blooms. He practically lived there. He spent 150 hours doing the pre-build and setup, and then spent more than 14 hours a day at the show, man-



Above: Niagara-based landscaper Scott Duff, of Aura Landscaping, earned an award for outstanding use of natural stone for his garden, Urban Passions, one of the feature gardens at Canada Blooms in Toronto last month.

PHOTO BY ROBERT ELLIDGE

RIGHT: Scott Duff of Aura Landscaping will be participating in this weekend's Niagara Home & Garden Show at Grimsby Peach King Centre.

PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE LETKEMANN



ning his booth.

In addition to the award, Duff also had the opportunity to connect with representatives from HGTV and Canada AM, and he even met gardening expert Mark Cullen.

More importantly, he said, he was also able to meet new people who have since come on board as customers.

"It's pretty humbling to have people come up to me and say, 'We want to hire you,'" he said, noting he welcomed people from Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Catharines and beyond at the

show. "It was really a great chance to open some new doors for me."

Duff was also thrilled to give back during the event. One of the sculptures that was a centerpiece in his garden was crafted and then auctioned off for charity, in support of cancer research, raising more than \$1,000.

This week Duff will be showcasing his work back in Niagara. He will be setting up shop at the Niagara Home and Garden Show, set to take place April 13-14 at the Grimsby Peach King Centre.

Duff said he will be sharing a booth at the home show with Ridgeview Garden Centre. Duff will be putting up a Techo-Bloc retaining wall supplied by Builder's Paradise in Grimsby and a Bana Stones natural stone patio and walkway. He will also be incorporating plant and decorative pieces into the setup, courtesy of Ridgeview Garden Centre.

For more information on the show, visit www.canadablooms.com, or for more information on Aura Landscaping — including a look at the garden designs — visit www.auralandscaping.com.



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