

Islands

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asked them why their stomachs were protruding. It's a sign of bounty, they said, there's plenty of fish in the waters."

Several of the paintings speak to the dark side of island traditions. "Danger at the Gate," an acrylic-based mixed media, illustrates the culture's tradition of sacrificing the first-born girl child to the God, Pele. A man with a knife in his hand appears ready to appease the God so the island's volcano remains silent. Vibrant island colors cast shadows over the event about to occur.

Initially, DiMarco "laid out the paintings in her head" two summers ago, after hauling her back while golfing.

"I did the masks because I wanted to do people. I decided I wanted to paint expressions of where I'd been. I had put down emotion. I had to put down what I felt," she said. The 1988 winner of the prestigious Scarra Club Gold Medal.

"The people there are so wonderful, gentle and kind. The world we live in is kind of scary. I found a gentleness there that is something lost for us."

Fellow artist Jeri Fellwock of Farmington Hills followed the development of DiMarco's island and mask paintings over the last year. "Her colors are vibrant, her brush strokes are energetic, the way she paints in layers, the way she lets her colors show through, the story she tells," Fellwock said.

As a 9-year-old girl, DiMarco learned the most valuable lesson of her life, one that guides not only how she lives that life but how she approaches her art.

"It was the last time I saw my mother before she died. I wanted to do something but backed away from it saying I couldn't. My mother said, 'Always try. If you have an idea no matter how abstract, how do you know you'll fail if you don't try. Always try. Not to try is to fail.'"

DiMarco learned from the best. Studies at Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts (now Center for Creative Studies) under Sarkis Sarkisian and Guy Palazzola, and at Eastern Michigan University, gave DiMarco the knowledge necessary to develop her drawing abilities.

Portraits sketched from life reflect much-practiced skills in the human form as well as the ability to manipulate the media of pencil and pastel.

An active member of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association and Scarra Club in Detroit, DiMarco has taught multimedial painting at the Birmingham Community House, Visual Arts Association of Livonia and privately in her own studio 15 years.

On March 4, she begins teaching a series of three workshops in pastel at VAA.

"Art doesn't have rules but you have to study to understand color compatibility. Some people call me a colorist, but I not only use color, I know the capability of color, how to paint flesh tones, to red separated by only a thin black line and offset by the coolness of Raku," she said, referring to "Maeke," an acrylic painting that incorporates pieces of ceramics.

DiMarco is proud of the many awards and prizes she's received but says she doesn't keep track of them anymore. That isn't why she paints.

"If I'm not involved in a painting, I'm kind of down but if I have something in progress, I wake up happy as a lark," she said. "Enjoy painting. I need to paint. I have to."

DiMarco has exhibited at the Bellan Art Center in Troy, Birmingham Community Center, Edie Jopple's Bay Street Gallery in Northport, Detroit Artists Market, Detroit Institute of Art, rental gallery, Farmington Community Library, Livonia City Hall and Atrium Gallery in Northville. Her work is in collections across the United States as well as Canada, Germany, Japan and England.

DiMarco likes to have three paintings in the works at any given time. The beginnings of her newest series focusing on impressionistic sunflowers raises its head for the first time in this show. Energetic bursts of gold light play on the canvas in all their magnificence.

Other paintings in the show continue a theme that thrives on social and psychological mores. "From the Caves" deals with the fact that women have always submitted to men's needs and wants. On the other hand, "Masks in the Men's Room" toys with the premise that "men don't show their feelings the way women do."

Hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday-Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday.

Spice up gardens with herbs



MARTY FIGLEY

without having to be replaced, while others are annuals, those that need to be replanted each year.

Herbs generally don't require much effort and don't need a lot of fertilization because flavor is sacrificed when there is lots of growth. And fresh herb flavor can't be beat! Herbs also are fragrant and pretty and reward the gardener in many ways.

Herbs do like a rich soil. Compost or sphagnum peat worked into the existing bed will accomplish this. Good drainage is necessary. Herbs don't like wet feet any more than we do.

Most people begin growing herbs for the part they play in our culinary world, so that is the type of garden I have planned. Start small — the garden can always be enlarged and I don't want you to be discouraged with too much work. But as I said, what little is

required is well worth the effort.

Garden planning

I've designed a small rectangular garden about 20 feet by 5 feet. It doesn't have to be "squared off" — it could be oval in shape or some other configuration. Use this plan as a guide (see related story).

A raised bed will allow the soil to warm up earlier in the season, but isn't necessary. It will be easy to reach all the plants from all sides, but if the garden abuts a building or hedge, a path of stepping stones, gravel or wood chips will make it easier to care for the plants. A layer of newspaper or landscape fabric under the latter two will reduce weeding chores.

