

Holiday plants deserve effort

By MARGE ALPERN

Growers, florists and even the people who buy gift plants are beginning to take a new look at those spectacular masses of bloom so often presented on holidays.

Many such plants have been groomed for the occasion by controlled light, heat and feeding in special greenhouses to meet a holiday deadline in perfect color, size and shape.

The calceolarias, poinsettias, cinerarias, azaleas, chrysanthemums, cyclamens and Easter lilies all should be enjoyed for what they are—bouquets growing in a pot. Generally, the grower will attach to the gift plant careful cultivation directions which are helpful and should be followed. They usually suggest good light, even moisture and cool temperature.

The majority of these plants are essentially "throwaways," and when they are finished blooming, they should be discarded. They aren't house plants.

Unless one is willing to go to great lengths to provide the proper conditions, attempts to rebloom them in the house usually are doomed. Having a greenhouse, of course, makes success more attainable, and the great increase in the number of home greenhouses is helping to keep these plants popular as gifts.

The new trend in gift giving is toward more permanent plants that can give years of pleasure on the window sill. Florists and plant shops are offering a large array of easy-to-grow begonias, brilliant bromeliads and superior varieties of a wide range of foliage plants. House plants certainly have a permanent place in our homes today, but the chrysanthemum at Thanksgiving, the poinsettia at Christmas and the Easter lily at Easter also have special places in our lives and with a little care, they can give us much pleasure.

THE POINSETTIAS now being sold are a great improvement over those of a few years ago. In fact, they actually are useful, long-lasting plants. A warm sunny window is an excellent place for a winter display, and a dim light will definitely shorten the plant's life.

When the soil feels dry to the touch, water until the water comes out the drainage holes. In our dry, overheated homes, try to find a cool spot for your holiday plant.

The poinsettia has recently been given a clean bill of health by the American Horticultural Society. However, some people still fear that the white, milky substance found inside the plant (characteristic of the Euphorbia family to which the poinsettia belongs) is poisonous or at least can cause an allergic reaction in some people.

The plants can be cut back after they have bloomed and "carried over" outdoors during the summer. Poinsettia plants are called short-day plants, which means they must be given a time-controlled period of reduced daylight, a process requiring careful attention. They must have 14 hours of darkness to set buds, so you should put them in an unused room or closet every night during the fall. Generally, the plants that I have seen that have been carried over look inferior. Siglinda Pritchard of Franklin, however, has successfully brought poinsettias through a second year of bloom. She believes it's not at all difficult. I prefer cutting the stems when the flowers begin to fade, putting them in a vase and discarding the plant into the compost. By burning the cut edge of the stem with a lighter match, the flow of the milky juice can be stopped and the blossom will keep nicely in water. I save my Bordine poinsettia coupons throughout the year and let Mr. Bordine worry about growing them. He does it exceptionally well.

THE CYCLAMEN, another winter-blooming gift plant, is usually sold with several flowers and many buds in all stages of development. They are stunning and generally expensive.

Cyclamens demand a really cool spot in the house, and you'll get much more than a week of bloom from them if you'll take the time to move them to a cool hallway or garage for the night. They also seem to need a great deal of water and will show you at once when the need is urgent by flopping down on all sides. A good thorough watering perks them up.

Avoid rotting the corn, the bulb from which the cyclamen grow, by not pouring water directly into the heart of the plant. This is good practice for the health of most plants.

With attentive care, you probably can coax bloom from your Christmas cyclamen until March. Recycling them takes skill and experience, but it can be done. Most growers suggest drying the corn after the winter bloom is completed and allowing the

curing process to last several months, before starting them back to live in the summer.

This didn't work for me, and the corns got dried out almost forever. I couldn't revive it, and from another corn I tried to restart, there was limited growth and absolutely no flowers.

My experience has been with the cyclamen that produce small blooms, not the huge ones, and I'm delighted with my success. After the plants finished blooming in the greenhouse last March, I reduced watering, but didn't allow them to go dormant.

