

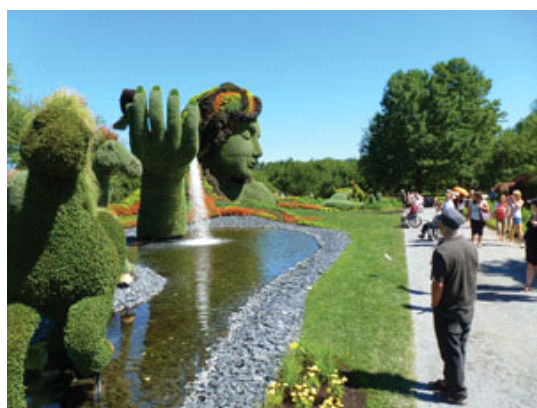
# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

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### Mother Earth, in Plants

*Chris Beytes*



This summer, visitors to the Montreal Botanical Garden got to see the art of horticulture presented in a beautifully creative way during the three-month exhibition “Mosaiculture Internationales Montreal 2013—Land of Hope.” This piece, titled “Mother Earth,” is made up of tens of thousands of small plants, each chosen for its color and texture, and meticulously pruned and maintained. Her nearly 50-ft.-high hair represents the mountains. Her left hand holds deer dashing off to join horses and bison on a prairie. From her right hand cascades a waterfall and perches a golden eagle. More horses canter into the foreground.

Designed by Mosaiculture Internationale de Montreal (MIM), the organizers of the event, Mother Earth is one of more than 50 works of horticultural art on display through September 29. Some 200 artists from 20 countries contributed mosaicultures.

What is mosaiculture? It's growing plants in potting media that's encased in a wire framework, which creates the shape of the desired object. Unlike topiary, the plants are growing in the form, rather than growing in the ground and trained up and around a form. Think Rose Parade floats, but with living, growing plants instead of glued-on plant parts.

This summer's mosaiculture exhibition, which opened June 22, is the fifth since the founding of the non-profit MIM in 1998. The first mosaiculture exhibition was held in 2000 in Montreal. This is the third Mosaiculture Internationales to be held in Canada; it was held in China in 2006 and Japan in 2009.

The level of work and detail that goes into each piece is truly awe-inspiring. One particular piece, “The Bird Tree,” took six years to design and weighs 100 tons. It features 56 birds with wingspans up to 10 ft. A team of nine horticulturists work in shifts to maintain it. **GT**