

CREATIVE LIVING

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1992



MARY FIGLEY

Heap of information can help composting

In March, I attended a composting seminar that took place during Agriculture and Natural Resources Week in Lansing.

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If you don't have green matter (grass clippings, trimmings, etc.) you will need one of the following that will cause heat to build up so that the composting process can begin.

Matter of degrees

A minimum temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit is necessary to kill weed seeds and pathogens in the soil, so either wood-free animal manure, a high-analysis weed-free fertilizer, or a bioactivator such as Hinger's CompostPlus, must be used.

Murphy's Oil Soap, or a soap containing saponin, will act as a surfactant to the dry leaves and can be applied with a hose-end sprayer. This soapy water makes the leaves wetter and they will then be able to absorb more water as needed.

To keep the heat up in the pile, it must be turned several times a month so that air circulates through it. If this is not done, fermentation will occur. Turning the pile will move the contents around so that all the weed seeds will be heated sufficiently to be killed. A loose plastic cover will help retain the heat and still allow air circulation.

If you want weed-free compost, DON'T add soil!

Heap of information

Although I have been "composting" for several years, I really haven't gone about it in the right way, especially since I'd like compost in several months instead of two years.

So the other day I dug into the compost heap and sure enough, some of the leaves that were put in last fall were as dry as a bone - although we really had plenty of rain this spring.

I began by transferring the contents to make a new heap. Not sure that there was really enough green material, I used a bioactivator as I layered the dry leaves, which I wet with the soapy water, and other debris. Then I stuck the compost thermometer, and covered it all with plastic. I will turn it every couple of weeks and look forward to the results. I know the plants will be grateful for it!

Many states are composting either through local governments or commercial enterprises. It is a step in the right direction. We could all help by composting and making use of our own yard waste. It is up to us to be conscious of the problems and do our part to help this Earth the best ways that we can.

A new magazine, "Great Lakes Recycling Journal," P.O. Box 638, Cudilline, Mich. 49601 (\$20 per year), gives much information on recycling and composting.

A three-savine composting idea is to leave grass clippings on the ground when you mow. When grass reaches three inches, cut off one inch and let the nutritious clippings filter down to the ground. This does not cause thatch. My goal this year is to convert you all to this beneficial practice.

Super symposium

In April I attended a garden symposium sponsored by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and the American Horticulture Society, where we met great American gardeners who have been successful in planning and planting their particular styles of gardens.

What had started as a temporary dalliance has become a lifetime obsession, one speaker said. Perhaps that's the way many of us began.

I highly recommend this symposium. To receive information about the 1993 event, call 840-229-1000. Among the All-American Selections winners for 1992 is a *Canna hortensis* "Tropical Rose," the first canna from seed, generally similar to canna from roots or rhizomes.

Rising rose

The foliage is lush and the blooms are soft rose. In our zone it must be grown as an annual, as purchased plants will be dead, since it takes several months for the plant to flower from seed.

Other winners are: *Salsola escaulina* "In a Red," *Verbena* "Penches and Cream," *Vinca* "Pretty in White," *Dianthus F* "Idea Violet," a new dill "Ferlican" and a round carrot "Thumblelina."

Mary Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham.

Boxes carry special message



SLASH PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN DEAN

Dots the look: Two ceramic figures sit on one of the mailboxes designed by artists for Birmingham gallery owner Carol Hooberman. Hooberman will donate all proceeds from the sale of the mailboxes and artistic mirrors to the Humane Society.



BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

The mailboxes Carol Hooberman is featuring at her Birmingham gallery this month carry a special message.

The eight mailboxes, and 13 mirrors, were designed by 15 artists from around the country. They are in an exhibit, "Mirrors and Mailboxes," at the gallery, 124 S. Woodward, Suite 12. All of the proceeds from their sale will go to the Humane Society.

"I just decided once in a while you have to do something for charity," Hooberman said. "What I try to do is find something that people could use."

"I wanted to get something that people cared about. I feel that people care about animals."

A Birmingham gallery owner is making special deliveries with the artistic mailboxes she is featuring this month. All of the proceeds from the sale of the mailboxes, and decorated mirrors, will go to the Humane Society.

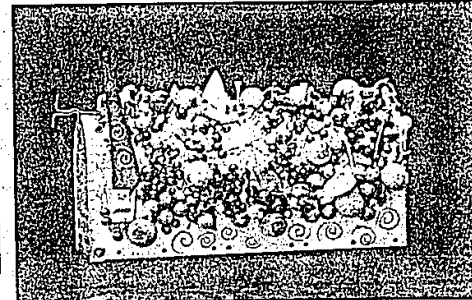
Hooberman gave "regular, generic" mailboxes to the artists, she said. "They were free to do whatever they wanted."

