

**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.

Incidentally, if you've got extra room in the garden, why not grow a few of your own spuds? It only takes a few to produce yourself a giant crop. And you have often wondered why your potatoes turn black after you cook them? This order is known as "after cooking darkening" and is worse in some years than others. Kabardin is quite susceptible, whereas Sebago is resistant. After cooking darkening in 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 agrostes, 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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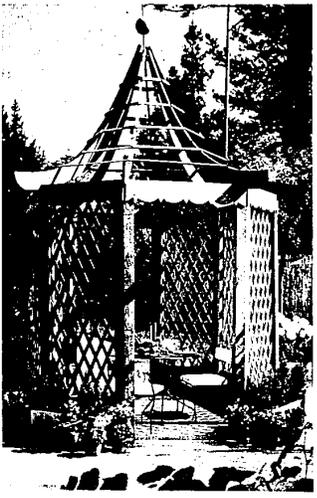
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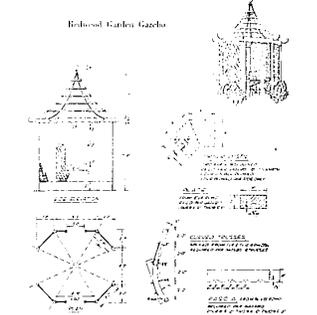
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SINCE IT IS MADE OF rot-resistant redwood, it can be placed directly on the ground, or on a concrete or brick patio, and designer Graham W.S. Miller says no foundation is necessary. Its "floor" can be grass, gravel, brick, or whatever you choose. If 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**

The turfgrass varieties best adapted in 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 Pennlawn creeping red fescue is the best species for shaded sites. While Pennlawn 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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**Landscape 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 important guidelines for establishing this turf.

Michigan State University scientists and specialists point out, for example, that sod rooting is most rapid if the sod is cut 1/2 to 3/4 inch. In other words, harvested 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.

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**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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