

Homey ideas bring unusual results

These are the days to salute your local merchants who have made the effort to have a floral display in front of their stores.

If you see a well-cared-for display of flowers outside of a store window, go in and compliment the owner or clerk. You don't have to make a purchase. Some have a margin of space beyond the sidewalk that belongs to the building and have created raised flower beds.

This is a good investment as they can insert evergreen cuttings in early winter to continue their plus accent. The total program is toward making your hometown a place to remember.

Geraniums and white petunias are always eye catchers. Coleus with bright leaves, plus pachysandra give a flower box an "A" rating.

ICE CREAM stores are well patronized in the summer. Here is a practical idea from Jean Kapel. She secured five



down to earth
Alice Burlingame

empty ice cream containers from a local store and lined them with appropriate plastic bags, then filled them with soil of good quality and planted the containers with colorful flowers in early summer.

She folded over the surplus plastic bag and placed a few white pebbles over the surface, leaving a minimal area for the rain to penetrate. This restricted the full blast of water so as to not drown the plants, but held the moisture for dry days. The containers can be covered with contact paper. Black and gold are handsome.

Here is another earthy suggestion. This spring I took a large rubbish bag and rolled down the top after pouring 15 inches of garden soil into it.

Then I took a sharp knife and made 16 slits in the bottom so water could escape. In the conditioned rubbish bag, I planted two potatoes that had been cut in half, being sure there were eyes on each of the four halves.

At this date, there are four beautiful plants and no potato bugs. Later, you will receive a report on how many potatoes I harvest.

The bag was set in a low area of a

field so it would have a better chance for moisture during a dry spell. I have heard the project works beautifully.

WHAT A PROJECT to share with city children to show them that all potatoes are not chips. Due to the weight of the finished project, an instructor could demonstrate the total lesson, then have the children cut two potatoes, and go home with the bag and cut potatoes for the project to be finished at home.

Think of all the vegetables that could be a conversation piece off one's patio. Squash would have elegant leaves as a vine. This idea would go over well in a nursing home.

As lettuce likes cooler weather for growing, you can make your own seed tape. You will need toilet paper, seeds and toothpicks. Make a paste with the flour and hot water. Dabble the toothpick in the paste, pick up a seed with the moistened toothpick and space it on the toilet paper at the intervals you wish.

The flour will have some nutrients, there will be a higher rate of survival, and you won't waste seed. Cover the attached seeds with lightly screened soil. This is a good project for those who feel their fingers are all thumbs.

MANY YEARS ago, I spent a morning with Mr. Bellingrath of Bellingrath Gardens. As he surveyed the beauty he had wrought, he said, "It is like a woman with 52 gowns."

I took this comment every time I visit Granbrook Gardens in Bloomfield Hills.

Have you been there this season?



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The sixth annual Art-in-the-Park in Birmingham will be held Sept. 27-28. Hours will be 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. both days.

The event, sponsored by the Friends of Common Ground, will feature the work of 125 artists from around the country.

Work will include prints, sculpture, jewelry, photography, weaving, ceramics, stained and blown glass and soft sculpture.

There will be a children's art area, ethnic food booths and free entertainment from 11 a.m. to closing on both days.

Participating artists are selected by a jury on the basis of quality. Serving on this year's jury are: Marsha Miro, Detroit Free Press art writer; Aris Koutroulis, painter and teacher at the Center for Creative Studies; and Bob Piepenberg, artist, teacher and sculptor.

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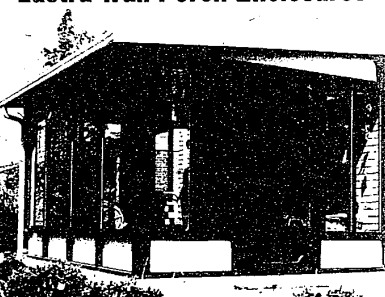
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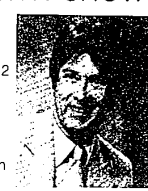
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