The mailboxes and mirrors sell between \$80 and \$200. The mailboxes can be used as indoor sculpture or on a desk top for outgoing mail. They can rest on a table or stand on a metal frame.

Two ceramic men sit back to back on the top of one mailbox. Another mailbox holds a colorful collage/semblage of marbles and tiny sailboats, globes, planes and figures. Broken glass is arranged in a mosaic on another.

Michigan artist Peggy Kerr worked on a mailbox and a mirror. Other participants include painter Nancy Rattit, Wil

See MAILBOXES, 3D



Special delivery: A colorful collage/semblage of marbles and small items decorates one of the mailboxes for sale this month at the Carol Hooberman Gallery.

'Celebrate Life'

Awards named in annual exhibition

"Take Time to Smell the Flowers," a brightly colored textile bath hand and machine quilted, won Juror's Choice Award honors Saturday in "Celebrate Life 1992," the 12th annual juried art show of the Congregational Church of Birmingham.

The 47-by-47-inch quilt, designed and executed by Nancy Meyer of Plymouth, was selected from more than 370 works entered by 100-plus different artists whose works are to hang in the juried show.

The granddaughter of a quilter, Meyer has been working at the craft since 1983 but only recently began to enter her textiles in competition.

"I've spent the last eight years working to develop my own style," she said. "Quilting was something I always knew I would do. I just had to find time to do it."

Variety on hand

Paintings, drawings, collages, hard and soft sculpture, graphics, photography, ceramics and fiber were entered into the show, open to the public Friday-Sunday, June 12-21. Hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday, and

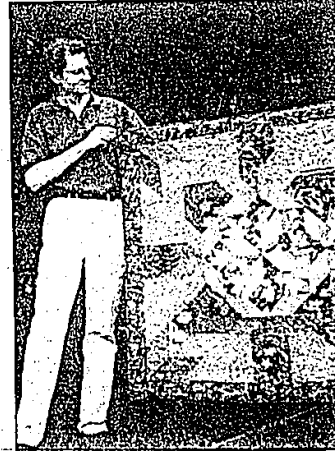
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. Lunch will be served between 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, June 16-18, as part of the exhibition. For more information or for luncheon tickets, available at \$7, call 644-4511.

The Congregational Church of Birmingham is at 1000 Cranbrook Road, at the corner of Woodward and Cranbrook Road in Bloomfield Hills. Its members include more than 500 families who live in the three-county metropolitan Detroit area.

Cranbrook juror

Juror Greg M. Wittkopp, curator of the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, narrowed the entries to about 50 eligible for prizes, then singled out the quilt for the \$300 Juror's Choice Award and six other works each for \$100 Merit Awards.

Two of the Merit Awards, made at the juror's discretion, went to artists for the work they entered in the show, rather than to individual works of art. Wittkopp is responsible for the preservation and development of Cran-



In celebration: Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum curator Greg M. Wittkopp, juror of "Celebrate Life," the 12th annual art show of the Congregational Church of Birmingham, holds the Juror's Choice Award winner. The 47-by-47-inch quilt by Nancy Meyer of Plymouth is among more than 370 works featured in the show, running June 12-21.

See EXHIBIT, 3D

Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Economic Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

For information and reviews of musical performances, please turn to the Entertainment section.

■ GREAT OUTDOORS

Meat Arts, 32800 Franklin Road in Franklin, will have its first outdoor show this weekend, featuring the whimsical, one-of-a-kind metal sculptures by Bill Helms. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Call 851-9949 for information.

Art Beat

■ BRUSHING UP

The Michigan Water Color Society will have its annual meeting 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, June 13, at the Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Evergreen. Non-members will be charged \$5 admission. For information, call 352-3973 in Southfield or 663-2825 in Ann Arbor. Two well-known Michigan watercolorists will demonstrate their skills: Marilyn Derwenskus in the morning and Paula Zaks Silverstein in the afternoon. A short meeting will take place during a brown bag lunch break. Desserts and beverages will be provided.

■ APPLAUSE, APPLAUSE

Jeffrey Evans, a student of Jerome Stinson of West Bloomfield, is a first-place winner in the Student Achievement Testing String finals sponsored by the Michigan Music Teachers Association in the Junior High Division. Jeffrey, a 15-year-old violinist from Romeo, is the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Mark Evans. The competition took place April 25 at Michigan State University.

■ ON THE AIR

Otto Haensler, vice president/managing director of the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham, is the guest host on the "Guess Who's Playing the Classics?" program, 9-10 p.m. Thursday, June 11, on WQRS-FM.