

Plant marigolds for winter cheer

Last month I spent a lovely afternoon at Greenfield Village and enjoyed seeing the well-maintained and interesting flower beds.

Much has been written about the historic significance of this treasure, but the plantings shouldn't be overlooked, they add a distinct quality to the whole.

At the entrance to the Village is a large, old-fashioned flower garden, which sets the mood. Put Greenfield Village on your list of places to visit soon.

You may still be able to find marigold seeds at the nursery or harvest them from your garden. You may want to experiment with growing these plants indoors this winter for continued summer beauty. What a great project for the kids, as seeds germinate in about seven days (with soil temperatures at 70-85.)

In December plant them about an eighth inch deep in a pot, gently, water well, and place them in a sunny window. In a few months you will enjoy again the summer fragrance, colors and bright beauty of marigolds. These plants don't need fussing over when established.

Marigolds are tender annuals that are native to the desert regions of Mexico, blooms are white, yellow,



down to earth

Marty Fligley

orange and red. Still, in 1573, a typical English farmhouse garden contained this plant as did those of Dutch settlers in the New World. Marigold petals have been used in cooking since the 16th and 17th centuries and are still used in salads. At one time they were used as a substitute for saffron.

Now is the time to walk around and look for damaged areas or bare spots on your lawn which need repair this fall. If you decide to sow seed, choose a variety that is recommended for your situation — heavy traffic area, sun or shade.

The Oakland County Extension Office generally recommends a mixture such as 40 percent bluegrass, 40 percent fine fescue and 20 percent improved rye grasses for this area. There are many combinations in between. Remember that fine fescue doesn't grow well in wet areas. Keep the grass a bit higher in shady spots,

so that the grass blades will produce as much energy as possible for continued growth. Information is included on the package.

There are steps to reestablish grass growth: 1. test the soil, 2. fertilize (if soil not tested, use a 12-12-12 ratio fertilizer), 3. till and rake to 4 inches deep, and water well for several days, 4. seed and lightly rake the area with a leaf rake, 5. apply a light mulch of oat straw (the oat seeds will be killed by frost) and roll the area so that the seeds will make contact with the soil, 6. water lightly and frequently, don't let the area dry out.

After the first mowing, when the grass is 3 inches tall, apply a second

application of fertilizer at the rate recommended on the bag. Fertilizer applied to all the lawn in September will give it a good boost to prepare for the winter and be ready to enhance the property when spring arrives.

The Oakland County County Extension Center has several brochures concerning lawn care. You can visit them or call 858-0880 for information. Two booklets on natural lawn care methods are offered from Ringier Corp., 9959 Valley View road, Eden Prairie, Minn., 55344. "Success with Your Lawn" is \$2, and "Restore Your Lawn - a Drought Relief Handbook," is free. Enclose a self-addressed stamped 8 by 11 envelope.

The Great Lakes Rock Garden Society of Michigan is holding its fall meeting on Saturday, Sept. 16 at the home of Vivian Kalmbach of Bloomfield Hills. After a program on growing ferns from spores and viewing Kalmbach's collection, a plant sale and lunch will follow.

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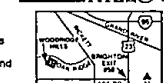


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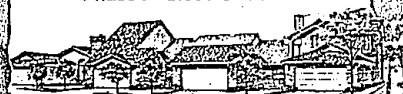
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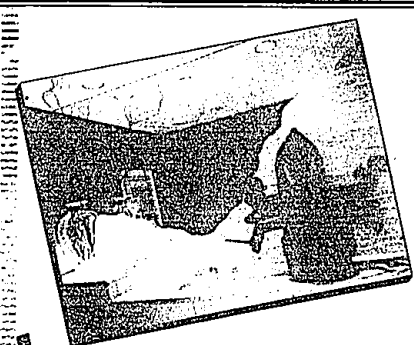
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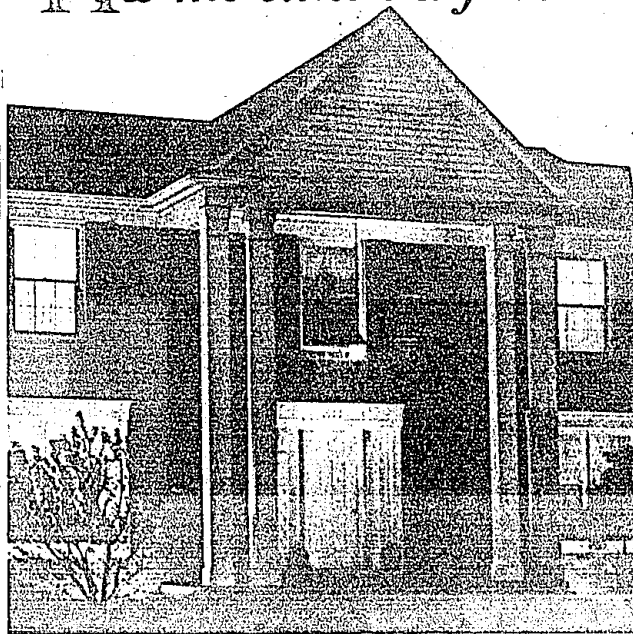
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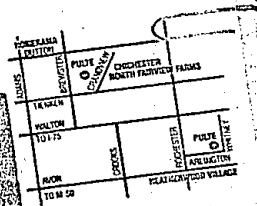
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