During the summer, the plants were lifted from their pots and sunk into the ground, and they took off. Since cyclamens like cool weather, I left them out until late fall, when I repotted the corn in rich, well-drained soil, allowing it to sit up, like a bun, halfway out of the pot. Today, in the coolest zone of the greenhouse, one is covered with flowers and the other is just forming a mass of little buds.

One commercial grower does not advise keeping the same corn for more than two or three years. At the end of that time, the quality of the flowers begins to deteriorate, although the second-year corn should produce a larger quantity of flowers than the first-year corn.

That's exactly what happened to my white cyclamen—many more blossoms than it had last year, and they are smaller. I really don't mind the diminished size, myself, since whop-size flowers hold no special charm for me—cyclamens, azaleas or roses. But, that is a matter of taste.

Azaleas, like the cyclamen, need a cool location. At night, they must be where the temperature falls as low as 60 degrees (a drop of 10 degrees from daytime temperature) if they are to continue blooming.

If you cannot meet these rather specialized requirements, don't expect all those enticing buds that come on these two plants to open or the foliage to remain in good condition. Azaleas don't react quite as quickly to unfavorable conditions as cyclamens and will hold up amazingly well in a warm atmosphere, even through some of the buds dry up.

Azaleas need a great deal of water to get abundant bloom. The plants have been grown in a peat-bond substrate with tightly packed roots in the smallest possible pot. There is little soil left in the pot to absorb any water, therefore, azaleas must be watered almost every day. An occasional dunking of the whole pot into a bucket of water, allowing the pot to soak until the air bubbles stop rising, is advisable.

DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ON THE TOWN

ROMAN CHARIOT
RESTAURANT & LOUNGE • Featuring Italian and American Dining

Entertainment Friday & Saturday
CHUCK MIDDLETON and TRIO
BUSINESS MEN'S LUNCHEON • BOUNTIFUL SALAD 11AM
Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs.

NEW YORK STRIP STEAK, Potato & Salad \$4.95
VEAL PARMEGIANA, Side Order of Spaghetti & Salad \$2.95
GAMER FISH, Served with Potato & Cole Slaw \$3.95

FRIDAY
FISH N' CHIPS, Served with Potato & Slaw \$3.50
Above includes Bread Basket
COCKTAIL HOURS MON. - FRI. 3-6 P.M.

32826 FIVE MILE ROAD - EAST C. FARMINGTON RD. - 425-8530

The Sherwood Inn
FEATURING
FESTIVE DINNER
Broiled Scampies Dinner...\$6.50
NOW APPEARING TUESDAY THRU SATURDAY
FABULOUS LENNY SCHICK
FOR YOUR DANCING PLEASURE

RESERVATIONS SUGGESTED
BUSINESSMEN'S LUNCHEONS
36071 Plymouth Road
357-1434 Across From Ford Transmission Plant
261-5500 Wedding and Banquet Facilities Available

Ladies Night at the Mine
TUESDAY and THURSDAY
from 8pm to 1am.

All drinks at reduced prices!
Boogie to the fabulous sound of
"NIGHT FLIGHT"
cocktail hour Monday thru Friday 5pm to 8pm.

located in the Holiday Inn
30075 PLYMOUTH ROAD
Across from the Terrace Theatre

CORSI'S
RESTAURANT AND COCKTAIL LOUNGE
NOW APPEARING
WEDNESDAY THRU SATURDAY EVENINGS
"LOST and FOUND"
for your listening and dancing pleasure

COCKTAIL HOURS 3:00 - 6:00 Reduced Prices
Fashion Show Friday 12:30 - 1:30
DAILY LUNCHEON SPECIALS \$2.25
Private Room Available For Parties or Meetings
Call for information

27910 W. 7 Mile, LIVONIA 531-4960
(Between Middlebelt and I-75)

How Should We Then Live?
The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture
a ten episode color film series
Written By and Featuring
DR. FRANCIS SCHAEFFER
PRESENTED BY: DETROIT FIRST
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
SHOWN AT: STEVENSON HIGH SCHOOL - LIVONIA

EVERY WEDNESDAY NIGHT - STARTING 1-18-78 AT 7:00 P.M.

