Cowboy creates bonsai geraniums

John Wendland of Royal Oak, the Geranlum Cowboy, always wears a freah geranlum in his cowboy hat. He does more than wear them, he is a real cratisman when it comes to growing these flowers. He has been a plant lover for many years. He said he learned to love nature mostly from his mother who loved flowers.

His greenhouse is used from April on through the season. A lot of plants are started in the basement and finished in the outdoor greenhouse. Impattens and begonias are also used extensively in his garden as they blend well with geraniums and choke out the weeds, which results in low maintenance.

Wendland talked about the history of his favorite flower. Pelargoniums are cultured geraniums — they have two sets of different sized petals. True geraniums have 5-7 identical petals and longer stamens.

in the 1500-1600s merchant sallors brought the geranium from South Africa to Europe and England, Bota-nists cross-polinated these plants and started to develop thousands of different kinds and just called them geraniums. In the 1500-1600s merchant sailor

During Queen Victoria's reign these flowers were very popular in England. Unfortunately no records were kept as to the number of varie-ties developed then. Around 1700 a French blologist noticed the differ-nce in the shape of the flowers and realized the classification had been wrong.

wrong.

The plants are all in the same family, Gernainnaicle, Cranesbill is a name for the perennial geranium—the real geranium. One species blooms in April/May with purple blooms. Another, Herb Robert, has a pinkish bloom and grows profusely in this aren. It has very shallow roots. All seed geraniums offered now by nurseries are dwarf. Pelargoniums are stork's bills, which refers to the shape of the seed pod.

Wendland has developed his own system for creating bonsal plants. He said he usually uses the scented pelargoniums. Many varieties are fashioned into bonsal and an exten-sive collection has resulted. Wend-land will again display these speci-

mens at the Detroit Institute of Arts "Arts and Flowers" show in April 1989. And what a display it is.

He creates these bonsal (which means attack) by laying the small pois of the plants on their sides, trimming out the excess when they are 3-5 inches high. As they grow be continues to turn the pois and trim the plants. He uses a professional solless mix Pormix BX.

Wendland had lots of advice for geranium growers. If you wish to keep your plants over the winter months, pot them up and put them in a cool sunny window (ideal temperature 55-60 degrees) or in a cool syn in the basement. Water about once a month and bring them out early in the spring and water well. Fertilize every third or fourth week.

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For cuttings, follow general procedures, using a mix of three parts
Canadian peat and one part each of
perilite and vermiculite (or two parts
vermiculite). Put the cuttings in indirect sun for 45 days and then in a
sunny window. In the spring and
summer it will take 3-4 weeks to get
the roots established. In the fall and
winter, double the time. Each time
you re-pot increase the pot size by
one inch. Geraniums in the hope like
morning sun. It is best to keep them
out of direct aftermoon sun. Ideal
temperature is 65 degrees.

Some geraniums to look for when you are in the market are: Brocade, with a variegated leaf; ivy geranium for hanging plants; Pink Camella, very light plnk blossoms, and Subell, a dark plant with a zonal leaf. Zonal means the leaf has a darker green borschoe print in the middle. A tiny plant, Alpine, with single or double blooms is unique. Sincerity is Wendland's favorite.

Using the variety Apple Blossom Rosebuds Wendland fashloned bou-quets and boutonnieres for his daughter's wedding several years

He a member of the International Geranium Society and the Gerani-um/Pelargonium British Society of England. He is an active member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church Garden Club in Royal Oak.



Geranium Cowboy John Wendland is famous for bringing the wonders of the geranium to the attention of the public. He grows them, talks about them, propagates them, turns them into bonsai and uses them for decoration.



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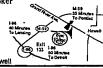
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