

## Down to earth

## Compost serves several purposes

If you are beginning a vegetable garden for the first time this year, you might like to follow Bruce Miner's idea (New York Times).

Mow the grass area and spread a 3 inch layer of compost on the mowed surface. Last fall's half rotted leaves will be good.

This icing of compost will smother the grass and cause it to decompose to enrich the soil. If you lack compost to cover the short cut grass you can use black plastic or roofing paper.

Mrs. Thomas Kuzma, an area gardener, has this suggestion to share.

"You know how hard it is to get grass to grow under some trees. In the fall, I pile the leaves at the base of the problem trees instead of carrying them away. Over the winter the leaves deteriorate.

In the spring, I spread them out in a pattern and plant a ground cover such as pachysandra among the half composted leaves. This leaf mix helps to keep the new plants moist until the roots establish (the mix of old leaves is left there to enrich the location)."

A word of warning might be appropriate. You have to be careful how much you raise the elevation at the base of trees due to the need of moisture and air to reach the existing tree roots.

If you are an apartment dweller with a balcony where you have to be aware of weight on the flooring you will welcome using ½ perlite and ½ peat moss for the growing of your plants. It will be lighter than soil. As these ingredients do not have nourishment you will

be using fertilizer as a supplement every two weeks or in very small amounts every time you water the plants. The lighter weight mix will mean that you can plan on growing larger perennials, shrubs and trees.

Some of us have lake property where the following technique can be carried out to enrich a compost pile. When the weather gets warm, wade in the water near the shore and with a steel rake remove the sundry weed growth in the water. This can be stored in an inconspicuous pile, decomposed and used to enrich your garden after being put through the leaf grinder. If you lack this garden supplement, it will just take longer to be usable at a later date.

IN YOUR VEGETABLE garden you will want to make an early start with lettuce which grows best on cool days. This comment carries over to the fall season when you might start a second lettuce crop the last week in August. If you want to push your luck on a quick start, combine your seed with a mix of damp peat moss and sand, 50-50. Store in the refrigerator for five days. The seed will begin to sprout. Plant the processed seed and water for the first week with ice water. Buttercrunch variety is easy to secure in a seed packet and very popular.

When you plant lettuce seed the "new technique" is to place it in groups of three or four with space around the plants rather than rows. It is more the idea of a community of maturing lettuce.

Recycling one ton of newspapers means you have saved 22 trees.

## Room for Design

## New gallery displays art



by  
Gloria  
Cohen

Whether or not you are fond of visiting art galleries, there is one I recommend for the "places to go and things to see" list.

The Biber Gallery, 22919 Woodward, Ferndale, opened early this spring. Owned and operated by a young couple, Dan and Irene Biber, much of the art work displayed was created by Biber himself.

I went to the gallery to

spend a few minutes which resulted in my voting an afternoon in awe of what I found there.

Biber grew up and went to school in Detroit. He graduated with a BFA from the Center for Creative Studies in 1975, which included a summer at the San Francisco Art Institute. He has since devoted himself to sculpture and table-making. He does much of his large

scale work at a studio on a farm near Ionia and works on portrait busts and other smaller works in the new gallery.

He will invite you to watch as he works, thus creating a more direct relationship with the art he may be doing for you.

Mrs. Biber, a mother-to-be, received her BA from the University of Michigan in 1972 and later, her M.A. in history of art. She is knowledgeable

and will give you a "mini" art education in less than an hour.

They opened the gallery so Biber could be in contact with the public and showcase his work, plus show work of Michigan artists the couple feel warrant wider exposure.

They will feature different artists each month. The gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

The current show features Brian Video, Birmingham painter known for his outdoor murals. On display are three of his oils — "Day Clouds," "Night Clouds," and — one I couldn't walk away from — "Robert." There is also a self-portrait in pastel on sandpaper.

Terrance Nagle, a Pontiac based painter, is showing a series of small circle studies in acrylic on paper. One, "Atmospheric Fantasy," a large horizontal canvas combines oil with tapestry stitching and weaver's knots using yarns of different colors, weights, and textures. To me, it was vibrant, alive and startlingly beautiful.

PETER F. JOHNSON is a ceramicist from the Muskegon area. He makes annual appearances at the Ann Arbor Art Fair. A notable piece on display is a punch bowl set, functional as well as decorative. It separates

into a large bowl, a tall vase, and a set of cups. He also has works such as goblets and treasure boxes in the show.

Sandy Frieberg Noble, who attended Wayne State University and Institute of Chicago, has several landscape paintings in acrylic on display. These possess a mystic, lush form delicately balanced by accents of crisp color.

Biber displays remarkable versatility. His tables are made of cross-sections of wood, often combined into a mosaic pattern for the tops. Each is one-of-a-kind.

Tables currently displayed are a pine bronze coffee table, a black walnut pedestal table, an oak step table, and pine and brass end tables that would suit many purposes. The brass accents are a bonus, and quite eclectic. All tables can be custom ordered to any preference.

Sculptures range in size and shape. The life-sized male "Dancer" cast in epoxy resin is intended for a large public space. It may be duplicated in bronze for outdoors. Notice a piece, the "Cellist" a sculpture cast in bronze. Best known for his portrait busts, Biber has several on display.

CURRENTLY, AMERICANS of every income and educational level are

## Barkers celebrate 50th anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Denver Barker of Farmington Hills celebrated 50 years of marriage in Plymouth Grange Hall April 22.

Present for the occasion were their children, relatives, and friends, including best man and matron of honor, John and Ida Oldenburg of Plymouth.

Married on April 20, 1929, the Barkers have lived in the area most of their lives. Barker was born in Ohio. They have eight children, Ruth Richard of Livonia, Ann Burk, of Plymouth, Richard Barker, Robert Barker, Duane Barker, and Betty Barker, all from Farmington Hills. Rose Scott of Detroit and Norma Pilch of Granite City, Ill. They also have 11 grand children and eight great-grandchildren.



MR. AND MRS. DENVER BARKER

## Surprise for Kempton

A group of amazed automobile shoppers found themselves in the midst of a surprise party for Ray Kempton this week.

Kempton thought he was going to be looking at a new car in Erhard Motors

Sales, at 32715 Grand River, but found that the car was already his, purchased as a birthday gift by his wife Paula. Everyone in the auto showroom at the time was invited to join in his birthday celebration.

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