

GARDENING

Watch temperature, sunlight to ensure spring blooms

GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

had hoped — and we will wonder why.

Also, sometimes plants that have been in the same location for several years may not be doing well. Blooms are sparse or the plant seems to be in a decline.

The most common reasons for a plant not to bloom are: the age of the plant, winter temperature, light, water, nutrition and improper pruning.

We are all busy planning where we will put our newly bought plants so that they will be at their best when it's time for them to take center stage in the garden. But, some of them won't do as well as we

Some ornamentals are slow growers and remain in a juvenile stage for several seasons. Patience is the key. Continue caring for them and soon they will bloom.

Temperature can be too low or not low enough and affect plants. Very cold winter temperature may kill flowers on early-blooming plants, often the shrubs that we so enjoy when they bloom and say "It's spring!"

On the other hand, some cold is essential for normal flowering of many ornamentals such as bulbs.

The amount of light also affects flowering. The proper amount of sun and shade is important.

If an area of the garden was sunny when a plant was first put in the garden, with time, trees may have matured and barriers been erected (fences, hedges, etc.) so that the area is too shady.

Now's the time to remedy that

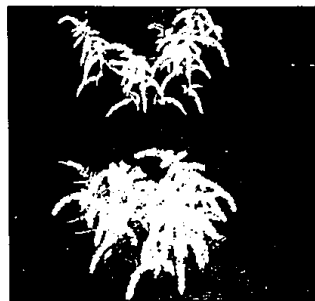
situation and transplant them. When you make purchases for this season, know what light conditions the plants need before you buy them.

There are probably areas in your garden that are damp and others that are dry. Watering too much can stress a plant as much as dry conditions.

Choose plants that will need the condition you have. A good book or two can help eliminate guesswork. If you learn about the places where the plant originated, you will find a clue as to what conditions it will need in your garden.

Nitrogen is a wonderful fertilizer, but sometimes too much is used and it may stimulate plants to produce lots of shoots and leaves but few flowers. Have your soil tested before you apply any fertilizer so you won't over-fertilize.

Pruning also affects flowering. Spring-flowering trees and shrubs should be pruned immediately after they flower.



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During the following months they set buds for next spring's flowers by the time they go dormant this fall, so pruning in fall or winter removes buds that

would have made the next year's floral display.

As for bulbs, if they are grown in a place where the foliage can be left undisturbed before it dies

Astounding astilbes: Beautiful astilbes grow well in a shady garden, in borders and as bog plants.

down (providing nutrients to the bulbs), they will repeat their performance for many years.

Cranbrook sale

Keeping all this in mind, plan to attend Cranbrook Gardens Spring Plant Sale and Garden Festival 2001, celebrating the 30th birthday of the gardens, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 16, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, May 17.

The sale at 380 Lone Pine in Bloomfield Hills will feature Carl Forrester grass, Michigan wildflowers, perennials, antique roses and shrub roses, orchids and other greenhouse plants. A special area is reserved for children in the wildflower area.

For more information, call (248) 645-3147.

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.

INTERIOR DESIGN

Find out what's hot in homes

Find out the hottest trends and tips to avoid the not-so-hot in home design from Amanda Dawson, associate editor of House Beautiful, who will be at two Gorman's Furniture stores Thursday, May 10 and Friday, May 11, for two sessions each day.

Gorman's Furniture hosts House Beautiful and Drexel Heritage specialists for an exclusive presentation, Style for Today, free to the public, to share decorating ideas on how to liven your home.

From Asian influences to inspiring color combinations, emerging trends and the freshest styles, Style for Today will inspire the individual looking to integrate the latest home fash-

ion into their home decorating plans. Among the topics are what's "out," the worst design sins, fast tips for decorating and how to invest wisely in home furnishings.

Visitors can meet Dawson afterward and discuss design ideas one-on-one. Sessions are scheduled for 1 and 7 p.m. Thursday, May 10, at Gorman's Lakeside, 14285 Hall Road, (across from Lakeside Mall), and Gorman's Novi, 27800 Novi Road (at 12 Mile Road).

Read
Observer
Sports

Exchange plants, discuss topics at community garden

Increase your plant varieties by attending a plant exchange 3-6 p.m. Tuesday, May 22, at the Linda S. Mlynarek Community Garden on the grounds of the Botsford Commons Community, 21460 Archwood Circle, off Folsom Road in Farmington Hills. Please RSVP by calling the Development Department at Botsford General Hospital at (248) 442-5045. Refreshments will be served.

Participants are encouraged to donate a plant from their garden, which will become part of this community garden.

For convenience, plants may also be dropped off 7:30-9 a.m. on the day of the plant exchange. Advanced master gardeners will be available.

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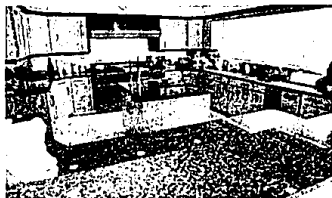
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