

## Figley from page 12D

It's interesting that when the plants bloom, the foliage has become quite unsightly and needs to be cut away. Soon new foliage will appear and the plants will stay green all summer and can tolerate some drought as that is their natural dormancy period. Although the foliage is attractive and we might be tempted to use it in flower arrangements, it needs to remain on the plant because it produces the energy for the next flower crop.

### Site

These plants like a lot of organic matter when they are planted and although in the wild *H. orientalis* often grows in acid conditions, it does very

well in a more alkaline soil.

These fascinating plants do need excellent drainage and if you don't have it in your garden, consider a raised bed for them. They are tolerant of both sun and shade and develop long roots. By choosing the correct site when you first put them in the garden, they won't need to be disturbed later.

Although my Lenten Roses have done remarkably well in their northern exposure, which attests to their hardiness, I really must decide soon if I want to move them to a more focal spot.

### Care

One nice thing about Hellebores is that they really don't require a lot of

care except for specific times during the year, such as cutting off some of the "ratty" foliage in early winter so the flowers will emerge in a pretty pattern. Frankly, I don't remove the foliage until the flower starts to bloom and then do it for the esthetics, although removing some of it at the proper time may help deter blackspot.

After the leaves have all been removed to allow the beautiful flowers their due, a good mulch will be appreciated. Just before applying the mulch, thin out the seedlings. Perhaps you will have as much luck as I have had with the Lenten Rose.

There are many species of this plant. *H. niger* reportedly is the most difficult

to grow, but I found it a care-free plant. Mine apparently appreciates its location, which is in a bed of Vinca Minor, with dappled shade and receives compost (when I remember). If you have one of these plants now is the time to relocate it. Early bulbs also do well as neighbors.

For further reading, "The Gardener's Guide to Growing Hellebores," Graham Rice and Elizabeth Strangman (Timber), is full of good advice.

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.

# Glue is the key to pottery repair

(AP) - The key to successful china and glassware repair is to select the right glue, match the edges of the broken pieces exactly and hold them together tightly while the glue sets. So be sure to choose a time when you won't be interrupted.

Use a clear epoxy adhesive that is slow drying and allows the pieces to be adjusted. Don't use instant glues. They set too quickly. Epoxies, which are permanent and strongly water-resistant,

are particularly suitable for repairs to items that will be immersed in warm water. Epoxies are two-part adhesives with a resin and a hardener that must be mixed together in equal proportions. Follow the package directions.

If a piece of china or glassware is especially valuable, however, don't use epoxy or any other permanent adhesive. Instead, mend it with a more water-soluble adhesive, such as polyvinyl acetate (PVA) or white glue,

which lets you take a piece apart and fix it again. Wash the repaired piece carefully by hand. Never soak in warm water.

Before repairing a piece of china or glassware, make sure it is clean. Soak in a solution of one-half cup household bleach and 2 quarts water. Wash it and let it dry. Fit the dry pieces together to determine the best order of assembly, then glue them in that order. Use a flat toothpick or matchstick to apply a very

thin coat of glue along one edge of the break. Join and brace the pieces. Wipe off any excess glue with a cotton swab soaked in alcohol or acetone (nail polish remover) before it completely cures.

If a piece of china develops a crack, use epoxy, either alone or mixed with whitening or kaolin powder and pigment (all sold by art-supply stores). Fill the crack slightly higher than the surface. Smooth the area with a super-fine abrasive after the glue hardens.

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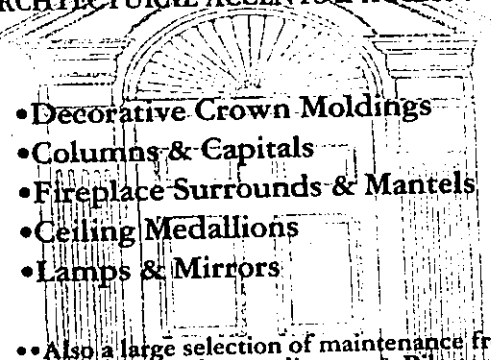
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