

POTATO POISONING:

Many readers have asked me if potato eyes or sprouts are poisonous. During the spring, spuds in storage have a tendency to send up sprouts, and when left in a well-lighted room they take on a greenish cast. We don't want to alarm you, but potato sprouts, potato tops and greened portions of the tubers are poisonous to humans, since they contain an alkaloid known as solanine. To be on the safe side gouge out the eyes of all old potatoes before cooking and remove the greened portions.

Seed Bentgrass In Moist Areas

Bentgrasses, species and varieties of Agrostis, are especially well adapted to climates with long rainy seasons or persistent mists. Such areas generally have an acid soil, too, well tolerated by bentgrass.

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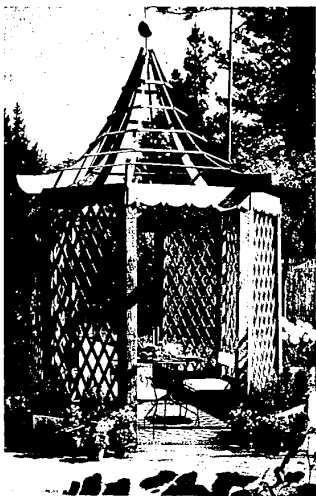
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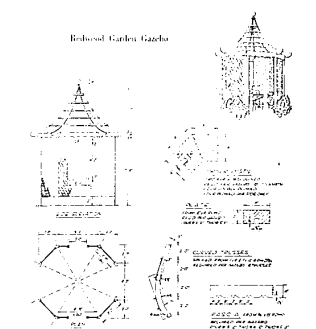
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SINCE IT IS MADE OF rot-resistant redwood, it can be placed directly on the ground, or on a concrete or brick patio, and designer Graham W.S. Miller says no foundation is necessary. Its "floor" can be grass, gravel, brick, or whatever you choose. If you build it yourself, use aluminum or hot-dipped galvanized nails to avoid staining. You can purchase the required kiln-dried redwood at any lumber dealer.

Red Fescue Is Best In Shaded Spots

FAST LANSING The turfgrasses varieties best adapted to a shaded lawn and the reasons why other varieties cannot survive under

shaded conditions have been pinpointed by a Michigan State University scientist.

Dr. James Beard, MSU turfgrass researcher, says Penn-lawn creeping red fescue is the best species for shaded sites.

While Penn-lawn can be severely thinned by leafspot disease, it usually recovers from the injury and develops into an adequate turf, he says.

A major contribution to turfgrass research was made by Beard and his colleagues when they discovered the actual cause of grass death under shaded conditions was not due to a lack of sunlight, as previously believed. Their studies show that the real cause is a more favorable environment for disease-producing microorganisms, plus a lack of disease-resistant varieties.

For example, permanent loss of Kentucky bluegrass has been caused by powdery mildew which is severe under shaded conditions.

Beard is currently working with other scientists to develop new varieties that will thrive when grown in the shade. He says there is a definite need for this kind of variety, since about 25% of Michigan's turf acreage is under some degree of shade.

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Landscaping Architect Planner, Not Planter

EAST LANSING As spring arrives many home owners can hardly wait to begin flower planting. But what about the design of your landscape?

If you don't feel confident in planning the landscape, perhaps you need to talk with a professional.

Joseph T. Cox, extension specialist in landscape architecture at Michigan State University, defines "landscape architect" as the professional person who plans and designs land spaces and the objects upon them for human use and enjoyment.

Guidelines Set For Sod

EAST LANSING Sodding can give you a weed-free "instant" lawn that can be established any time from early spring until Sept. 1. But there are some professional guidelines for establishing this turf.

Michigan State University scientists and specialists point out, for example, that sod cutting is most rapid if the sod is cut 1/2 to 3/4 inch. In other words, sod should have only that much soil clinging to the grass.

MSU studies have shown that the underlying soil should be moist when sod is laid. This gives roots a better chance to establish themselves quickly and firmly.

Soil for sodding should be prepared just as it is for seeding.

Laying sod on a subsoil should be avoided because the grass won't readily take root and get established.

New Rule

The American Lumber Standards Committee has announced the new standard covering mainly framing lumber and boards will go into effect Sept. 1. A six-month delay was allowed for preparing new grading rules and span tables.

Contrary to popular thought, the landscape architect is not one who plants trees or bushes or tells you how to take care of them. Instead, he adapts the land to fit the use you intend it for. He aims at economy and efficiency with maximum attractiveness.

To do this, he makes use of the existing land features—such as natural drainage, bodies of water and natural vegetation—to arrange land areas for special purposes. He may introduce a unique feature, such as a multi-trunk tree or sculptured lawn.

"CREATIVITY is one of the most sought-after abilities of the landscape architect," says Cox. "Without this, a plain, ordinary property will remain plain and ordinary and may not function well even after it has been developed."

The landscape architect prepares preliminary and alternate plans for land areas to make them as functional and attractive as possible. Once he has developed a plan that meets his client's approval, he makes detailed drawings, to include grading, drainage, utility layout, planting plan, road details, construction and cost estimates.

Also, he is responsible for letting the contract to a construction firm which will work under his supervision.

On any project, Cox explains, the landscape architect works with architects, engineers, nurserymen, zoning experts and other specialists.

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landscape architecture has been practiced in the United States for over a hundred years, though its history goes back more than 3,000 years. Arranging the landscape to meet man's needs for economic use and for pleasant surroundings has been carried on by the more highly developed civilizations for centuries, Cox notes.

Examples of landscape architects' work appear almost everywhere in parks, schools, subdivisions, shopping centers, industrial centers, golf courses, cemeteries and campuses as well as on private properties.

The landscape architect's ability is used by local, state and national governments. More and more, sensitive individual property owners seek his help.

Tulip Tips

If you have tulips blooming this spring and want them to do well next year, don't cut the stems and leaves off after the flower is gone.

William Carlson, Michigan State University horticulturist, says that stems and leaves are food sources for the bulb which provides the flower next year. If you want color in your garden after the tulips bloom, he recommends planting annual flowers between the tulips.

You'll only have to dig the tulip bulbs when they begin to show inferior flowers—or no flowers at all.

You can plant tulip bulbs any time from September to early December. Just be sure the weather is consistently cool enough so the bulbs won't start growing immediately.

If you feel that the tulips don't last long enough in the spring, Carlson suggests planting several different varieties.

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