

GARDENING

Redford man tends to detail in garden

GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

Harry Thron of Redford Township can sit on his front porch and enjoy beautiful flowers any time he chooses. Many annuals grow in a row of containers hanging from the porch edge, others are in the ground, while a few perennials keep them company.

He has lived in his home for 31 years and enjoys gardening. "Some people call the scene a jungle," Thron said.

That's stretching it a bit because the planters are evenly spaced and hang in a neat row; other planters are strategically placed in and around the beds and porch.

Two of them sit on stumps of trees that have been removed and the planters themselves are camouflaged with flowers planted around the stumps.

The soil mixture for the hanging plants is 2/3 topsoil, 1/3 Canadian peat and some bone meal.

Variety

The area just in front of the porch is filled to the brim, as is an island bed directly in front of it.

Harry used 10-1/2 flats of flowers for the gardens, including red and variegated geraniums, hostas with blue, green and yellow foliage, gray dusty miller, bright marigolds, red salvia, impatiens, sunflowers and a grand array of coleus with red, green and cream foliage.

Harry has allowed the coleus to bloom with tiny blue flowers clustered along stems held above the leaves.

"I made the design of the baskets myself," Harry said.

They are artfully done with many of the plants listed above.



MARTY FIGLEY

"I'm very impressed with the multiple heads on the sunflowers; some have as many as 20 flowers," Harry said. "I didn't expect them to grow so tall because the seed packet said 5 to 6 feet; a couple of them are at least 10 feet tall."

Harry started the sunflowers and cucumbers indoors and set them out in mid-May.

Playfulness

Along with other plants, vegetables grow in the tidy back garden—the cucumbers, cherry tomatoes and hot Hungarian wax peppers.

Thron pickles many cukes and peppers, and shares this recipe, called *lacas* in Hungarian: In a skillet put chunks of tomatoes, onion and peppers and when they are cooked add some sour cream. Serve over rice or potatoes.

A little playfulness can be found in this well-maintained garden.

For instance, hanging among the planters on the porch, smack dab in the middle, is a hummingbird feeder. Shiny Christmas bulbs hang at the tops of the hanging baskets.

Bright Ideas:
Harry Thron grows a bright garden with many colorful plants.

they degrade during the winter.

At one time Thron had a problem with some slugs on salvia near the back fence.

He tried a few things, but nothing worked until he was told about Bug-Geta Plus, a snail, slug and insect killer by Ortho. He used a solution of this to wash all his plants and that worked—no bugs, and the product can be used safely on vegetables.

A sprinkling system keeps everything watered except the narrow side gardens, which Harry waters by hand.

He feeds with regular-strength Schultz or Rapid-Gro weekly or every 10 days "until the plants get going," then cuts back to every two weeks.

His secret for success? "Flowers eat and drink like human beings. So I take care to give them what they need."

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.

"Rather than buy some things, I'd rather make them myself," Harry said.

The back garden and those along the fence and garage are edged with attractive volmanized lumber, again attesting to detail.

Care

The vegetables are mulched with grass clippings, which holds moisture.

The flowers are grown so closely together it's easy to remove an occasional weed, so they aren't mulched. Several years ago Harry added amendments to improve the soil, and has a quite efficient way to continue to enrich it.

Near the end of the growing season, while the moisture is in the annual flowers (a little green), he chops them up very coarsely with a spade and turns them over immediately, returning them back to the soil where

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, 36261 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail kabramczyk@ae.com. To send a fax, call (734) 691-7279.

GARDEN CLUBS

FARMINGTON

Paul Wingert will discuss growing, dividing, repotting and mounting bromeliads at noon Monday, Sept. 10, at the Longacre House, on the west side of Farmington Road between 10 Mile and 11 Mile roads. Visitors are welcome. Call (248) 615-3516.

HILL AND DALE

Pauline Flynn will conduct an heirloom wreath/candle ring workshop guided by Pauline Flynn at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 13, in the visitor's center at Heritage Park on Farmington Road north of Grand River. Flynn will provide her custom kilts for

\$15 at the door. The public is welcome to join the creativity. Bring a glue gun and scissors. For more information, call (248) 478-9009. The Hill and Dale Garden Club also will have a fall perennial plant exchange 9 a.m.-noon, rain or shine, Saturday, Sept. 8, at the parking lot of the William Costick Activities Center, 28500 11 Mile Road (1/4 mile east of Middlebelt Road), Farmington Hills. Please pot or bag your perennials for trade, and label with plant name and growing instructions. For more information, call (248) 646-4374.

NURSERY SCHOOL

ENGLISH GARDENS

English Gardens conducts free gardening seminars for the public 7 p.m. Thursdays at its West Bloomfield store, 6370 Orchard Lake Road, north of Maple. Call (248) 851-7506 for information.

PLUMBING TIPS

DO YOU RUN OUT OF HOT WATER?



JEFFREY MOSS

Are you always running out of hot water when you take a shower? Does your family have to wait until your water heater recovers to take another shower? Let me introduce you to the newest water heater on the market today. It is called the Takagi Instantaneous water heater.

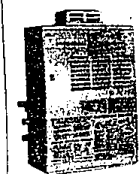
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Jeffrey Moss is vice-president of Advance Plumbing Supply Co. in Wall Lake and Detroit. Call (800) 560-7474 toll-free. Have a plumbing question? Write to Jeffrey at Advance Plumbing Supply Co., 1977 E.W. Maple Rd., Wall Lake, MI 48390. www.advanceplumbing.com

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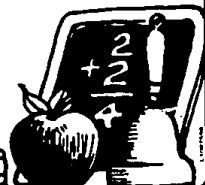
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