



down to earth
**Alice Wessels
Burlingame**

New geraniums bred for hardiness

This will be an important year for geraniums because of the new characteristics which have been bred into the seed.

If you examine seed packets, be on the lookout for some of the especially developed series such as Sprinter, Sooner, Ringo, and Encounter. There is great competition among the seedmen to introduce a mature plant which will not fade in the sun, have large flowers, and be shatter resistant.

Seed geraniums stand dryness and heat better than cuttings, plus they will give a better late show. This means that after the first minor frost you can look for continued flowering white petunias, coleus, etc. will be affected by cold nights.

YOU CAN EXPECT the planted seed to take from 15-17 weeks before color. Soak the seeds between moist paper towels for 48 hours. Don't let them dry out. I would be inclined to fold up a wet bath towel, put it on a cookie sheet and place the seeds between two sheets of paper towel on top of the towel. Just don't dry them and forget about the project for a couple days.

Sow the conditioned seeds in a tosse medium like vermiculite which has been watered. If you can supply bottom heat, good. These seedlings will want a lot of light when they begin to grow. Don't forget to water, but sparingly.

If you have children and want to introduce them to a novelty to see and eat, start seeds of the "golden egg tree." It makes a 3 inch plant with hen sized eggs. These eggs are miniature eggplant and edible. Of course children will want to try them. The plants adapt themselves to pot culture. You can start the seed 6-8 weeks before our take-out time which is about May, but don't plant outdoors until Decoration Day. They are tender seedlings.

Ed Thorne, volunteer plant director of the Cranbrook Greenhouse, has traveled all over the country to gather to-

gether unusual indoor plants.

Visitors are welcome to explore this plant wonderland from 9:30 a.m. to noon on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday mornings. Volunteers from the Cranbrook Garden Auxiliary benefit from the experience of working beside knowledgeable gardeners, indoors and out. There are men who find that this hobby pays dividends of constant new knowledge, plus creating a show case for visitors from all over the world to enjoy.

MANY OF OUR readers have expressed interest in a window greenhouse. Fine information has been compiled on this subject through "Avant Gardener," Box 489, New York, 10028, \$1 for "Greenhouse in a Window." Data covers every angle including how to do it yourself, how to conserve fuel, and the plants which thrive under these conditions, etc. Nobody could do a better job of adding a potential window greenhouse owner than Thomas Powell. It is a very honest guide.

Correction: In Jan. 10 column the distance for a windbreak, should have been 35 to 40 feet from the house to control snowdrifts, not 35 to 40 inches.

m.m. memos

Margaret Miller

For years I've been writing these stories about physical fitness. The people at our friendly YMCAs tell me about national cardiovascular programs and how important they are to everyone's good health.

These fitness experts even trot out satisfied customers — you know, the folks who started running, or exercising, or whatever, and now have slimmed down and firmed up and have become purveyors of the fitness gospel.

For years I've been nodding sagely and scribbling furiously and pounding out stories about the importance of regular exercise.

But that's all. When the scale readings mount and the bulges show more, I do some fairly leisurely swimming or put in a few weeks of morning exercises. Otherwise I ignore what I write.

SO WHAT on earth happened this time? Well, the story about a lunch-hour exercise and soup fitness program must have been especially convincing. It led several working colleagues to sign up.

One of them was planning to get her aerobic workout in the swimming pool. I took a deep breath and decided maybe I could do that and maybe it would do me some good.

A cardiovascular screening was the first step. I was sure the entire Y staff was lying in wait for me.

After being weighed, blood sampled and scientifically pinched (to determine my fat percentage) I suggested to the director that she might flunk me for the program. Not a chance, she said, but a letter would be sent to my doctor to tell him I was overweight. No need, I suggested, he already knew.

I also mentioned I expected to hate every minute of the kind of exercise I was letting myself in for. She said the soup would be good.

SO NOW I CAN report that I've survived one day. I fully expected to run out of breath scissors-kicking to the end of the pool, but when my instructor-pusher said I could frog kick instead, the world brightened. I also made it through a couple of lengths of dog-paddling while trying to hold a super-buoyant kickboard between the knees. Well, occasionally it was between the knees. More often it was spurted upward.

But then there came some free swimming, the kind I like to do. I surprised myself by pushing to swim faster.

And the soup WAS good.

Probably I'll live through the rest of the 15 weeks of fitness. It even looks as though I might get to like it. Just wait until you read that interview I'll give me when I write the NEXT fitness story.

Juan Serrano opens anniversary season

The American Artist Series begins its 10 anniversary season at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 20 with program of Flamenco guitar, Romantic piano trios and a newly-commissioned fanfare.

Juan Serrano, master of the Flamenco guitar, will be the first of several guest performers to appear in the series at Kingswood Auditorium, Bloomfield Hills.

Participating artists performing the Romantic piano trios by Schumann and Dvorak will be pianist Joann Freeman, (also the series' artistic director) and Detroit Symphony members Misha Rachlevsky, violin and John Thurman, cello.

JAMES HARTWAY, professor of composition, Wayne State University, has been commissioned to write the opening fanfare for this first performance of the season.

SEASON TICKETS for the series are \$35, a 30 percent savings over single ticket price.

If available, single seats are \$10 for DeMille and Davidovich; \$7 for all other performances. Individual tickets will be sold after season sale and only one week prior to each event.

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