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Timely Tips on

GARDENING

By Betty Frankel

YUCCA is a desert plant that has made itself at home in a number of local gardens. Although this member of the lily family is a native of Mexico and the southwestern part of the United States, it seems to thrive in our climate and is now providing a dramatic accent with its tall spikes of beautiful creamy-white flowers. The flower stalks rise from a low cluster of stiff sword-like leaves. They are from three to five feet tall and are crowned with two-inch bell-like flowers that look as though they are fashioned from translucent parchment.

Yucca flowers are pollinated by certain little white moths known as yucca moths. Each species of yucca has its own particular species of moth which emerges at the time the flowers come into bloom. The female moth gathers pollen and rolls it into a little ball, then flies to another flower and lays her eggs in the tube leading to the ovary. The moth then plugs the opening with the ball of pollen. The developing larvae eat some of the seeds formed, but most are left to produce new plants.

Yucca requires a sunny situation, but will grow in any soil as long as it is well drained. They grow best in dry, sandy soil. They thrive where other plants fail and once established they need no care and live for years. Although they can be grown from seed, it is more satisfactory to purchase small plants. They can be planted in either Spring or Fall and require three feet of space be-

tween plants. They are an excellent choice for the hot side of a house. Although they are stately plants and may be used to advantage in a formal garden, they are also eminently suited to planting in contemporary informal beds mulched with crushed stone. A large rock and a yucca plant make excellent partners in such a situation and make a complete picture in themselves.

REMEMBERS—Oriental poppy foliage is turning yellow and the plants are entering a dormant phase. Cut off foliage for a neater looking garden. If the plants are to be moved or divided this is the best time to do it. Iris will soon be dormant and can be divided. Order new varieties for planting in the next few weeks. When delphinium has finished blooming cut back the stalk so the plant will bloom again later in the summer. Divide lily-of-the-valley. Remove seed pods from rhododendrons and lilacs. As rows of vegetables are harvested, plant another crop to utilize the vacated space. It is still not too late for new home owners and others who didn't get gardens planted earlier to set out beds of annual plants. Container grown flowers and shrubs can be planted at any time, but be sure to water newly planted stock thoroughly each week. If the hedge looks untidy give it another trimming. A steady supply of water is essential to produce the best tomatoes, but flow it onto the ground rather than sprinkling. Beans are ready to be harvested and corn is ripening.

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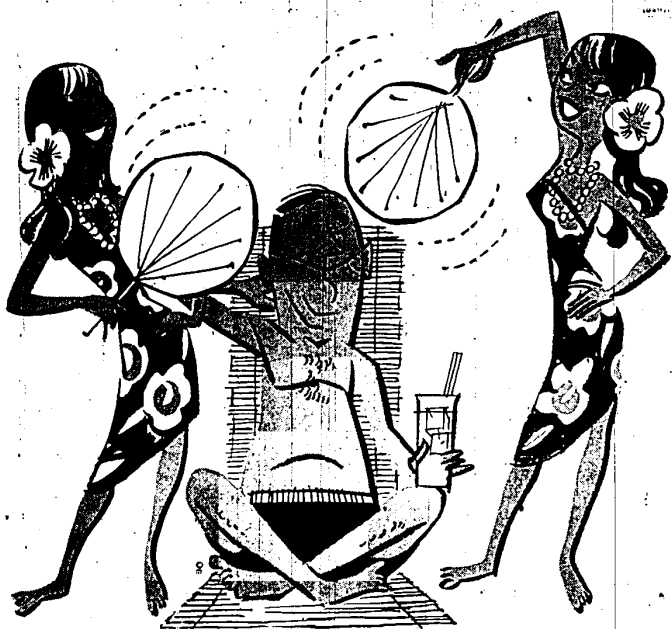
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