

Prize lilies coming to OCC

By MARGARET MILLER

Lawrence Schmit, who has been growing lilies for going on 44 years, has a whole backyard full of blooms to delight visitors to the annual Michigan Regional Lily Society show this weekend.

Bright in white, oranges, yellows, pinks and lavenders and ranging to an almost black purple, they are nodding on tall stalks at his home.

By Saturday and Sunday, many of the best will be on display at the J building of the Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge campus in Farmington Hills.

The show 2-9 p.m. Saturday, July 17, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, July 18, will draw a dozen or so exhibitors growers from all over the state and anyone who grows lilies is eligible to enter.

The idea of this show, Schmit said, is to get more people interested in growing lilies and to realize how many varieties there are. So many people have never seen any except Easter lilies.

THOSE ATTENDING the free show in the Orchard Ridge location for the sixth year will be able to see their names to receive indication of the society's bulb show in the fall. That's when the members will offer as



Lilies from the garden of Lawrence Schmit will be among those in the show coming to Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College Saturday and Sunday. (Staff photos by Art Emanuel)

sorted bulbs of the many varieties they have been propagating.

Schmit writes, actually that the lily show had been held last week. They really were at their prime early this year, he said. Weather warmer than usual, you never can tell how it will be.

But anyone looking around his yard would agree there is plenty of beauty left for those who come to see his blooms.

SCHMIT, who lives in Redford Township and is a retired iron worker, is one of the lily growers in these parts who likes to hybridize his plants.

By some careful cross-pollination, he comes up with a wide variety of blooms. He rarely tries to name one, he said, but he does keep tabs on the best of the crop each year so he can grow those again.

Lilies come in two general classes: two- and three-petaled. There are the Asiatic

plants, which have petals that open and bend way back, and the trumpet or auricular plants, so named because their shape is more like a horn.

Schmit has countless samples in both classifications, including a purple bloom grown from seeds sent him from Russia.

HE COLLECTS SEEDS from his assorted plants each summer, saving them and marking them according to the color of the flower.

These are planted about January in seed beds in his basement under fluorescent lights.

In May, he moves about 500 of the seedlings outside to see how they will develop. Some people grow thousands, he said, but I don't have room for that.

Late June and early July are the fun times for the lily grower, because that's when he sees how his varieties develop. One of Schmit's favorites this summer is a large Asiatic in a deep lemon yellow with just a few tiny dark spots.

I like the ones that come out in two tones, too, he said.

THE BEST of the blooms are marked for showing. The bulbs are prepared for sale and the cross-pollinating begins again.

This year Schmit met some of his peers with Mrs. Robert Briggs of Farmington, president of the Michigan Lily Society, and Charles Fillmore of Pleasant Ridge, co-chairman of the coming show, to the national show in Philadelphia.

Both of them will be among the exhibitors at OCC this weekend, as will Mrs. Leo Hough of Southfield and George Jacob of Royal Oak.

The coming show is open to anyone who grows lilies, true lilies, as opposed to the hemerocallis, or day lilies, and those who enter need not be members of the society.

All lilies entered must have been grown outdoors by or under the personal supervision of the exhibitor. The entries should be brought in between 7:30 and 10:30 a.m. Saturday.

The OCC Orchard Ridge campus is located between Eleven and Twelve Mile Roads and between Farmington Road and Orchard Lake Road.



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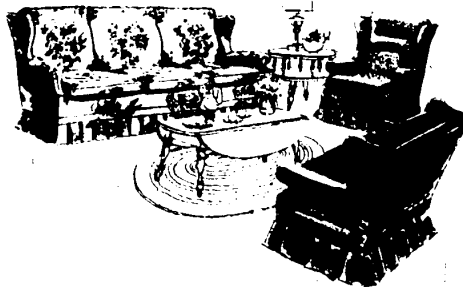
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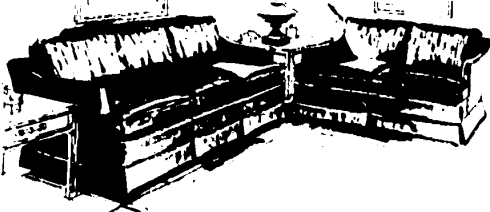
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