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Tips on Gardening

By Betty Frankel

GARDENING—A to Z

In March as the sun rises higher in the sky and the tips of bulbs begin to poke above the still frozen earth, the gardener feels a stirring within himself, too. It is too soon, though, to get out and dig and plant. It is not too soon, however, to think about gardening, to read garden books and catalogs, and to make plans for future planting.

A is for **ANNUALS**. These plants live only one growing season and must be started each Spring from fresh seed. Hardy annuals may be seeded outdoors as early in Spring as possible. Seeds of tender annuals cannot be planted until May when the soil has warmed up. A head start can be gained by setting out small plants started indoors or in a greenhouse around the end of March. Petunias and marigolds are popular annuals.

B is for **BIENNAIS**. These are plants that take two growing seasons to complete their life cycle. The first year foliage is produced, often in a rosette form which stays green during the winter. The second year flowers and seeds are produced. Canterbury bells and pansies are biennials.

C is for **COMPOST**. Make a saucer-topped pile of grass cuttings, fallen leaves, and other healthy green material from the garden. Layer with soil and chemical fertilizer. Keep moist and turn once or twice during the season. In a year it will have decomposed into humus

that can be used to top-dress and enrich garden beds.

D is for **DECIDUOUS**. These are woody plants that drop their leaves in Fall and form new ones in Spring.

E is for **EVERGREENS**. Some evergreens, such as pines, have needle-like leaves, while others, such as Rhododendron, have broad leaves. Although the leaves eventually fall off and are renewed, this is a gradual process and there is no time when the plants are bare. Because of this they are excellent plants to use as screening material and as accents by the house entrance.

F is for **FUNGUS**. These minute plants cause many serious garden diseases such as Dutch Elm disease, black spot, mildew and rust. They spread rapidly by tiny spores which need moisture to germinate. Sulfur and lime-sulfur are standard remedies. Captan, fermetate are among the new organic fungicides but may be dangerous. Special antibiotics are being developed.

G is for **GRADING**. This is the process of leveling or contouring the ground to the desired land form. It is most important for proper run-off of water, and some gentle contours can add interest and privacy to even a small yard.

H is for **HERBACEOUS**. This refers to plants whose tops die back to the ground each winter. If the roots live for many years they are herbaceous perennials. This includes peonies, daylilies, delphinium, phlox and many others which can be planted together to make a charming long-lived garden.

I is for **INSECTICIDES**. Beetles and other chewing insects are controlled by "stomach" poisons which the insects swallow. "Contact" poisons are used to control sucking insects such as aphids, DDT, Dieldrin, Lindane, and Malathion are examples of chemical insecticides that contain "chlorinated hydrocarbons". They can be very dangerous to humans. Less dangerous are the old fashioned insecticides containing nicotine, pyrethrum, and rotenone but even these should be used with great care because they, too, are poisons.

J is for **JUNIPER**. These light-green, fine-needled evergreens are useful for landscape planting and will grow under almost any conditions of soil, moisture and light.

K is for **KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS**. This is the popular lawn grass in this area. Merion is an improved form of Kentucky Blue.

L is for **LAYERING**. Woody plants can be propagated by fastening a branch against the ground and mounding soil over it. When roots form, the new plant can be cut off and transplanted.

M is for **MULCH**. A summer mulch allows water to penetrate the soil, but retards evaporation of moisture and keeps the soil soft and cool. It keeps weeds from sprouting. Peat moss, buckwheat hulls, ground corn cobs, leaves, sawdust, wood, chips, aluminum foil, plastic sheets, and small stones are some materials used for mulching.

N is for **NATURALIZING**. This means the planting of trees, shrub and flowers so that they like wild natural growth.

O is for **OCCULT BALANCE**. This is used in formal gardens. The design on one side of a central axis is a mirror image of the other side.

P is for **PRUNING**. Part of the top of a tree or shrub is removed to compensate for roots damaged during transplanting, to remove injured or diseased branches, to increase flowers or fruit, to improve the shape, or to control size. Do not destroy the plant's natural form.

Q is for **QUERCUS**. This is the botanical name for oak trees.

R is for **RHIZOME**. These are thickened underground stems found on iris, Hosta, Cana, and Lily-of-the-valley.

S is for **SOIL ACIDITY**. Most plants prefer a neutral soil (pH 6.5 to 7.5). Rhododendron and azaleas prefer acid soil (pH 4.5 to 5.5) while a few plants prefer alkaline soil (pH above 7). Lime or bone meal added to the soil raises the pH. Aluminum or ammonium sulphate or acid peat lowers the pH.

T is for **TRANSPIRATION**. This is the giving off of water vapor through pores in the leaves of plants. If transpiration exceeds water intake by the roots, the plant wilts.

U is for **UREA-FORM**. This is a chemical fertilizer that releases nitrogen slowly over a long period of time and does not cause burning. It is good for lawns, trees, shrubs, flower beds, and long-season vegetables. One application will last a season.

V is for **VINES**. These climbing plants need support. They are good for screening and to supply height in the garden. Morning glory and scarlet runner bean are annual vines. Woody vines include ivy, bitter-sweet, euonymus, and clematis.

W is for **WOODY**. Trees and shrubs with hard stems that live many years are woody plants. A tree generally has one main stem while a shrub has many stems springing from the ground.

X is for **XERANTHEMUM**. This is an annual whose papery white, rose or purple flowers are attractive in the garden and are used as "everlasting" dried flowers.

Y is for **YARD**. This is an enclosure around a house and comes from an ancient anglo-saxon word. The word "garden" comes from the same root and means an area set aside for the cultivation of plants.

Z is for **ZINIA**. This is one of the most popular annuals and thrives in any soil but needs sunshine. Sow seeds when the ground is warm.

Next Week's Topic: LANDSCAPE PLANNING

'Paperdolly' Aids Busy Housewives

For housewives who budget time and space as well as money there's a new "paperdolly" made to fit between wall and base cabinets.

The dolly, by Nautilus Industries, serves as a chrome framed blackboard with convenient chalk for jotting down household messages.

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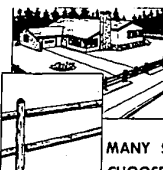
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