

## GARDENING

## Go with special green for St. Patrick's Day

## GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

Chartrouse has been a hot color for several years and still is. It blends and contrasts well with many other colors while adding a certain zing. A striking green container filled with tall chartreuse bells-of-Ireland with green and maroon amaranthus cascading over the edges caught my eye in the window at Nature Nook in Bloomfield Hills.

The "bells" grow on tall stems and add an upright element to the arrangement, while the cas-

cading amaranthus adds a soft note.

Florists use two kinds of amaranth. One is upright, the other is pendulous. The tassel-like clusters of flowers in similar shades of acid green and chartreuse, as well as maroon, blend well in many arrangements.

"This is a very unique and elegant piece which will add grace and sophistication to any home," said Joette Rippelle, store manager. "We bought the whole line of the green pottery which complements most any home decor."

The attractive store is chock-full of interesting and unusual items—for instance, iron tables and stands with "instant" aging; a line of handmade mosaic tables, stepping stones, wall plaques, vases and cachepots that can be used indoors or out

in a protected area.

Grass in a box is a hot seller now. An 8-by-10-inch box is all seeded and ready for water. One could be used as a centerpiece (add bunnies, birds, eggs, etc.), or it even makes a great snack for kiddy.

Especially for spring, a line of gift items relating to butterflies, frogs and other whimsical pieces will add a light note to a garden, indoors as well as out.

There's more. Fabulous orchids and living topiaries in a variety of shapes and sizes, including hearts, caught my eye. Candles, dried and silk arrangements, topiaries and wreaths are just a few of the other items.

Many of them are created in the shop," Joette said. "As well as custom-designed pieces for all your floral needs, we also do special occasion flowers, such as

(for) weddings."

All the cut flowers are bought from California or at the Dutch auction.

If you are concerned about color, "an all-white creation is elegant and always appropriate; jewel tones are also fresh for 2001," Joette said.

She believes people are more sophisticated flower buyers and like to buy things with a European feel, she said.

The staff is extremely proud of Howard Silver, head of the design department of Gerald Stevens Florists, which include Nature Nook, Mary Jane Flowers and Gerald Stevens Florist.

Silver is the current FTD America's Cup Floral Design winner, who later this year will represent the company in the World Cup competition for floral design. You can't get much bet-

ter than that!

This full-service florist is a member of multiple floral wire services, so they can send anything anywhere. The Bloomfield Hills store is at 2627 Maple; call (248) 647-1588.

Now back to the arrangement in the window. St. Patrick's Day is Saturday. Instead of the anticipated shamrock, why not look into the various shades of green that are available now and perk up your home with a different flower for the holiday? I predict lots of oaks and ahs will be heard.

Both bells-of-Ireland, *Moluccella*, and amaranthus, *Amaranthaceae*, are annuals and can be grown in our Michigan gardens. You can plant the seed directly in the ground a few weeks before the last frost date—they need a

little chilling. Our last frost date is about the middle of May.

"Bells" grow well in full sun to light shade and poor to average, well-drained soil. They also like sandy soil.

There are several varieties of amaranthus. Probably the most recognizable is love-lies-bleeding, *A. caudatus*. The bush can reach 5 feet, so give it room to grow. It likes full sun to partial shade and evenly moist, average soil.

The deep red or green tassel-like clusters of flowers appear from summer to early fall.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then 111, then 3445. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

## GARDENING CALENDAR

Does your garden club have an upcoming event or meeting you want publicized? Send items for consideration in Gardening Calendar to Ken Abramczyk, Observer Newspapers, 38251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail [kabramczyk@oc.homecomm.net](mailto:kabramczyk@oc.homecomm.net). To send a fax, call (734) 591-7279.

**ARRANGEMENTS**  
Several workshops are scheduled at Keller & Stein Florist and Greenhouse, 42158 Michigan in Canton. Reservations are needed

for the workshops. Each workshop costs \$10 per person, and is non-refundable. Classes are scheduled at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The classes include a herbal workshop, Saturday, March 17, and a patio pot workshop, Saturday, May 5. Call (734) 397-0800.

**ORCHID SHOW**  
Plant sales, raffle and growing tips about orchids will be available at the Palm Sunday Show 2001, presented by the Michigan Orchid Society, April 7 and 8, at

Laurel Park Place Mall at Six Mile and I-275 in Livonia. Admission is free. Call Gail Liff for membership information at (734) 971-4117.

**ORANGE**  
A patio gardening class will be taught at 10 a.m. Tuesday, April 3, at the Livonia Civic Park Senior Center, 15218 Farmington Road. Learn how to "repat" a vegetable plant. Class participants can take the plant home. Fee is \$3. Call (734) 466-2555 for information.

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