

Create a tropical island

Your home will have the feel of a tropical island if you acquire one of two new Hibiscus Rosinensis, commonly known as Chinese hibiscus, produced by Yoder Brothers. These everblooming hibiscuses are in the Paradise series. Two available now are the "Vista" with a bloom the color of pink sherbet, and "Lava" with a bloom the shade of a pale orange sunset. Even the names make you think of a warm tropical paradise.

Hibiscuses have flamboyant flowers and produce large blooms from white to all shades of red, yellow, pink and salmon. The deep green foliage of the two new varieties is quite attractive, as is the foliage of other varieties which range from bright green to variegated.

A warm sunny location with a southern or eastern exposure is ideal as these flowers like plenty of bright sunlight. Average house temperatures are fine, with night temperatures above 55 degrees. Thoroughly saturate the soil at each watering and keep it moist to the touch at all times. Don't let the pot stand in water. If your plant fails to bloom, give it more sunlight, or use artificial grow lights. Fertilize with full strength houseplant fertilizer from March through Novem-



down to earth Marty Figley

ber and occasionally in December through February.

Each bloom lasts a day or two, although there are several blooms at the same time, making a lovely display. The flower and the shell which supports it fall off after the bloom is spent, thus you have a self-grooming plant.

THE BLOOMING period will last for about three weeks and then the plant will rest to renew its strength to bloom again. The length of this period depends upon the time of year, the amount of light and the home temperature. If chosen now, Hibiscuses are geared to bloom at the time of purchase, so next winter your plant may not bloom

depending upon the amount of light it receives. When the plant does blossom, it will be a happy occasion.

Hibiscus plants are woody shrubs and can be pruned after a flowering period, by clipping off long weak branches to maintain a desired shape. The flower buds come on the new wood.

In our climate these plants must be considered tender perennials. They can be moved outside for the summer, but must be returned to the house before frost.

If you can't wait for your hbot paradise, write to Down to Earth, Box 3505, Birmingham, 48812, for the name of a nursery that has these new plants.

The holidays are about over — when you take your Christmas tree outdoors, why not trim it with special "treats" for the birds such as unsalted popcorn, cranberries or raisins? Colorful ribbons and yarn can be added to make it even more festive. If you trim an evergreen in your yard in this manner and leave the decorations until spring, the birds may be able to use the scraps of yarn and ribbon for their nests.

You may choose to use the evergreen boughs as a mulch in your garden.

It has been so heartwarming to receive the wonderful response from you since I have become the columnist for Down to Earth. Many thanks to you all. A special thanks to Alice Burlingame who has so much faith in me. I'm sure she sends her best and warmest regards to you.

My wish for the New Year is for us to "grow" together in many ways and that you have the happiest of New Years.

Swanne Alley makes its 2nd recording

The Musicians of Swanne Alley, an ensemble specializing in late Renaissance English and early Italian repertoire, has released its second album, "As I Went to Walsingham."

It features music of Walsingham House, which was the London residence of Sir Phillip Sidney, an Elizabethan Age poet and secretary to Queen Elizabeth I. Except for the elegy, all songs are based on texts by Sidney and all but two of the consort lessons are taken from Walsingham Consort Books.

The melody, "As I Went to Walsingham," was one of the most popular ballad tunes of the era. It serves as the basis for the many variations sets that are interspersed throughout the record. The album is in the Harmonia Mundi label and is available in local music stores on record, cassette and compact disc.

THE MUSICIANS of Swanne Alley was founded in 1976 and has toured extensively throughout North America and Europe. Three members have Oakland University connections.

Lyle Nordstrom, professor of music, directs the OU early music pro-

gram and the Oakland Choral and is founder and co-director of Swanne Alley. Besides performing on the bandora, lute and viol, Nordstrom edited and reconstructed many of the consort lessons and lute songs that are featured on this recording.

Patricia Adams Nordstrom is a teacher of recorder and viola da gamba, as well as a part-time instructor at OU. With Swanne Alley, she plays cittern and viol.

David Douglass, an OU graduate from Trenton now living in Boston, plays Renaissance violin and viol.

OTHERS IN Swanne Alley are Paul O'Dette, Christel Thielmann and Emily Van Evert.

O'Dette is co-director and assistant professor of music at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. He has recorded many albums, including several solo lute recordings. Thielmann, an Eastman instructor, plays viol and lute on this recording.

Van Evert is an internationally known singer from London, England. She is heard on numerous other early music recordings, especially with the Taverner Consort.

Nominations due for arts awards

The Arts Foundation of Michigan is accepting nominations for its Michigan Arts and Patrons Awards through Friday, Jan. 8.

The awards are presented at the Foundation's ceremony held each spring at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Arts winners each receive a \$2,500 prize for

excelling in their fields, including visual arts, literature, music, dance, drama and architecture. Patrons receive a plaque of Pewabic pottery for outstanding service to the state in support of the arts.

To receive nominating forms, call or write the Arts Foundation of Michigan, 542 New Center Building, 7430 Second Ave., Detroit, 871-0559.

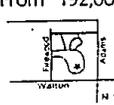
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