Some perennials will form the bones of the garden and will do fine in the semi-shady location. They can be bought as plants in May, while the annuals can be started from seed indoors in early March or sown directly into the garden when the soil warms up.

Savory characters

Perennial plants include Lavender, which blooms a beautiful deep blue-purple and will provide a fragrance as you brush the foliage — Munstead and Lavender Lady are good choices. Common Thyme is a relatively short upright plant with deep green foliage, while the foliage of Lemon Thyme is tinged with yellow. Sage plants are lovely with gray-green,

purple or variegated foliage. Taste the leaf of the French Tarragon plant before you buy it to be sure the flavor is strongly anise-like. Space them 18 inches apart.

The annuals include Basil, which comes in several "flavors" — large or small leaves. Choose your favorite and include one with purple foliage. Flat-leaved (Italian) and curly-leaved parsley will both be used. Summer Savory is low-growing with light green foliage. Coriander grows two to three feet tall — the seeds are coriander and the foliage is known as cilantro. It, as well as the parsley, may self-sow.

The seeds of the basil and savory can be started indoors in March, although they can be sown directly into the garden as can parsley and coriander. Follow the directions carefully that are printed

on the seed packets — they contain a wealth of information.

It's always fun to have some special adornment in an herb garden, perhaps a bee skep, or a pedestal topped with a gazing ball (the latest "new" rage), or a potted plant. Bay, rosemary, scented geranium or a mint of your choice all will grow well in this area, as they can tolerate some shade. Set this "pretty" in the center of the garden and surround it with the Lemon Thyme.

Let me know how your herb garden is doing.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing 313-953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859. Her fax number is 810-644-1314.

Here is suggested guide

This is a guide for your semi-shady herb garden. It gives the number of plants and packages of seeds needed. The plants needn't be placed in such rigid rows — as they grow, they will spread.

ROW I: Lavender (Lavendula angustifolia), one plant; Parsley (Petroselinum crispum), one package; Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), one package; Summer Savory (Satureja hortensis), one package; Lavender, one plant.

ROW II: Basil (Ocimum basilicum), one package; Sage (Salvia officinalis), one plant; Lemon Thyme (T-X Citriodorus), 12 plants; Sage, one plant; Basil, one package.

ROW III: Lavender, one plant; French Tarragon (Artemisia Dracunculifolia), four plants; Common Thyme (Thymus vulgaris), eight plants; Parsley, one package; Lavender, one plant.

Wildflower seminar slated March 7-8

The Wildflower Association of Michigan will again have a two-day seminar at the Kellogg Center at East Lansing, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, March 7-8.

The charge is \$10 for a single day or \$15 for both days. Registration isn't necessary, unless you

Tackle block

The Paint Creek Center for the Arts will offer a one-day adult workshop, "Inventing the Invisible," 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 12.

Undo writer's block through associative techniques. Effective for beginners as well as more experienced writers. No previous writing experience necessary. For more information, call the PCCA at 810-651-4110 between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.

wish to attend the luncheon March 8 (in which case a paid reservation must be made). Cost of the lunch is \$15; a check made out to the Wildflower Association of Michigan for that amount plus the cost of the seminar (\$10 or \$15) can be sent before Wednesday, March 2, to Larry Hill at P.O. Box 80527, Lansing 48908-0527.

For March 7, the tentative program is: "American Roots in Your Garden," Steve Keis of Van Bouché's Seed Co.; "Michigan Natural Areas," Kim Herman of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; "Edible Wildflowers Benefit Cooking," Jim Meulmick; and "Wandering Fellows/Linear Connections from Agricultural Lands to Natural Areas," William Gibson and Pieter Ramseier.

For March 8, the tentative program is: "Creating Landscapes for Our Recreational Activities," Hank Bima of Johnson, Johnson

and Roy Landscape Corp.; "A Case Study for Crystal Lake Golf Course: An Ecological Approach to Landscape Management," Mike Devries of the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment; and "Educating Young Children

About Natural Areas," Carol Clements of Leslie Nature Center.

Artists' pictures for the 1994 poster contest will be judged Sunday, March 6, and will be exhibited in connection with the seminar.

Watercolor entries sought

Slide entries for the Michigan Water Color Society's 48th annual exhibition are being accepted through February, postmarked no later than March 1, 1994.

For entry forms and other information, call 313-665-8924 or 517-697-9593.

The exhibition will take place June 12 to July 1, 1994, at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association. Selected paintings from the show will travel to museums, universities and art centers throughout Michigan for one year.

All residents and former residents of Michigan are eligible. Paintings are limited to watercolor or on paper. Awards totaling \$5,000 will be given, including a contribution from the Arts Foundation of Michigan.

The juror for this year's show is Al Loving, a Michigan native now living in New York City. Loving is a faculty member in City College of New York's art department. He earned his master of fine arts degree from the University of Michigan.

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