Oktoberfest Raises Funds For Botanical Garden

The International Oktoberfest, at the Queens Botanical Garden through July 19, is the big fund-raiser of the year for that institution. The annual festival helps support the year-round programs carried on the garden's grounds in Flushing; during the daytime part of the festival, visitors can see some of the attractions that benefit.

For example, the garden has a fine display of annuals including begonias, and cineraria and a circle-planting with 40 varieties of petunias in full bloom. Some late roses are still blooming in the 1,000-plant rose garden (largest on the East Coast), said a staff member. The herb garden has medicinal and culinary herbs and herbs grow solely for fragrance. A bird garden displays native plants that attract birds, supplying them with food or nesting materials. Last week the bee garden yielded 400 pounds of honey which is being sold in the garden shop along with plants some grown on the grounds.

During the year the garden offers Tuesday night lectures on subjects ranging from growing house plants to raising herbs. Through an outreach program, staff members work with community groups and schools in the vacant lot gardening, helping plan which plants to grow. On the grounds is a big Senior Garden, where older people grow many vegetables (lettuce, beans, tomatoes, carrots, onions, grapes, raspberries) on their own 10x10-foot plots. There's even a community corn patch. A similar garden program is planned for "People feed their families on what they grow," said the staff member.

During the school year hundreds of teenagers come to the garden for workshops and guided tours. The workshops involve programs on such topics as finding wild food in the garden and making it into salads for their lunches or making a city terrace with wild plants. The tours are geared to educate children to learn by touching, smelling and investigating, she said.

The Queens Botanical Garden is open daily from 9 a.m. to sunset; the garden shop 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is free.

As the Queens Botanical Garden tries to reach out to different people, so does the International Oktoberfest, according to Willie Schoeps, the official greeter. German in origin, the Oktoberfest is now multi-ethnic in scope, featuring food, music, and dance of varying nationalities.

Throughout the festival there will be 210 performers on stage in the 2,000-seat main tent. The tent also has a large dance floor where visitors can dance to the cajun and other music. Musical tests will offer all kinds of ethnic food — Greek, Oriental and Mexican among them — but the emphasis will be on the German food — bratwurst, knackwurst, schweineberg, liver meat loaf, potato pancakes, etc. A Konditorei (German coffee shop) will have apple strudel and Black Forest cake. A variety of 101 imported beers will be served in two beer tents. Special appearances will be made at the Botanical Gardens (Oktoberfest by the Incredible Hulk (July 11) and a series of soap operas stars (July 18).

For additional information and a complete schedule of entertainment, see the ad in the center of this week's issue.

Seuffert Band Sets Extra Concert Dates

The Seuffert Band, held every Sunday in the Mauve Grove in Forest Park, will schedule an extra four dates this season. Thanks to the intervention of Councilman Arthur J. Katman.

The concerts normally end Labor Day weekend. However, because of the great demand by music lovers last year Katman promised on several occasions that he would make efforts to secure funds for the Seuffert Band to perform four more times on successive Sundays during September. "Happily," the Councilman said, "this has been achieved and music lovers will enjoy as added treat."

Katman added, "Obtaining the money for these concerts is one of the happiest and proudest moments of my career as an elected official. To provide the loyal supporters of the Seuffert Band added listening enjoyment is a great delight. A good part of the credit for the extra funds also is due to Queens Borough President Donald R. Manes who made the request in the Board of Estimate and gave his strong support for this."

One of the highlights of this Sunday's program, which begins at 1 p.m., will be the "Overture: Maximillian Robespierre," a "miniature drama" by pianist and composer Henry Lisoff. The introduction of this overture depicts the turbulent background of the French Revolution. The "Robespierre" motif is soon heard; its gradual dominance of the music is the counterpart of the hero's role in the revolution. At length the trumpet signals Robespierre's approaching doom and the overture concludes with a final picture of his execution. The concert opens with the Berlioz "Rakoczy March." This march, the national march of Hungary, was originally written by a gypsy court musician of Prince Franz Rakoczy, from whom this composition takes its name. In a spirit of patriotic fervor, Berlioz reorchestrated this march and incorporated it in the score of his opera "The Damnation of Faust."

Bach's chorale "Wachtet Auf" (Sleepers Wake), his celebrated "Air," and Liszt's exciting Hungarian Rhapsody no share the program with such modern favorites as excerpts from his "Majestic." This concert is made possible by grants from the Natural Heritage Trust of the State of New York, the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of New York, Edward I. Koch Mayor, Henry Geldzahler, Commissioner. Gordon Davis, Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, Donald R. Manes, President of the Borough of Queens and the host for the afternoon — The Hamburg Savings Bank, U.S. Recording Companies fund in part the instrumental music for this performance as arranged by Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians.

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