

Bring begonias indoors soon

As promised, way back in January, we will tell you how to bring the bedding plant begonias indoors so that you can enjoy them all through the coming winter months. They can give much pleasure and remind us of our summer gardens. (Yes, I believe that Michigan will again have cold, cold winters.)

Carl Eklund, master grower at Goldner-Walsh Nurseries Inc. in Fontaine, has some advice. Dig the clumps of begonias soon, before they are completely "gone" as annuals, before the frost. Shake half the soil off until you can see roots. Repot them in fresh soil to six inch pots and put them in the house, give them plenty of indirect light.

Trim them back to where you can see new foliage a few inches from the base 2-3 inches above the soil level. When they have grown about 12 inches long, make another cut (or pinch out the long new shoots). Each time a cut is made three or four new shoots will form at that spot. Contin-



down to earth

Marty Figley

ue to cut the long shoots until a huge clump has grown and overflows the pot with lovely blossoms.

Make sure the plants are watered regularly (they must not be dry for any length of time) and feed them lightly. If too much food is given, the plants won't bloom very well.

Now isn't that simple? Winter houseplants can be treated from the bedding plant begonias that have been enjoyed all summer long. What a pleasant gift for a friend.

I've had some successes and some failures with starting seeds indoors, but still I'd like to share some information with you. I've had good luck with *Lonas Anna*, a plant that

grows about 18 inches tall and blooms with dainty 1 1/2 inch clusters on tiny golden blossoms. They grow very well in dry conditions and will bloom until killing frost. I am happily harvesting them to use in dried arrangements. The seeds came from Burpee.

Two others started from seed are: *gaillardias*, which I have supported with small branches from a nearby tree, since they grow over two feet tall; and *Helichrysum* (not a great success rate for this one), but a wonderful plant to dry, which also likes

long, hot, summers. Apparently the *Scabiosa* didn't like the location, since they didn't grow well enough to bloom.

A pretty annual that is great for a summer garden (sown directly in the ground) is *godeta*. The flowers are pink, rose, white, lavender and variegated. Although I grew them at the edge of a bed, they would be ideal in a hanging basket. These seeds came from Ed Hume Seeds, Kent, Wa. 98035.

Park Seed Co.'s new petunias, *Celebrity Red* and *Celebrity White*, have done admirably in our Michigan summer. Their marigold discovery, *Yellow Hybrid*, is marching along as a border in the chrysanthemum bed. It grows to 12 inches and the new blooms cover the spent ones to make it self-cleaning . . . how about that? These were bedding plants.

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