

# Home Improvement Guide '66

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THE FARMINGTON ENTERPRISE

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**Woods Favored** Western red cedar, Douglas fir, incense cedar and white fir are recommended woods for garden structures.

**Fence of Spindles** A pretty front yard fence for a traditional house can be designed with stock spindles set between 2x4-inch rails.

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## Tips on Gardening

By Betty Frankel

**GERANIUMS** Everybody loves a geranium. They are the most popular plant for window boxes, planter boxes, and patio pots; and each Memorial Day an enormous number are planted in cemeteries with the certainty that the grave sites will be embellished for many months to come. They are dependable as well as vividly colored.

This love of geraniums is no recent affair and geraniums are no "Johnny-come-lately" on the garden scene. They were well known in England before 1000 and were featured in many famous eighteenth century French and English gardens. Early in the nineteenth century

there appears to have been a real "geranium craze," with much experimental hybridization and breeding. A five-volume work was published in 1820 containing colored illustrations of five hundred geraniums.

Most of the species of geraniums that have been cultivated have come from South Africa and were brought into cultivation by the English and the Dutch. The plants that we know as geraniums are botanically called Pelargonium and are one of three groups of plants in the geranium family. The genus *Pelargonium* consists of about sixty species, a few of which are grown as low border or rock garden plants. The genus *Geranium* has 250 species, some of which are widely cultivated. This group includes the lovely purple-pink wild geranium now in bloom in open woodlands in the area. In the genus *Pelargonium* are the garden and pot plants commonly called geraniums.

**ALL PLANTS IN THE** geranium family have flower parts in multiples of five—five petals, five sepals, ten pollen tubes, etc. The garden geraniums differ from the others in having the two upper petals of each flower smaller and separate and the three lower ones larger and overlapping. This distinction however, is less obvious in the double flowers and some hybrid forms. The geraniums have been grouped into four general categories—bedding, ivy-leaved, Martha Washington, and scented-leaved geraniums.

The bedding geraniums, also known as zonal, horseshoe, or fish geraniums are the kind most often grown. These plants are woody at the base, but the young shoots are soft. The leaves are roundish with wavy edges and are often marked with a dark colored "horseshoe." Some, though, have plain green leaves, while others are marked with creamy white or with a blend of purple, yellow, pink, or bronze. Most grow up to three feet tall under favorable conditions; but there are dwarf and miniature forms that are as much lower. Flower colors range from white and pale pink through purple, salmon pink, and rose to blazing crimson and scarlet.

**THE MARTHA WASHINGTON** geranium, known also as Lady

Washington or Show or Regal geranium, is more popular in Europe than in this country. The upright stems are woody at the base with soft shoots, but they are more slender than the zonal geraniums. The leaves are lobed and toothed on the margins and are wrinkled. The flowers are very attractive, being large and richly colored with deeper blotches and spots. Their main period of bloom is May and June.

The ivy-leaved geraniums have slender trailing stems and are suited to growing in hanging baskets and pots or may be used to form a mat or carpet in the bed. They have clusters of pale or brilliant flowers, either single or double, which appear all summer.

The scented-leaved geraniums are also known as rose geraniums. The leaves are often finely divided and fern-like. When crushed they give off an aromatic fragrance that in some varieties is lemon, in others rose, apple, nutmeg, or other spicy scents.

**GERANIUMS ARE** easy to grow and are resistant to most diseases and pests. They need lots of sunshine and not too much moisture. If the soil is too moist and too rich in nitrogen the plants will produce tall leaves and produce few flowers. In dry, somewhat infertile soil they will flower best. Pinching off the growing tips of young plants will result in the formation of bushier plants.

Because of their gay colors and easy culture, geraniums richly deserve their popularity. Whether it is a single plant on a window sill or a large bed in a public park they add a cheerful note throughout the summer.

**REMINDEES** Prune spring-flowering shrubs after they have finished blooming. . . To keep evergreens from becoming too large remove part of the new growth that resembles a candle. . . Plant bulbs of gladioli, cannas, tuberous begonias. . . When planting vegetable gardens grow the family favorites. . . Plant a single plant on a window sill or a large bed in a public park they add a cheerful note throughout the summer.

## Shade, Fruits, Flowers—Trees, Shrubs Give Much

Different trees and shrubs have different purposes, and the homeowner always should take this into consideration when purchasing them.

The principal reasons for planting trees are for beauty and function. Trees for shade include the maples, oaks, liquidambar, pecan, plane trees and hundreds of others.

Trees for flowers include the crabapples, camellia, cherries, magnolias, alibizia, catalpa.

Trees for windbreaks and green color in winter are the coniferous evergreens, such as pines, spruces, hemlocks, arbor vitae.

Trees with interesting barks are the beeches, birches, walnuts, mandarin.

Trees for edible fruits and nuts also provide attractive flowers (and sometimes shade)—apples, cherries, pears, plums, citrus, pecans, walnuts, to name only a few.

**Colors Conflict** Highlight flower beds and climbers with screens and trellises stained a natural wood shade or allowed to weather to a soft silver. White paint is good, too, but color on garden structures conflicts with flower and foliage hues.

## Strong Texture Zips Built-Ins

Textured materials give a usual cabinet-shelving arrangement more decorative zip. Panel the wall behind open shelving with resawn tongue-and-groove Douglas fir siding and build the

cabinet enclosure and doors of original saw marks remain. Use a black-brown stain on counter and shelves, antique gold or pomegranate on paneling and cabinet doors.

**Never, but NEVER Such**

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