

Senior gardeners to celebrate

The senior residents of Southfield have been gardening with great zest in some 100 vegetable and flower garden plots at the Mary Thompson Resource Center, 10 1/4 Mile and Evergreen.

Awards for the biggest and best produce will be given at "Autumnfest," sponsored by the city of Southfield from 1-6 p.m. Sunday. Dancing, singing and farm animals for the children to pet will be featured. Many old-time crafts will be demonstrated and a bake sale and refreshments will be available. Tours of the Thompson home will be conducted.

If you park in the library lot of the Southfield Civic Center, a shuttle will take you to the farm site.

The home and surrounding 20 acres are part of a former sheep and fruit farm deeded to the city of Southfield for the express use of senior citizens for agriculture and cultural arts programs. More than 140 gardeners are presently using the Mary Thompson Farm.

What a nice way to spend a Sunday afternoon and see the seniors' gardens.

FALL IS a good time to plant most deciduous trees, although this varies with the type of tree. It is best to check with your supplier if you have questions.

According to new planting practices, it may not be better to dig a 45 hole for a 30-cent tree. If a lot of organic matter is added to the soil, the amended soil will help give a tree a good start, but it is then not in the "correct" soil in which it will grow as the years go by. If you insist, a mix of 50-50 mulch and soil can be used, but it is not necessary.

Choose a tree with one strong leader (central trunk). If there are

two leaders, remove one completely, or cut it back to promote side growth on that branch. The smaller the tree, the more successfully it will survive the transplant. A small- to medium-sized tree will usually catch up to a larger one in two to three years.

NOW, TO get back to that hole. Dig it wide and shallow, two to three times the width of the root ball.

Loosen the soil for a considerable area beyond the planting site so that water can be readily absorbed around the tree roots. The primary ones are in the top eight to 18 inches of soil. A healthy tree has roots that can extend as far as 1 1/2 times the diameter of the dripline.

Soak container grown plants well for ease of removal. Balled and burlapped ones should have the burlap loosened and pushed down toward the bottom of the ball. Be sure that wires or cords are cut away so that they will not girdle the tree as it grows. A garden fork can be used to score and loosen the root ball. If the roots are going around, uncoil them by hand.

The tree should be planted at the same depth at which it grew in the nursery, although a slight mounding, called "planting proud" in England, is good practice in clay soil — and we do have that in this area.

AFTER PLANTING, water thoroughly so that the soil can creep around the roots and no air pockets are left. A bit more soil may be needed to fill the depressions. Keep the root system moist, but not wet. A sharp pencil pushed into the root ball will tell if water is needed. Generally fertilizer at planting time isn't needed because the tree may be stimulated into growth for which it

is not ready. Wait until one growth cycle is complete before fertilizing. One final thought — the best way

to prevent mower or weed trimmer damage is to mulch an area free of grass around the base of the tree.



down to earth

Marty Figley



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Soril Gliberman, John Webb, supervisor, and Al Gliberman check out some of the fruits of their harvest.

September Fest

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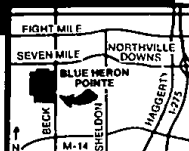
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