

# CREATIVE LIVING

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MARTY FIGLEY

## Advice for gardens comes from England

**T**he Hillier Guide to Connoisseur's Plants, Alan Twigg (Timber Press, \$37.95), contains more than 200 color photos, many of them in ideal settings, and lists 1,500 "good and desirable plants mainly for the garden but also for cool conservatories."

Hillier Nurseries in England is known for select plants. Don't let this deter you from the book, as the sound advice will be an invaluable reference and is suitable for our country as well. Included are trees, shrubs, roses, conifers, clematis, perennials, bulbs, ferns, grasses and alpines.

Each section gives descriptions and horticultural information as well as advice for using plants in groupings for the most effective display, including those for a focal specimen and those suitable for containers.

### Ideas for bulbs

"Classic Bulbs: Hidden Treasures for the Modern Garden," Katherine Whiteside, photos by Mick Hales (Villard, \$40), is filled with delightful information from historically correct accounts to legends about plants that grow from bulbs; corms, tubers or thickened rhizomes.

Whiteside writes from personal experience and with humor. A warm feeling hit me as I read it. Although many people limit the garden to spring flowering bulbs, this book encourages one to explore bulbs for all seasons of the year, including forcing for indoor pleasure. It also suggests innovative planting ideas. Hales' photography reaches out from the pages to grab your attention.

### Garden gardens

"A Vineyard Garden," Molly Chappell (Viking, \$30), is a coffee-table sized book that is visually enchanting. It contains many photographs and nine paintings on silk, but the main theme encourages us to look, see and appreciate the beauty of nature in all seasons.

Chappell relates many experiences and thoughts of her family's successful vineyard and gardens in the Napa Valley in California, and also shares her creative uses of nature's bounty.

Corstals in the bedroom, many uses for rocks (and how to appreciate them), baskets from pine needles and a "dayhouse" made of vines are just some of the delightful ideas. Her use of natural things for centerpieces and for decorations are inspiring.

"By Pen & By Spade: An Anthology of Garden Writing from Horace," edited by David Wheeler (Summit Books, \$24.95), includes personal accounts of gardening and historical facts by eminent writers.

The essays are lifted from the privately published gardening journal Hortus, begun in 1987. Both "Cut to the Penelope Hobhouse, Rosemary Verey, Stephen Lucy and many others detail experiences and share their knowledge about gardens such as ones in New Zealand and the Azores and at Sissinghurst Castle, and the rather mottled history of herb gardens. All who enjoy "the story" will find this a delightful read.

### Cooking adventures

"Vegetables," Colette Rossant and Marianne Melendez (Viking, \$40), describes all kinds of vegetables and presents many innovative recipes that will suit the most adventurous cooks — 250 of them.

This mother and daughter team recall personal forays to find the unusual — mushrooms, roots, bulbs and many varieties of onions, squash, Chinese vegetables and wild plants — then turn them into scrumptious and unusual dishes.

Some of the vegetables are readily available, although it might be a bit difficult to find all of the unusual ones, the search would be worth the quest. A perfect gift for the gourmet cook.

### Roots of travel

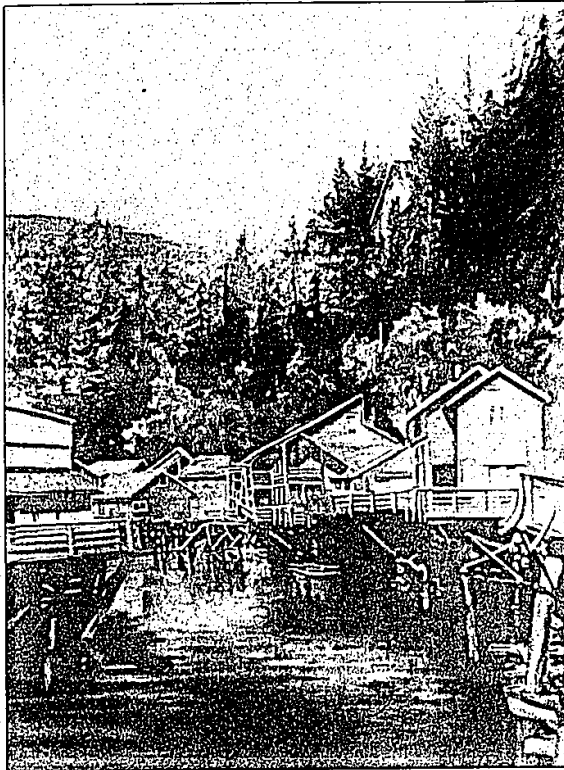
"The Book of Scottish Gardens," Fay Young, photographs by Brinsley Burbidge (Timber Press, \$29.95, soft), is a pictorial guide to more than 50 gardens in Scotland. It breathtakingly shows the various types of gardens throughout the country. The scope of these gardens is amazing and the book will encourage one to plan a trip to Scotland to see them firsthand.

If you're going to England, an excellent traveling companion for gardeners is "Gardens of England & Wales," (Green Shade Inc., \$10). Updated each year, it is now available in the United States and Canada.

Generally a car is necessary for visiting the gardens (more than 2,800 arranged by county), some tiny and others quite large. Many have specific visiting dates and times, some offer refreshments. To order, write Green Shade Inc., P.O. Box 547, Cape Neddick, Maine 03902-0547, or phone or fax 207-363-6787.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham.

