

## GARDENING

## Books teach youngsters about animals, plants

## GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

Two books for children take center stage in this book review.

**Ghost Bat in a Gum Tree**, Benetto Tiffault (Falcon, \$9.95, soft), is wonderfully illustrated by Peter Groushauer. Tiffault has taken the rhythm from the Christmas song *The 12 Days of Christmas* to create a poem about 12 endangered animal species.

Fun for the youngsters and all the family as they discover what happens to each animal for 12 hours of Earth Day. A profile of each one and a list of concerned organizations are included.

**Unearthing Garden Mysteries**, Ellen Talmage (Fulcrum, \$17.95, soft), is full of fun and exciting experiments for children as they discover a garden's ecosystem; some may need adult supervision.

They'll learn why the sensitive plant is that way, why the Venus fly trap eats insects, the different ways vines twine, why plants need light, and about good and bad insects. These are just a few of the 20 projects that can be done at home or in school. Some may take several days.

The book is a great resource

for use in the classroom as well as at home—great afterschool project ideas. The ISBN number is 1-55591-993-6. Call Fulcrum at (800)992-2908.

## Informative

A very scholarly book, **Wildflowers of the Fairest Cape**, Peter Goldblatt and John Manning (Timber Press, \$34.95, paper), details 652 of the most common wildflowers to be found at "the fairest cape," as Sir Francis Drake called it.

Arranged by groups of related families, many of the plants are presently in cultivation; therefore the book is a guide to the region as well as a source of information about many plants grown in home gardens. Enjoy the color photos as you take a journey to this "flowerful" country with these eminent botanists.

**The Herbal Epicure**, Carole Ottosen (Ballantine Wellspring, \$16, soft), contains much information about growing, harvesting and cooking 60 plants that can be homegrown and provide nutrition for a healthier lifestyle.

"All those chosen are safe," Ottosen says.

Most of the recipes are for cooking, using the herbs that are healthful; others are for decoctions, syrups, etc. for medicinal use. I like the little tips in the sidebar, such as drying chamomile blossoms for tea and how to make pumpkins easier to

peel. Ottosen approaches the subject in a relaxed manner.

## Inspiring

**A Fierce Green Fire**, Marybeth Lorbiecki (Falcon, \$19.95, published in 1996), is the biography of Aldo Leopold, the driving force of the conservation movement in this country.

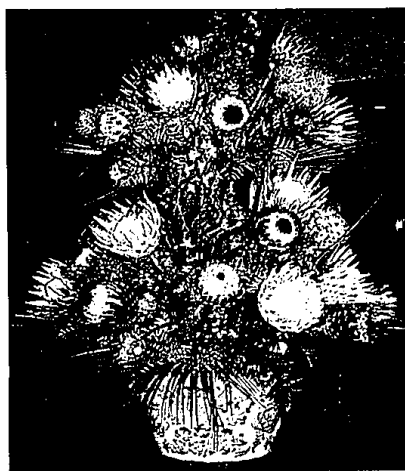
Influenced by his grandfather, Leopold became concerned about the destruction of our land during the 1800s and throughout his life. The struggles he faced to sway many opinions and the tide of indifference were mostly uphill. Father, writer, teacher, he devoted his life to ecology. This is a lesson about love and perseverance.

"His greatest dream was to learn how to live on the land without spoiling it."

David Brower, founder of the Sierra Club Foundation, also suggests reading **A Sand County Almanac**. Good stuff.

Ann Lovejoy's **Organic Garden Design School** (Rodale, \$36) contains a wealth of information to help design a garden that is pleasing to you, suits your lifestyle, and works.

Lovejoy's goal is to have each garden be interesting in all seasons, be low maintenance and bloom with healthy plants. She talks about the layers of plants in the garden and their maintenance, and ties it all together with descriptions and photos of mouth-watering plants.



MARTY FIGLEY

**Out of Africa:** This selection of Africa's flowers is in the *Comodore Hotel*, Cape Town.

From soil to pests, it's all here. The lessons are presented in a four-color format. Thirty-four workbook pages of your "homework" allow you to record your progress.

You've probably all heard of the *Chicken Soup* series of books. My friend Pat Stone, who publishes *Green Prints*, was one

of the seven editors for the inspiring *Chicken Soup For The Gardener's Soul* (Health Communications Inc., \$12.95).

