

GARDENING

Books help with everything from tea to plant propagation

GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

Have you ever wanted to increase your stock of plants by propagation? The book, *More Plants: The Science, Art and Joy of Propagation*, Ken Druse (Clarkston Potter, \$46), contains invaluable information about the subject.

With his wealth of knowledge and personal experience, Druse leads us into this world of gardening and makes each step look easy, whether it is by stem cutting, seed, layering, or obtaining more flower bulbs with sections of their leaves!

We learn that many plants can

be increased with only a kitchen knife. The steps of each procedure are clearly given with accompanying photographs that illustrate beautifully.

This book is extremely user-friendly and I recommend it to all gardeners, novice or more experienced. *Lavender: The Grower's Guide*, Virginia McNaughton (Timber Press, \$29.95), includes more than 200 lavender species and cultivars.

McNaughton explains how to recognize the many plants in the genus as she describes each cultivar. Growing instructions and garden placement as well as the botanical history are featured. Photos and line drawings help with identification.

Tea-riffic

Two small books from Storey will delight tea lovers. *Herbal Tea Gardens: 22 Plans for Your Enjoyment and Well-*

being, Marietta Marshall Marcin (\$95), shares the beverage's history and directions for making a perfect cuppa.

Line drawings accompany each of 93 herbs described; included are recipes for specific ailments. Among the garden titles are "Arthritis Care" and "Aphrodisiac." A quick reference chart and list of resources are nice additions.

Tea With Friends, Elizabeth Knight (\$14.95), is filled with delightful ideas for every month. Some are related to events with which we are familiar, such as St. Patrick's Day; others such as Hogmanay High Tea will need a little explaining.

Each tea has been carefully planned with clever invitations, centerpieces, music and special activity. The history of tea and descriptions of the various types, brewing time and serving suggestions are helpful.

Malcolm Hillier has done it

again with *Flowers: The Book of Floral Design* (DK, \$40), which features more than 160 display ideas for all seasons that will keep many flower arrangers inspired for years.

A key to average days the arrangement will last, best time of season to make it and degree of difficulty is a thoughtful addition. The plant directory includes a photo, season to use, care and vase life.

Scientific

Two books from Timber Press are scientifically based and will astound readers with the unusualness of the plants.

The first, *Aroids: Plants of the Arum Family*, Deni Brown (\$34.95), is the updated version of her earlier book. She has brought the classification of the plants up to date, due to the discovery of many new species.

Did you know that skunk cabbage, some orchids, calla lily and

philodendron, voodoo lily and taro are all related? You'll learn about them as well as about the many other plants in the family, and how well they reproduce (some by luring pollinators by their structure and scent). Most interesting.

The second, *Mosses and Other Bryophytes*, Bill and Nancy Malcolm (published by Micro-Optics Press and distributed by Timber, \$39.95), has fascinating magnified photos. They reveal amazing details and surprising beauty of the nearly 400 mosses, liverworts and hornworts.

GOOD GARDEN TIPS

In anticipation of the gardening season, you might want to try new Bendable Supports and Connecting Stakes by Luster Leaf Products Inc. They are an extension of its Link-Ups Support System; available in several sizes, with easy-to-use connections. Prices are from

\$1.99 to \$6.99. Write the company at 2220 Techcourt, Woodstock, IL 60098.

If you are growing vines and want them to be more full, cut the vines back, leaving two sets of leaves on each stem. Usually two new shoots will form.

Don't despair if your garden is rather shady. Try lettuce, spinach, endive, chard, kale, mustard greens and other leafy vegetables.

If trees haven't begun to break bud and show green, horticultural oil spray can be applied to eliminate many species of scale and insect eggs that have overwintered on the plant.

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. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

Get strawberries off to a good start this spring with these tips

By LEE REICH
AP WEEKLY FEATURES

A box of mail-order strawberry plants is a sorry sight: 25 stubby plants, leafless or nearly leafless, bound with a rubber band. The plants are shipped in a dormant state, but given warmth and soil, they will soon come to life.

Although wild strawberries often grow in dappled shade, the

plants thrive in full sun. They also need soil that is well-drained and rich in organic matter. If you cannot plant immediately, make sure the roots are moist and keep the package refrigerated.

Strawberry plants spread by runners, stems that creep along the ground and form new plants at intervals along their system. The "matted row" length of

strawberry planting makes full use of these runners. Set plants far apart — four feet between rows and two feet between plants — and let the spaces fill in with runners. When the matted row tries to spread beyond a two-foot width, keep it in bounds with a tiller or by hand.

The opposite extreme in strawberry planting is the "hill" system. Set plants in a double row

with 12 inches between rows and between plants. Pinch off every runner that forms so that the plants cannot spread at all.

The hill system is nester and yields the most berries the first bearing season. With a matted row, you need less plants to start with.

Before planting strawberries, regardless of the system, trim the roots to four inches, then

drop the plants into a shallow pan of water to keep them moist.

Open a slit in the ground for each plant, fan out its roots, then firm the soil. Planting depth is important — the ground line should go right through the middle of the crown. Set too shallowly, the plants dry out; set too deeply, they suffocate.

The plants will soon sprout new leaves, then flowers. Pinch

off any flowers that form the first 30 days after planting so that as much energy as possible can be pumped into growing new roots.

After that, everbearing types will continue to flower, bearing fruit later this summer. Traditional June bearing strawberries will only grow leaves and runners this year and yield their first detectable fruits next year.

Avoid errors in planning water garden

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Interested in a water garden? Marvin Pritts, a professor of horticulture at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., urges would-be pond owners to avoid these common errors:

■ Locating the pond in the shade or near a deciduous tree. Ponds need sunlight to thrive and leaves dropping into the pond can be toxic to fish as the vegetation decomposes in the winter.

■ Stocking fish before the plants have established and the nutrient cycling processes have become established. This can lead to fish kills.

■ Replacing the water during an algal bloom. Although this may temporarily clear the pond, the added nutrients from the new water will just restart the bloom. Wait it out, Pritts advises.

■ Believe that you need filters, pumps and chemicals to have a healthy pond. If you do things right, ponds can be self-sustaining without these inputs, he believes.

■ Overfeeding fish. The more you feed fish, the faster they will grow and the more waste they generate. A pond with lots of big fish may require an expensive filtration unit. Otherwise, you could get an algal bloom, leading to depleted oxygen and a fish kill.

Jerry Baker opens store Saturday

Jerry Baker, America's Master Gardener, will appear Saturday, April 28, at the grand opening of his Factory Outlet Store, 53400 Grand River, in New Hudson, just south of I-96 between Wixom Road and Milford Road. Baker will be broadcasting his radio show "On the Garden Line" from 8-10 a.m., then feature seminars at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on his "home remedies."

Book signings and garden give-aways will be featured until 3 p.m.

See C5 for gardening calendar

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GRAND RAPIDS BEDDING

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