**Eyecatching:** Translucent violet skies hover over "Ketchikan," an Alaskan watercolor by V. Janus Benda. Limiting the palette, she uses the darker value of the same hue to accent evergreens in the background. Treetops and roof lines angle downward, leading the eye to a small red house resting on the water's edge.



## Northern exposure

## Alaska trip inspires artist



The beauty of Alaska stirred the painter's brush of Farmington Hills artist Virginia Janus Benda. She returned from a trip to the 49th state inspired to paint the great scenery and vastness she saw.

By LINDA ANN CHOMIS  
SPECIAL WRITER

Alaska's natural lures beckon artist Virginia Janus Benda to return to where animals roam free and scenery remains untouched.

After a 3½-week trip to the rugged 49th state last September, the Farmington Hills resident returned home with a passion to paint "all of the scenery and vastness of it all."

With enthusiasm and energy levels zooming, she has created an outpouring of translucent watercolor, ink and dye on rice paper, oil, acrylic, and handmade paper assemblage.



STAFF PHOTO BY JIM JACOBSON

**Deluge of artwork:** Farmington Hills artist V. Janus Benda, inspired by a 3½-week tour of Alaska, exhibits 35 of nearly 50 watercolor, acrylic and oil paintings and handmade paper assemblage created within the last nine months.

The Livonia Arts Commission showcases 35 of these new works through July 3 in the first one-person show at the new art gallery, on the second floor of the Livonia Civic Center Library, Farmington Road and Five Mile.

"I've traveled all over the world — Mexico, Paris. Alaska is the only place that keeps haunting me," Janus Benda said.

"Alaska must be the only state left where nature is virtually undisturbed by man. It's undeveloped. There was so much raw nature there. I would like to be able to go back to Alaska, stay there while and paint on location."

Rising at 5 a.m., Janus Benda works 5 to 14 hours a day, six days a week in her studio. Her zeal impresses the viewer in the landscapes, florals and abstracts, all created within the last nine months. "I enjoy what I do. I love it," she said.

### Architectural background

An architectural engineering graduate of the University of Detroit, Janus Benda worked 15 years in structural engineering of commercial buildings for the Southfield firm, Harley Ellington Pierce Yee Associates. In 1987, she decided to chuck the security for a full-time career in art.

"I've always had art in the back of my mind. I'm in this for a profession," Janus Benda said. "Since I only have one life to live, it's now or never."

See ARTIST, 610

## Grads exhibit talents

By MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

The familiar turns unusual, and vice versa, in Student Summer Show 1992 at the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, 500 Lone Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills.

The exhibition, continuing through Sept. 20, features work by this year's 61 graduates from the Cranbrook Academy of Art's nine departments: architecture, ceramics,

### CRANBROOK

design, fiber, metalsmithing, painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture. Many offer a new look at what is considered usual.

In the ceramic piece, "The Great Wall," by Nell Maxton, masks look like birds trapped in a large net. Some eye holes in the masks are closed, others open. The work examines the idea of reality that often hides behind fantasy.

Andrea Stix Wasserman's fiber work consists of a wooden ear on the wall and a larger, mulberrywood and brass ear on the floor. The latter "ear" has rings like a tree stump. They suggest past development, but also current resonance, sound chime into the center.

Metalsmithing student Hec Kyong Rim constructs a statement with brick molds. They look alike but are different when they are taken apart. The brick is a metaphor for building art and culture.

Concentration is depicted in the writing table by design student Abigail J. Shacht. It resembles a stack of paper, topped with a frame that resembles a desk top or a window. The user has no room for anything but paper and a writing instrument. He or she is "enclosed" by the frame, concentrating on the work or on looking inside for ideas.

See CRANBROOK, 3D

## 'Picture Lady' gets new look

By MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

The school year may have wound to a close, but volunteers in the Detroit Metropolitan Area Picture Lady Program are still going strong.

Those in the nationally recognized public and private school art enrichment program are getting down to business — developing a new logo, revising the manual, working on ideas for the fall.

Volunteers present art in the classroom to students in kindergarten to fifth grade. The program is known by a variety of names, including Picture Person and Art Smarts.

The program uses the facilities at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association. It expands beyond the immediate area — to Farmington as well as Fenton, Clarkston and Battle Creek, among other communities.

See VOLUNTEERS, 1D

## Art Beat

### BROADCAST NEWS

Lathrup Village resident Ernest Cooper, chemistry and physics teacher at Seaholm High School in Birmingham, will be the host on the "Guess Who's Playing the Classics?" program 9-10 p.m. Thursday, June 25, on WQRS-FM.

### STAMP OF APPROVAL

John MacDermald of West Bloomfield is among the artists whose work is on display to show entries

in Michigan's annual trout/salmon and waterfowl stamp design contests.

Anyone wanting to see wildlife art may catch the exhibit July 1-18 at Chandeliers Gallery in Petoskey, July 24 to Aug. 10 at the Grand River Gallery in Grand Haven, Aug. 12-17 at the Mlet Festival in St. Johns and Sept. 12-13 at the Pointe Mouillee State Game Area near Rockwood during the Duck Hunters Tournament.

The design contests are sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources. The art works were judged during the Bluebird Festival and Wildlife Art Show in Jackson in March.

More than 300,000 trout/salmon stamps and 60,000 waterfowl stamps are expected to be bought by anglers and hunters this year.