

COVER IMAGE: GOLD WINNER, *RÉSET*, EARTHCORE LANDSCAPES

2026

# *Boutique Gardens*

**COMPETITION**

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**



**MELBOURNE  
INTERNATIONAL  
FLOWER AND  
GARDEN SHOW**



## INTRODUCTION

Landscaping Victoria (LV) presents this unique opportunity for established and emerging **landscape designers** and **landscape architects** to participate in The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS).

With thanks to show owners IMG and NGIV, the **Boutique Gardens competition** offers five (5) finalists an opportunity to showcase their design talents, push design boundaries, gain valuable industry experience and promote their business to the 100,000+ visitors to the Show, as well as capitalise on post-event publicity.

## WHO CAN ENTER?

To be eligible to showcase a Boutique Garden at **MIFGS 2026**, the five selected finalists must hold current **membership with Landscaping Victoria**. There is no fee to submit your entry.

Non-members are invited to enter and submit their designs; however, if selected as a finalist, a pro-rata LV Membership fee of \$662 will apply, with the added benefit that there's no application fee to put your vision forward. LV Membership will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2026. There are many benefits to becoming a Landscaping Victoria member. You can [find out more](#) on our website.

Becoming a Finalist comes with significant exposure. Your garden will be heavily promoted across the Landscaping Victoria website, print and digital publications, and social media channels, along with the 100,000+ show visitors.

## KEY DATES

**Entry Submissions Open:** 5<sup>th</sup> August 2025

**Entry Submissions Close:** 24th September 2025

**Finalists Selected By:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025

**Construction Bump In:** 16th– 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Tools down at 3 pm.

**Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show:** March 25th – 29th 2026

**Construction Bump Out:** 29th March – 1st April 2026

## DESIGN BRIEF

Site dimensions:

Each site is **5 x 5 metres**. **Viewing is from the front and the two sides**, and should be aesthetically pleasing and functional.

Site locations will be randomly allocated, and there is no flexibility to relocate or adjust dimensions. The back of each garden design will not be judged.

## BUDGET

Finalists will be contracted to IMG, who will provide sponsorship of \$9,550 +gst to each of the five (5) competitors.

Sponsorship money can be put towards the design, materials, construction, or labour costs, and site pack-up. Any additional expenses over the allocated sponsorship amount will be at the cost of the finalist. The finalist is encouraged to outsource additional sponsorship to cover any other expenses.

Additional sponsorship will need to be cleared through application to LV, who will report such applications to MIFGS/IMG with the express intent of avoiding any clashes with existing show sponsors.

The finalist is permitted to promote their own sponsors via site signage (parameters will be provided to each finalist) and **MUST** include logos and reference to Competition Sponsors also.

## THEME

**There is no theme** for the Boutique Gardens competition. Challenge your creativity and come up with original design elements that will make your garden a standout at the 2026 Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show.

## CONSTRUCTION RESTRICTIONS

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show takes place in the heritage-listed Carlton Gardens. The Boutique Gardens are constructed in the grounds of the Gardens. **It is vital that the construction of each garden does not impact on the grounds.**

All of your plans must take this into consideration. **Boutique Gardens cannot have any construction that penetrates the soil.**

You will need to build a 'box' to surround the perimeter of your site, concealing your pots and any sub-structure; this will need to be included in your budget. The 2026 site location is on a flat surface, however, some levelling may be required. This will give you a level site from which to start your creation. The public are not permitted to enter your site, but the judges may.

## CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Each finalist is responsible for sourcing their own construction team.

Victorian finalists must use a Landscaping Victoria Member who is a Registered Building Practitioner for all their landscape works. Interstate finalists must also use an affiliated landscape industry member who is a Registered Building Practitioner in their state for all their landscape works.

Details of the makeup of your construction team must be included in your application. If you do not have a construction team, Landscaping Victoria may be able to assist in sourcing one for you. An agreement must be in place with your construction team to fit within your budget. During the design process, consideration must be given to how long it will take to construct your garden.

## SPONSORED MATERIALS

To help make your budget go as far as possible, Landscaping Victoria has arranged sponsorships with suppliers who are prepared to give you a product or discount to use in your garden build. These sponsorships could save you hundreds; money that can be put towards other elements such as prop hire, labour, or other materials. You are encouraged to take advantage of these offers, and finalists will be connected with the suppliers in due course.

## SPONSORS



**Gardens At Night** is proud to shine a light on the finalist Boutique Gardens.

Although MIFGS is predominantly a daytime event, there are several after-hours opportunities where your garden will be in the spotlight, including dusk photography sessions and private functions, along with popular twilight sessions. These opportunities are great for your exposure, and quality lighting that highlights the features and plant life within your design will help bring your garden to life after dark.

