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Careful Cultivation Needed

Prize Winning Flowers, Plants Tough To Grow

By BETTY FRANKEL
Special Writer

Growing prize petunias or blue-ribbon ranunculus is the dream of every gardener, but exhibition quality flowers, and fruits and vegetables don't just happen with a little bit of luck. It takes a little extra care and attention—and also a few special tricks to have the specimens at their peak of perfection on the day that they are wanted.

Area gardeners with potential prize winners should be cultivating and coddling so they will have their specimens ready to exhibit in the show to be held at Farmington Junior High School on July 27 under the auspices of the Farmington Garden Club. The show is open to the general public for viewing, and anyone in the area eligible to enter.

To raise prize winners start with good varieties and healthy plants. Cultivate them carefully, weeding and feeding and watering them to keep them thriving, and use pest controls to ward off fungus diseases and insects that might damage the flowers, foliage or fruits.

Flowers should be in full bloom when they are exhibited but not over-blown, and produce should be mature but not over-ripe.

To produce the best flowers, plants must not be allowed to bear too many flowers. Side buds should be removed so that all the energy goes into developing one perfect bloom or cluster. This is especially true for carnations and roses, but many other flowers will be improved by disbudding. The disbudding should be done early, as soon as the side buds can be rubbed or pinched off without damaging the end bud.

SOME FLOWERS need to be staked to keep the stalks straight. These include delphinium, lupine, germs, corn-crops, and gallardia.

To prevent slugs from damaging exhibition flowers as showtime approaches, tie a thick wand of cotton around the stem just below the blooms.

To prevent rain damage make a plastic shade for the plant. Also, a small plastic tent can be used over an individual flower to hasten its maturity. Make a loop with a long stem from a wire coat hanger. Push the end into the ground next to the plant or staple it to a stake for added height. Drape a large "freezer-size" plastic bag loosely over the loop so it surrounds but does not touch the flower.

Leave the bottom hang loose. Warmth will be trapped inside the tent. This trick works well even during cloudy weather. If the weather is sunny, ventilation holes will be needed in the bag so it doesn't become too hot inside. A tent like this might be useful, too, to hasten

the development of small fruits and vegetables.

IF FLOWERS and produce develop ahead of time they can be stored in a refrigerator. Thirty-one degrees is the best temperature for storing flowers for a long period of time, but even normal refrigerator temperatures will suffice for a short time. Almost all flowers except gladioli and lilies can be stored. Roses, asters, day-lilies, phlox, petunias and begonias are among those that can be stored for about two weeks at 31 degrees. Some others such as alysium, delphinium, iris, marigolds and zinnias can be stored for three weeks.

Flowers to be stored should be picked just before they reach their prime. Put each flower

Gardeners Beware Of Sucking, Chewing Bugs

With shade and ornamental trees and shrubs fully leaved out now, the home gardener should be alert to the ravages of sucking and chewing insects that seem to appear coincidentally at this time to feed on the tender foliage.

Since leaves manufacture plant foods essential to the trees and shrubs, unchecked invasions of the leaf-eaters seriously can affect the health and appearance of these valued plantings on the premises. Modern contact insecticides, such as sevin, malathion, and DDT, however, will control most of them if applied in time.

The insects that feed on leaves include a wide variety of winged adult beetles and the larvae (immature form) of moths, butterflies, and sawflies, but it is the larvae—worms or caterpillars—that are more common and most destructive.

ALREADY there are many reports from homeowners and arborists of an abundance of the familiar inch worms, also known as measuring worms and canker worms, which are representative of the larvae group of leaf eaters.

Inch worm eggs hatch shortly after the leaves unfold, and the young worms begin feeding first on the under sides of the leaves, often going undetected until considerable damage has been done. As they mature, they become more voracious and have been known to completely defoliate large trees.

It is in their early stages that insecticides should be applied, the arborists warn, if damage is to be minimized.

IN GARDENS where there are willows, whether or not they are the weeping variety, the trees literally "weep" with the secretions of aphids when infestations are heavy, causing an intolerable situation for picnic or play areas.

Foliage sprays will rout the aphids, as well as other pests, but too often the trees are too large for the homeowner to reach all portions of them with home-type

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Butterfly Begonia

The 2 1/2 inch flowers of the Semperflorens Papillon Butterfly are the largest known of fibrous begonia, resembling huge bright colored butterflies. The center of each flower is a dusty sparkling ball of canary yellow stamens.

The flowers are borne in clusters or strong stemmed shiny green foliaged plants 10 to 12 inches tall, in semishade beds or in pots, they present a riot of color from early spring until frost.

Rye's Good Humus

When plants are through for the season and harvested don't leave the laff idle. Experts advise sowing rye which turned under with your spade next spring quickly decays to furnish an abundance of humus and nutrients.

THE NIGHT before the show remove the flowers from storage and snip an inch off the end of the stem and "condition" in a pail of warm water in a cool room overnight. This "conditioning", which is necessary even for freshly cut flowers is especially important for stored flowers. It enables them to take up the maximum amount of water so that the stems are firm and the flowers will not wilt.

The experts have come up with tricks for cutting, handling, and transporting flowers and produce so they retain their perfection. (These methods and procedures will be covered in the next article.)

Improve Windows

A fixed sash flanked by operating casement windows makes a dramatic bay window. Another is to create a bow window or window wall with a series of casements.

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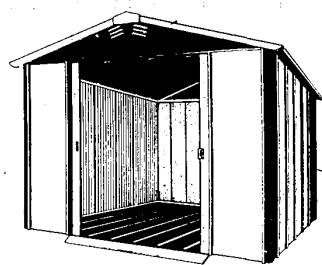
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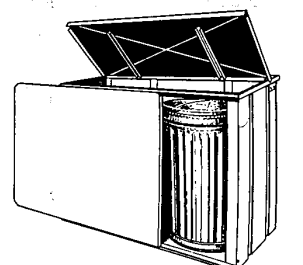


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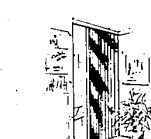


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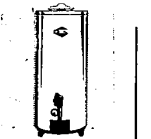


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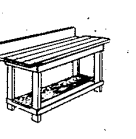


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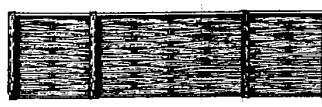


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