Cap'n Scoggies Lounge
Proudly Presents
from
Youngstown, Ohio
"SURPRISE"
Mon. thru Sat.
Showtime 10:00 p.m.
Dancing 9 p.m. til 2 p.m.

RAMADA INN
28225 Telegraph Southfield 355-2929

WANT-ADS
FOR BLAST-OFF ACTION!

LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SELLING
IN YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

FEATURING
Bill Kahler WED.-SUN.
DALE HICKS TUES.

The Leather Bottle Inn
• Businessmen's Luncheons
• Family Dining
• We Also Cater Weddings, and House Parties
• Entertainment

522-2420 28937 W. Warren Garden City

TUESDAY SPECIALS
Served from 4-Course
Includes baked Potato, Texas Toast and Salad Bar
RIB EYE STEAK \$21.99
only
CHOPPED STEAK \$20.99

THERE'S NEVER A HOLD-UP AT BONANZA AND THEIR PRICES ARE A STEAL!

YOU'LL FLIP OVER BONANZA'S SALAD BAR!

9 Different Fixings
Four Great Dressings
A Meal in its Own Right

MONDAY IS SENIOR CITIZENS' DAY
Senior Citizens Receive their Beverage FREE!

SPECIAL 1/2 LB. T-BONE \$2.99

CHOPPED STEAK DINNER \$1.89
BREADED VEAL CUTLET \$1.89
N.Y. PETITE STRIP DINNER \$1.89

Includes potato, toast, salad bar
SERVED ALL DAY MON. THRU THURS. 3-6 PM

BONANZA

SOUTHFIELD 25810 W. 8 MILE RD. AT BEECH-DAILY RD. IN K-MART PLAZA
BELLEVILLE 2053 RAWSONVILLE RD. OFF I-94 IN K-MART PLAZA
LIVONIA 33456 W. 7 MILE RD. AT FARMINGTON RD. IN K-MART PLAZA

MON. THURS. 11:00-8:00 • FRI. & SAT. 11:00 • SUNDAY 11:00

Kevin's back!
("Don't Worry Nothing")
- also -
Reno Vic Trio is back!
for entertainment
Tuesday - Saturday
also on Sundays -
Famous Clarinet Player -
Hacik Gazarian and his Quartet
at 9:00 p.m.
For Armenian and MidEastern Night
Limited Time Only: Shish Kebob Dinner \$5.00

Lobster Tail Dinner \$6.95 (2 tails)
Prime Rib Dinner \$4.95
New York Strip Dinner \$4.95
Dinners Include Soup, Salad, Potatoes and Dessert
Also Available - Our Famous Menu

Businessmen's Special Luncheons
Open 11:30 Monday - Friday
11:30 - 6:00 Double Feature (2 for 1) Cocktails

Kevin's
Sunday Family Style Dinner
Serving 2 - 7 p.m.
Chicken and Prime Beef, Potatoes, Vegetables, Salad Bar and Dessert
\$3.95
under 12 \$2.95

Perfect for Family Parties - Please call ahead for Reservations
8051 Middlebelt, Westland, 261-5062
cocktails • luncheons • dinners • entertainment
MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

House of Carrie Lee's
Chinese and American Food
Exotic and Delightful Dinners
and Cantonese Style Dinners

Private Rooms for Receptions and Parties
Special Attention Given to Party Planning
Call for Party Quotes
Ready to serve your event

FOR RESERVATIONS
PLEASE CALL
MI 4-7576

Open Mon.-Thurs. 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. • Fri. & Sat. 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. • Sun. 12 p.m. to 10 p.m.
850 N. Woodward • Farmington