

## Here are some handy tips

# How best to launch a summer garden



Renee Goga was one of those persons who enjoyed the fruits of her labors in her garden last year. (Staff photo by Harry Maubel)

It may be too late to plant tulips, but beginning gardeners who feel inspired by the first rays of spring sunshine have time to start their gladioli, begonias and cladiums.

Or, if preferred, as long as a shovel can be shoved into the ground, shrubs can be planted.

Gardeners in the first flower of enthusiasm for their new hobby can be tempted to buy gadgets and seeds that are unsuited to their needs.

To start a border garden around the edge of a fence or lawn, zinnias, petunias and marigolds can still be planted in time to bloom during spring.

To start a garden full of glads or begonias, John Stellini, co-assistant manager of Frank's Nursery, Farmington, suggests starting the bulbs now. That way, they'll bloom in about six weeks.

IF THEY are planted later in the month, the flowers will bloom during the middle of the summer without their full amount of color and blossoms, according to Stellini.

Start the bulbs in synthetic soil instead of the black dirt used for mature blossoms. Synthetic soil, a mixture of peat moss and vermiculite, is lighter and allows for a better root development than conventional soil, according to Stellini.

Once the bulbs are safely tucked in their new pots, they should be watered regularly. Avoid adding so much water that the soil becomes soggy.

Cold water will shock the plant. Warmer water is preferred, according to Stellini.

Hot trays are ideal for bulbs. The

trays have a heating cable on the bottom so the root system stays warm.

Another way to encourage a root system to grow through heat is to place the potted bulb on a marble ledge about three or four feet above a register. This method is trickier than buying a tray and Stellini urges caution before trying to devise a home-made heating system.

"You could broil your plants that way if you're not careful," he said.

FOR THE LESS adventurous, clay pots are good for bulbs. They should be about one to two and one-half inches wide. Peat pots are also good.

Armed with the bulbs, pots and a trowel, the beginning gardener can start dreaming of the flowers that should bloom within six weeks. Fight the temptation to help the bulbs along by fertilizing them. That's unnecessary.

For those beginners who rather have the instant results of a shrub in the backyard instead of waiting for flowers to bloom, now's the time to start planting new shrubs. They're hardly enough to have a fighting chance against the late frost.

If the shrub is to be planted in heavy soil, such as clay, there should be a mound of dirt around the ball of the plant. The ball should stick out of the dirt about two or three inches, according to Fred Steinkopf III, of Steinkopf Nurseries.

If the soil is sandy or not heavy, the shrub should be placed in a hole that is about a half-inch deeper than the soil in the shrub's container.

Shrubs will be contained in pots of metal or plastic. These containers should be removed before planting. If there is compressed cardboard or a peat pot around the roots, punch a

series of holes in the base of the container and plant.

LOW nitrogen fertilizer such as cow manure should be used for shrubs.

When watering the shrub make sure it is moist at the base of the plant. Sprinklers are poor providers of water since they wet the tops of the shrubs

and miss the base, cheating the root system of moisture.

Clay soil should be watered sparingly since it has very poor drainage.

Shrubs, like the rest of living matter, need air to survive. Digging a hole four to six inches bigger than the circumference of the ball will assure the shrub of the air it needs.

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The Farmington Musicale will present a vocal and piano recital at 12:30 p.m., April 5, in Farmington Community Library, 2350 Liberty.

Soprano Mary Sue Ewing and pianist Maxine Zeitz will perform a program of pieces representing Italian, Polish, Russo-Armenian and French composers.

Ms. Ewing will sing "Le violente" by Alessandro Scarlatti; "Di piacer mi blaza il cor" by Rossini; and three art songs by Bellini. She will conclude her program with "Quando Me'n Vo' from Puccini's "La Boheme." Her accom-

panist will be Mary Behnan. Ms. Zeitz will perform Chopin's "Waltz in C Sharp Minor," "Etude" by Bortkiewicz; "Tocatta" by Kachaturian and the "Sarabande" from "Pour le Piano" by Debussy.

Chairman for the day will be Mrs. Harry Peets. Tea chairman will be Mrs. Lindsay Lloyd. Babysitting facilities will be available.

Reservations may be obtained for a 50 cent guest fee by calling Mrs. James McElroy, 478-6221.

The Farmington Musicale is an affiliate of the National and Michigan Federations of Music Clubs.

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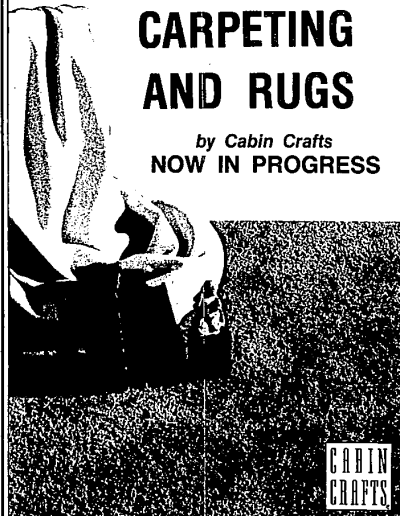
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