The 101 stories will inspire, bring a chuckle or two and/or invoke a memory. Some of the pieces were by writers such as Erma Bombeck, James Michener and Charles Kuralt. Others were by folks just like you and me.

This is a perfect book to take on vacation, or read in the shade of a big tree in your own back yard. You'll love it.

## GOODGARDEN TIPS

■ Pull off any tomato blossoms that cling to young fruit. The odd conditions called "catfacing" and "zipper streak" may result where the clingy flower pistil causes the fruit to scar at a young age.

■ If lettuce tastes bitter or secretes a milky white sap, it has been in the ground too long. If the juices are clear, it's still good for picking.

■ Give carrots a twist when you pull them up so the leaves don't break off. Then immediately cut the leaves off just above the stem so they won't steal moisture and nutrients from the roots.

■ Azaleas, rhododendrons and camellias would like your left-over tea and the leaves.

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.

## Enjoy wildflowers this summer on the freeways

More than 1 million metro Detroit motorists will get daily views of a sight that inspired one of the world's most famous artists to paint some of his greatest masterpieces—acres of wildflowers.

**Wildflowers Paintings**, sponsored by Southeast Michigan Chrysler-Jeep Superstores, are inspired by the gardens of Impressionist painter Claude Monet. Monet, whose works are among the most valuable in the

world, planted huge fields of wildflowers and would later paint the fields at their most vibrant.

Monet carefully patterned the placing of different plants to produce rich textures and moods of colors. He would constantly experiment with different colors and chose certain patterns because of the way wildflowers can change colors and shapes due to light and weather. The artist spent the final 20 years of

his life painting his gardens, eventually employing six gardeners.

As the summer continues and grows into fall, different flowers will develop and grow, while others will subtly change, so that each day and week brings new surprises for passing motorists.

The wildflowers were planted in the medians in the interchanges of I-275 and I-96, I-94 and I-696, and I-96 and I-75.

## White is a versatile color for garden

BY LEE REICH  
AP WEEKLY FEATURES

White flowers and leaves are not the first things that come to mind when planning a colorful garden. Nonetheless, they can really spruce up a flower bed.

White mixes well with all colors and makes for harmonious transitions between colors that would otherwise clash. Picture

a mass of red zinnias next to some blue lobelias. Disturbing, isn't it? Put an island of white, perhaps something soft such as baby's breath, between the zinnias and lobelias and they peacefully coexist. Use the soft whites of flowers, or plants with grayish leaves, to harmonize a garden's many hues.

White not only pacifies clash-

es, it also adds zest to already bright colors. The flowers of rose campion are pink-magenta, but they sparkle even more brightly against the plant's silvery-white leaves. The same goes for the white, woolly leaves of dusty miller, which highlight bright red geraniums or blue salvia.

PLUMBING TIPS  
PUT AWAY THE PLUNGER!

JEFFREY MOSS

If your toilet will not flush or you have to flush it two or three times to clear the bowl, you are a victim of the new 1.6 gallon per flush toilets. There is a solution. A company called Toto, the world's largest manufacturer of plumbing products, has a full line of high performance 1.6 gallon toilets. These toilets feature: • Most powerful gravity flush toilet ever • 2 1/8" 100% glazed trapways, largest in the industry. • 3" flush valve vs. standard 2" • Consumer Digest Best Buy. • Siphon jet action to assist performance for efficiency. • Designed for commercial and residential installations. The toilet you select should be able to perform flawlessly. You should have a sense of confidence in your toilet, knowing it will function with one flush.

For more information and a free 28 page guide on selecting the right toilet, call Advance Plumbing Supply Company at 248-669-7474 or visit us at [www.advanceplumbing.com](http://www.advanceplumbing.com).

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Jeffrey Moss is vice-president of Advance Plumbing Supply Co. in Wall Lake and Detroit. Call (800) 560-7474 toll-free. Have a plumbing question? Write to Jeffrey at Advance Plumbing Supply Co., 1977 E.W. Maple Rd., Wall Lake, MI 48390.

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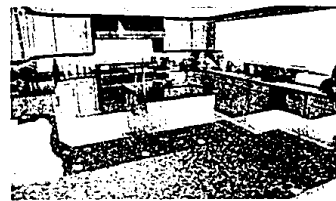
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