

House plants clean up pollutants Cranbrook art tours

In the late 1970s buildings were "buttoned up" for more efficient heating and cooling. The result was indoor pollution from chemicals found in products used for this purpose. Also, more synthetic materials were being used in construction, refurbishing and furnishing office buildings and homes.

"And what came to the rescue? Living plants. Their photosynthesis process helps remove pollutants from the air. This certainly reinforces the fact that man and nature must work together to create a safe haven for us all."

"In studies to prepare areas for people to live inside a space station, researchers have found that plants can help reduce pollution. Since 1974, researchers at NASA's environmental research department at the John C. Stennis Space Center in Mississippi have conducted experiments on using plants for cleaning polluted air. The reports are quite encouraging in the battle to rid enclosed environments of pollutants."

Some 20 common houseplants were used in the tests. So, if you want to add to your houseplant inventory, consider the Dracaena family (marginalia, mass cane, Janet Craig, Warneckii) or a Chinese evergreen, either aglaonema modestum or "Silver Queen."

Others that might perform well in your home are: Gerbers daisy, English ivy, peace lily, mother-in-law's tongue, bamboo palm, pot mum, banana, golden pathos, alo vera, ficus and, of course, the green spider plant. Some suppliers are labeling specific plants for this purpose. Yoder's,

for instance, are marked "pollution fighters."

Now that you have new houseplants in your home, keep in mind their needs, such as water, light and food. We have spoken before about water and light. Now we'll talk a bit about food.

The three most needed nutrients are nitrogen (N) for healthy leaf production; phosphorus (P) for root and bloom growth; and potassium (K) for flower production, strong stems and resistance to disease.

A container of fertilizer will always list these three nutrients in that order — N-P-K, and show a ratio, such as 12-6-8, so the consumer will know what proportion of these essential foods are contained in the product.

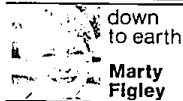
Fertilizers come in many forms such as liquid, powders and pellets. Choose the one that you prefer. Foliar sprays are also available to supplement the fertilizers that are applied directly to the soil.

Blooming plants require a formula with equal amounts of these nutrients, such as 7-7-7, or 20-20-20, often called African Violet food.

Food for foliage plants is called all-purpose. It contains the nutrients in different ratios, such as for young plants a 5-10-10, or for more mature ones perhaps a 7-6-19.

If you prefer to use the all-purpose formula on all your plants, change to the flowering (7-7-7) type when the flowering plants are ready to go into bud to encourage more spectacular blooms.

Most plants need additional food during heavy growth periods. During slow growth fertilize even-



down to earth
Marty Figley

ry 3-4 weeks. Always follow the manufacturers directions.
Speaking of flowers: The University of Michigan's Matthaei Botanical Gardens will present Michigan's Annual Flower and Garden Show April 6-8 at the University's Yost Field House. More details about this FIRST in March.

11 Mid-East countries

The exhibition, "Fifty Years of Cranbrook Design," opened in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia last month and will travel to 11 sites in eight countries in the Middle East, North Africa, India and Pakistan under the auspices of the United States Information Agency.

The objects in the exhibit range from furniture and products for the home, office and farm to architectural and interior designs for public, office and commercial spaces and buildings. Featured are examples of

recent graphic communication for private and corporate clients.

Cranbrook's underlying philosophy is the integration of art, architecture and design into everyday life.

Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum curator, Michele Rowe-Schickel and assistant, David Rowe, went to Saudi Arabia to install the exhibit. It was conceived by Roy Sledge, president of the Academy of Art, and curated by the Academy of Art, and by Michael McCooy, chairman of the Academy's design department.

Master Gardener classes to start

The 1990 Oakland County Master Gardener training program will start Jan. 22. Students will attend one evening class per week covering topics such as lawn care, pesticides and fruit trees. At the end of the 12-week period they will have a better understanding of the plants in this environment. Each graduate will be required to volunteer 40 additional hours after the formal training to receive the Master Gardener certificate.

The student doesn't have to be an expert to take the class, some experience in gardening is all that

it takes to be accepted into the program.

To enroll, call Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service of Oakland County, 858-0887. The \$90 fee covers classes and training packets. Registration deadline is Jan. 10.

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