

You can grow own ginger

Have you heard a mourning dove coo lately? Residents of St. Anne's Mead retirement home, Southfield, have been wondering why mourning doves don't seem to coo anymore. If you have an answer to this question, please write to me c/o Box 3503, Observer & Eccentric, Birmingham 48012 with your observations so that we can r/l learn.

Now is the time to plant bulbs for spring enjoyment in the landscape. When purchasing them locally, make sure they are firm, with no soft spots. They should not smell bad nor show mold. They also should not have sprouted.

If tulips are your choice, be sure the bulbs have a good firm basal plate (the flat area at the very bot-

tom). It is OK if the skin is off, but beware of those "remainders" in a box because they have been moved around a bit, and as you know, the flower is in the bulb — therefore they may not be in tip-top condition.

CHOOSE A WELL-DRAINED site for the bulb beds. A sunny spot is best, but a little shade is all right. The bed should be spaded 12 inches deep and the bulbs planted at the recommended depths. A good rule of thumb is to plant bulbs three times as deep as they are tall. For example, tulips should be planted about 5-8 inches and crocus three 3-4 inches deep.

Sprinkle bonemeal in the bottom of each hole to give the bulbs a good start. Water well after planting. Saturate the ground.

After the frost has penetrated the ground 1-2 inches, cover bulb beds with a three-inch mulch of leaves, peat moss, straw or evergreen boughs.

For good color impact, plant the bulbs in clumps — for smaller flowers at least 25 in one clump. For more tulips or other larger flowering bulbs should be planted in one area.

On the other hand, for a natural look, toss the bulbs out on the ground and plant them where they land.

Another suggestion is to layer the bulbs — plant the larger bulbs deep and smaller bulbs directly on top — perhaps tulips, with scilla above. When the scilla are gone, the tulips will be coming up for more bloom in the same area.

Mulch should be removed in the



down to earth

Marty Figley

spring before the shoots develop more than an inch or two. When they are 4-6 inches high, top dress with nitrogen.

When the petals begin to fall from the flowers, cut the flowers off to prevent them from going to seed, as this will deplete the food needed to form new blooms for the following year. The foliage should not be removed until it has turned yellow and can be pulled away easily since the bulbs get nutrients from the leaves.

YOU CAN GROW your own ginger in a pot in your home this winter and enjoy its pungent flavor in soups, salads, fish and vegetable dishes. Buy a fresh plump root at the supermarket and plant it whole, or cut it into several pieces — each having three or four "eyes." If you

cut the tuber, let the pieces dry a day or two before planting.

The container can be 6-12 inches in size — fill with moist, rich soil. Plant the tuber half in and half out of the soil. Set the pot in a warm, sunny window, and water just enough to keep the mix damp until shoots appear, then increase the watering and give a high-phosphorus fertilizer monthly.

It will take about eight months before harvest. Save a piece for restarting your next crop. You may wish to cut off just what you will need for a recipe — or harvest the complete tuber.

Ginger roots will keep in the refrigerator for up to three weeks. They will keep indefinitely in a jar covered with sherry.

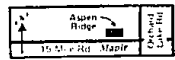
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Artrain stops in Pontiac

ARTRAIN, the nation's only art museum on a train, will arrive at the Oakland County Service Center, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac on Thursday, Oct. 8, and will be open to the public for viewing through Sunday, Oct. 11.

Guided tours of the exhibits on three gallery cars will be conducted from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Oct. 8 and 9, and noon to 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 10 and 11.

Comprised of five cars, the exhibition of the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum will be on three gallery cars. A studio car for live demonstrations by artists and a caboose used by the on-board staff complete the museum-on-wheels.

In honor of the state's Sesquicentennial, and sponsored by the county's Sesquicentennial Council, this year's exhibition on the ARTRAIN will be devoted to Michigan's highly acclaimed arts and education center, the Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Fifty years of American art, architecture and design, including the treasures of the Academy's collection of paintings, drawings, sculptures, furniture, tapestries, ceramics and silver work will be on display.

The exterior of the ARTRAIN will be painted with graphics highlighting Michigan's celebration of 150 years of statehood.

ARTRAIN is barrier-free, with wheelchair lifts at the entrance and exit to provide ease of access for the elderly and handicapped.

Schools in Oakland County have been alerted to the ARTRAIN's arrival and scheduled times will be provided for large groups by calling the county's Cultural Affairs office, (313) 858-0415.

ARTRAIN is supported in part by the Michigan Council for the Arts, the Oakland County Sesquicentennial Council, the Cultural Council and Grand Trunk Railroad.

Take fall photos

Freelance photographer Alan Lowy will conduct a class, "Fall Outdoor Photography," at Cranbrook Institute of Science, beginning at 1 p.m. today.

For information, call 645-3230.



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