

There's options galore in gifts for gardeners

SELECTING appropriate gifts for the gardeners on your gift list may be difficult, but only because there are so many options to choose from.

Extension specialists at Michigan State University suggest the items below would be welcome under their Christmas trees:

- Gift certificates from a local nursery or garden center, or from a seed, plant and gardening equipment catalog.

- A flowering plant to brighten the home during the holidays. Even if the plant is one that will be discarded after flowering, be sure to include care instructions with it.

- Flower or vegetable seeds. Someone who raved over some product of your garden will probably appreciate seeds of that variety to grow.

- Cuttings from a house plant or an IOU for cuttings from a shrub, a tree seedling or a transplant from your property at the appropriate time for planting.

- A coupon redeemable for some gardening service or supplies. A horse owner might present a gardener friend with a coupon for a load of organic fer-

tilizer, for instance. Or the owner of a garden tractor might give a coupon entitling the recipient to have his/her garden plowed and disked.

- A tool or garden gadget — rain gauge, for instance, or a large outdoor thermometer, a pair of sturdy gardening gloves, a roll of plastic mulch, peat pots or pellets and plastic flats for starting seeds — even fluorescent tubes for a friend's indoor light garden.

- A book on some aspect of gardening or a subscription to a gardening magazine.

- A bird feeder and some wild bird feed. Be sure the recipient will be able to afford to continue feeding the birds after the gift feed runs out. Birds soon come to depend on backyard feeders and may starve if feeding suddenly stops.

Cookie dress-ups

Place whole nutmeats, candies, raisins, currants or candied peel on cookies before they're baked. If the cookie dough is not moist enough to hold the decorations, put a drop of water, honey, syrup or a little egg white where the decoration is to be placed.

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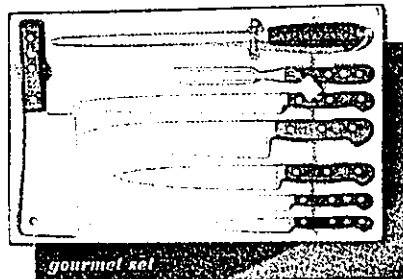
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