



Catch a Little Spring

Maribeth Galasso (above) sports sexy, suspended shorts from Alberta and Kathy Keller (at right) is in monochromatic dressing from B C Clothing. Both girls are residents of Farmington Hills and both modeled for Fairlane Town Center's "Catch a Little Spring" fashion show. A modern sense of attractiveness for this spring is low-keyed and unsexcessive, but perfectly finished.



Cross certain trees off your list

Most homeowners are aware of the value of trees, but there are a few kinds to be avoided when possible.

Some trees are real pests on property, and you should be aware of them if you buy a home and they come with the package. They should be eliminated. Also, avoid buying them in the nursery or supermarket.

If you buy a Chinese elm, the chances are it is a Siberian elm. This one doesn't have the beautiful vase profile of the elms and will break up in storms and your lawn will be a mess much of the time. The elm leaf beetle likes the Siberian elm.

This tree has surface roots which will make lawn mowing difficult. It has vast numbers of seeds to vex the home gardener.

Other groups of trees to avoid are the box elders, silver maples and cottonwoods, all fast growers with brittle branches. In the spring when the cottonwood drops its seeds it looks like the heavens are raining cotton.

Lombardy poplars are often seen in the country. They grow like marching soldiers with a narrow vertical profile. Take them off your list and out of your property. They are susceptible to borers and the cytospora canker. Soon a



down to earth

Alice Burlingame

dreamed of landscape line of vertical trees can become spotty because of having to eliminate the sick ones.

IF YOU are considering planting some trees to control the wind velocity which can hit your house on cold windy days, a group of trees planted on the west side of your property can become a windbreak and can cut down fuel by 15 percent. They reduce the speed of freezing, gusting winds and lessen the windchill freeze. And as a bonus they will reduce heat on hot summer days.

Here is a recipe which you can mix up and feed your house plants: ¼ tsp. of Epson salts, ¼ tsp. of salt peter (secure from the drug store), ¼ tsp. baking powder and one tsp. of household ammonia. Dilute in one quart of water and feed your house plants once a month.

Many of us admire iris as a perennial, but there are always those pesky borers which can move in and spoil a plant.

Edwin Rundlett, a garden writer, has this sage tip. In early March cover the exposed rhizomes with soil and place on the dead leaves a handful of dry, old leaves, or what have you. Ignite and burn all of the old foliage. This will eliminate the borer eggs and weed seeds which have been caught in the old dead leaves. Be sure and water down any mulch which might be in the flower bed.

Buckner Hollingsworth who wrote "Gardening on Main Street" has this tip to share. Take an 18-inch square of chicken wire and lay it on the top of your emerging peony foliage in the spring. As the plant grows, gingerly

raise the wire at intervals. Eventually the wire becomes supported and covered up by strong foliage. The peony bush will have good form.

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retirement memos

Margaret Miller

A family era ends

Moving vans rolled last month to take our daughter Barb and her family from their home in Livonia to the far east side of the metropolitan area.

Grandchildren Katie and Danny and their parents needed more space. Son-in-law Stosh had a job in Troy and cross-town commuting was getting less and less acceptable. Relocating put the family close to paternal relatives.

All excellent reasons for moving, Joe and I agreed. Having been the route ourselves, we followed with interest the sale of their first home and the search for a new one. We joined them in their joy when they found it, and we eagerly studied the pictures they sent.

BUT WHILE celebrating their happy milestone, I have to confess to a few feelings of emptiness. None of the family now is left in the west suburban area where Joe and I saw our four blonde girls grow to adulthood and where one family of our next generation began.

The changes started happening nearly a decade ago, of course. They began when Mary, our first-born, went to North Dakota, then to Massachusetts, then to Maine. And our youngest went to Alaska. Kathy has been in California and now is back in Michigan, but Lansing is rather far removed from her childhood scenes.

And Joe and I made the major changes, first leaving the Farmington

house on the hill that was home for 20 years and then making the retirement move to Florida. I really have little excuse for indulging in this particular nostalgia.

But the void is there — a little bit, anyway — when I realize no one in the family will be bumping into my longtime friends, or reporting changes in the old neighborhood, or, for that matter, reading these columns except after they've been clipped by friends.

WE'RE ENJOYING hearing reports on the new home, the abundance of nearby children and baby sitters, the classes, the school and the playground. Katie's new room and the new location of Danny's "ride-ride" bouncing horse.

We look forward to pictures of them and their belongings in new surroundings. We anticipate still more the time when we'll visit them in the fall, when larger quarters will provide more room for traveling parents.

And when we come we'll surely be back in our old western haunts too. It won't be the same. But then, nothing ever is.

Margaret Miller was Suburban Life editor for Observer Newspapers for 16 years. She and her husband Joe have retired to Florida, where she writes Retirement Memos.

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