

Visiting more public gardens, both near and far



MARTY FIGLEY

Last month, I talked about my trip to Washington. I want to share a little more with you. A special treat was a visit to the U.S. Botanic Garden, the oldest continually operating botanic garden in North America, begun in 1820. The large conservatory is being renovated, but was still an interesting area to see.

I had the privilege to be included in a private tour with Holly Shimizu, assistant executive director to the Frederic August Bartholdi Park (he designed the Stat-

ue of Liberty), part of this complex of gardens. What a treat! One area is constructed of raised beds to provide superior drainage to the plants, many of which are herbs.

A new garden is being planned, a three-acre National Garden, adjacent to the Botanic Garden, to commemorate the bicentennial of the Congress. This garden will feature the rose, includes an environmental learning center and consist of gardens to illustrate the diversity of plants in the United States. Landscape plans are being submitted.

Raising awareness

Another day on the Washington trip we visited the American Horticultural Society headquarters, River Farm. AHS is "a national

organization, dedicated to increasing the public's awareness of the importance of horticulture in our daily lives and to our future."

Twenty-seven acres provide plenty of space for beautiful gardens, teaching gardens, lectures, symposia, even a composting display and the many activities associated with such an organization. The lovely home is also open, and visitors are welcome.

Royal treatment

In May, on a trip to England, we were fortunate to visit the Great Garden, 4,600 acres that surround Windsor Castle. The weather was perfect, bright and sunny, and the rhododendrons and azaleas were blooming in all their glory. The health garden was especially interesting. The solid-

ity of the huge old trees added such a permanence to the acres of gardens.

I also visited Kew Gardens and was thoroughly enchanted with it. Although time was short, I managed to climb to the top of one of the glass houses and view the lush greenery from a bird's eye view. Next time a picnic lunch would be in order.

On the agenda was a visit to the Chelsea Flower Show, and I found it to be somewhat of a disappointment. The display gardens were lovely, as were the flower displays (some very unusual, most very beautiful). The stands of commercial enterprises were a surprise, but, I suppose, necessary. The crowds were unbelievable.

Garden calendar

Great gardeners live in England and around the world, but our good old metropolitan Detroit area has a lot to offer in the way of flower shows and displays.

The Ann Arbor Flower Show committee can be proud of their efforts, and all the people and companies who display are to be commended. The 1993 dates are March 25-28.

The Home and Garden Show at the Silverdome represents workable ideas for gardening, and the exhibits and individual plants from clubs and members help make the show a success. The 1993 dates are March 3-7.

Finally, the Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association/Meadowbrook Outdoor Garden Show proves that gardens can be

appreciated most fully and in perspective when they can be seen where they are to remain. This year several new gardens will inspire, and lecturers will share their expertise. The 1993 dates are June 12-13.

Happy Holidays to you all, and a Joyful New Year.

Samples of my Dillylilicious and Mustardilicious mixes will be available 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, at MT Hunter Country Store, 1000 S. Woodward in Birmingham.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave a message by dialing 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859.

Windows

from page 1D

"He's been doing the windows (here) forever," McAuley said, rapidly and smoothly preparing burgers.

"There's no maintenance to them at all. It's taking advantage of something (window space) we have a lot of."

When the decorations are removed (with Windex and razors), the windows seem barren, McAuley said.

"He does something different all the time," said Alex Carwano, owner of Xandru's Hair Care at 12 Mile and Farmington Road in Farmington, where Fleck adorned the windows with holly. "It's all free hand, not like a stencil thing."

People enjoy seeing the decorations, Lynn Fleck said. "They have a smile on their face," she said.

The artist's work brings compliments in different ways. A business in Georgia wanted Fleck to paint a Christmas design on its windows in September after he said he wouldn't be in the area again before December. A woman praised the painting he did in the

kitchen of a Michigan restaurant. "She said when she feels blue, she'll sit and have a cup of coffee and feel better (looking at the painting)," he said.

At Greene's, Fleck's activity didn't interfere with the business. One of the customers watching from the counter asked him where a Santa was.

"That's the first year you didn't make one here," he said. "It amazes me how fast he can do it."

Fleck placed a tiny Santa and reindeer on the door, as he had planned.

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And he does more than windows. He painted such figures as Laurel and Hardy, Martin and Lewis and Jay Leno for the Rags to Riches Comedy Club in midtown Manhattan (where he has performed as a standup comic).

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Fleck's work in the houses has included front windows, shower doors and bathrooms. Filling some of the more unusual orders, he has painted a toilet seat to match the wallpaper, and a room with lips all over it.

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The sale includes items ranging from a \$10 simple carved wooden pin to a \$16,000 garnet and diamond pin/necklace with pearl accents set in 18-carat yellow gold. The piece, circa 1880, contains

very rare green garnets called Demantoids.

Also in the sale are a costume rhinestone pin, a Victorian metal band and ribbon choker, a platinum diamond watch with an opal face and a graduated necklace of natural black opal beads.

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Jewelry sale to help finance building for new art gallery

Paul Haig has a new twist for comedian Henry Youngman's one liner, "Take my wife, please." Haig wants people to "take" her jewelry instead.

Haig is the owner and proprietor of P.R. Haig Jewelers in downtown Rochester. He and his wife, Diane, are hosting a special event this weekend to sell 90 percent of the jewelry Haig has given her as presents over the years.

They are hosting the Jeweler's Wife's Sale to raise money to buy a building for a new business venture they will call Fire Hall Galleries. It will be a gallery featuring textiles, objets d'art, antiques and collectors pieces from different ethnic groups.

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