

'A Gardener's Holiday' declared in Ann Arbor

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"I have always liked model trains; her hobby is gardening," he said. "To spend more time together, we joined our hobbies together."

The result is a rare hybrid: model railroading in an outdoor garden. "There aren't too many people who do it," Cromer said. "Ours is kind of a pioneering display."

Frost, snow and rain can ruin a set-up, he said, but it's not as fragile as some might think. "I've seen some model railroad gardens where the engine has a working snow plow on the front."

The model trains used for his hobby are larger than the type most often used in basement set-ups, he explained: a locomotive is one foot to

two feet long.

Meanwhile, Marge Taylor of Plymouth will give a lecture, demonstration 3-4 p.m. Sunday, April 14, on "Designing Bouquets for Your Home."

VISITORS TO the show also will have everything they need to emulate what they see at their disposal in "The Marketplace," in a pavilion adjacent to Yost Ice Arena. It will offer a full array of gardening tools, plant materials, gifts, topiaries, Bonsai specimens, house plants, seeds, decorative planters and bulbs.

Local Observer & Eccentric participants in The Marketplace include: Eaton Nursery, a landscape services firm in West Bloomfield;

Botanical Images, a shop specializing in wearable botanical art in Troy; the Garden Path Nursery, a garden center specializing in Japanese Maples in Union Lake; Good's Nursery, a garden center in Canton, which is bringing a variety of perennials; and Nature's Reflections in Farmington Hills, which specializes in botanical and wildlife art prints.

Show tickets are \$8 for adults, \$4 for children age 12 and younger. Tickets will designate dates and time periods to visit the event. Although tickets will be available at the gate, only advance tickets guarantee immediate entry. Advance tickets are available at the Michigan Union Ticket Office, all Ticketmaster outlets and Hudson's department stores.

To order tickets by telephone, call 763 TKTS (Ann Arbor area) or 648-0666 (Detroit area). In the interest of public safety, strollers will not be permitted inside Yost Ice Arena during the show.

Directions: Free parking for the flower show is available at the Briarwood Mall on State Street and at Ann Arbor Pioneer High School, 601 W. Stadium Blvd. Shuttle buses will run regularly to and from both lots to the show. Shuttle fares are \$1.

Take I-94 west to State Street and travel north to Briarwood Mall or I-94 west to Ann Arbor Pioneer High School heading northeast toward Ann Arbor to Main Street, veer left heading north to Pioneer High School.

Home gardening — variety, best taste, freshness

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For most vegetables, a small packet of seeds will produce enough for a family of four.

Warm-season vegetables such as cucumbers, melons, squash, peppers and tomatoes are sensitive to cold temperatures and will be killed by frost. Buy seedlings of these vegetables at your favorite nursery and plant them in mid to late May when the evening temperature hits 55 degrees.

Not only is this a timesaver, but Bizio said it allows the gardener to avoid any problems with seed germination.

DON'T CHOOSE transplants that already have flowers or fruits on them, said Bernie Zandstra, Michigan State University extension horticulturist.

"Transplants need to concentrate their energies on establishing a large, strong root system. If they've already switched from vegetative growth to

fruit production, they will not be able to do this and will struggle to produce fruit on an inadequate root system."

According to Sullivan, four tomato plants could supply a small family with fresh fruit for most of the summer. Pick an early-maturity variety, like Early Girl, that will be ready in 60-65 days, cherry tomatoes for salads, and beefsteak which taste great on hamburgers, but take longer to mature.

"Handle plants so as to avoid miring their stems or roots as much as possible," Zandstra said. "If plants were grown in peat pots, soak the pots completely before planting. Then bury each pot completely under the soil. If part of the pot is left exposed, it will serve as a wick and dry out the pot and the soil mix around the roots."

Plants in multi-compartment containers should be well watered and then carefully removed.

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