You'll work closely with Gardens At Night to produce a lighting plan using your design renders, in the lead up to the Show and during bump-in, to make sure the installation of your lighting runs as smoothly as possible.

From the many years of lighting MIFGS Show and Boutique Gardens, Gardens At Night know that designs may change slightly, and it's important that they have lighting allocated for your design early.

Visit [www.gan.com.au](http://www.gan.com.au) to browse their comprehensive lighting range, making a note of the lights and finishes to complement your design. It's recommended you also consider any changes in levels and features of your garden, along with any important elements that may require focused illumination.

Throughout the design and build journey, LV and MIFGS may introduce additional supplier partners keen to support the Boutique Garden competition. We'll connect you with relevant suppliers as opportunities arise, giving you access to added value and potential cost savings during the production period.

## WHAT TO SUBMIT

### Entry Form

This should include all your contact details, including an email address, postal address, mobile phone number, and answers to the entry questions.

### Description (or Brief)

Your garden will need a name, and you should also include an explanation of what you have designed and why. This should be creative and fully explain your design to the judges. This should be no more than 250 words, submitted with your entry form and will form part of the judging criteria and will be used in marketing messaging promoting the Competition.

### Plans

Initially, to make an entry into the Competition, you should submit as many plans as necessary to explain your design to the judges. As a minimum, this should include:

- A plan view
- A perspective drawing or elevation
- Planting plan
- Construction overview

**Note 1:** For the initial entry, this can be a simple section with basic information; however, if chosen as a finalist, you will be required to submit copies of all plans, full working drawings, elevations and plant lists to the City of Melbourne for approval before commencement of construction.

**Note 2:** All final working drawings should provide your landscape builders with enough detail to build your design. Stage Two of the judging will take your detailed construction drawings into account.

## THE JUDGING PROCESS

Judging will be conducted in two stages:

### STAGE ONE – SELECTION OF FINALISTS

A panel made up of representatives of Landscaping Victoria will select five (5) finalists from all submitted entries based on the following criteria.

#### **Brief 7%**

An overall statement of the purpose of your design.

#### **Overall creativity, Impression and Design 50%**

This is about the originality and unique nature of your design and how you can captivate and maintain interest from the audience. The unity, scale and balance of your design will also be assessed.

#### **Construction 14%**

Practicality of your design; can it be built to achieve your intentions and within the guidelines of the Carlton Gardens

#### **Planting 29%**

Design, colour, texture, seasonal interest, scale and harmony

### STAGE TWO – SELECTION OF THE WINNER (AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BUILD)

A panel of independent landscape industry professionals organised by LV will be responsible for determining the overall winner.

Stage two looks at how well your planned design translates to the finished constructed garden and whether your intentions were achieved.

This will be assessed by the Onsite Judging Sheets, you can [view a copy here](#).

From the five (5) constructed gardens, there will be two placegetters: first and second. A copy of the Judging Criteria will be provided to finalists.

A trophy will be presented to the first-place winner. Promotion and publicity opportunities may be available for the award winners via print & digital publications, podcast, social media and may include TV media during the show.

All finalists will also have promotional and publicity opportunities via the LV website, print and digital publications and social media.

## GOT QUESTIONS OR NEED SOME SUPPORT?

If you have any questions about the Boutique Garden Competition at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, please contact Landscaping Victoria.

**Online:** [www.landscapingvictoria.com.au](http://www.landscapingvictoria.com.au)

**Email:** [events@landscapingvictoria.com.au](mailto:events@landscapingvictoria.com.au)

**Phone:** +61 3 9566 7284

*1. A copy of the 2025 Exhibitor Manual is available for you to view on request as an indicative example of the restrictions you will need to work within. By entering the Competition, you will be bound to abide by the restrictions. Manuals for 2026 will be circulated to finalists when available from the Show Managers, IMG.*

*2. The levels of each of the five (5) sites vary, and finalists will not know their site location until they meet with the organisers in the gardens to be allocated a site. At that time, site levels may be taken, or at any time afterwards, as convenient to the finalist.*





**Ready to submit your entry?** Simply fill out the form below & send your design and entry form to [events@landscapingvictoria.com.au](mailto:events@landscapingvictoria.com.au)

## ENTRY FORM

### YOUR DETAILS

Name:

Company Name:

Email:

Mobile:

Address:

State:

Postcode:

### CONSTRUCTION TEAM DETAILS

Name:

Company Name:

Email:

Mobile:

Address:

State:

Postcode:

RBP No (VIC) or state equivalent building certificate:

☐ Tick if you do not have a construction team & may need assistance to source one

### CHECKLIST FOR ENTRY SUBMISSION

- ☐ Completed entry form
- ☐ Plans
- ☐ Plant List
- ☐ Perspective drawings/elevations
- ☐ Construction drawing(s)

## ENTRY FORM

NAME OF ENTRY:

DESCRIPTION OF ENTRY: