



## Suburban Gardener Bay Window Becomes Little Garden Room

By BETTY FRANKEL  
Lee Peel, well-known Farmington High School English teacher, has a "way" with plants as well as with students and enjoys nurturing and encouraging the growth of both.

To provide a suitable haven for his collection of plants Peel has converted a bay window adjacent to his kitchen into a charming little garden room. The remodeling, inspired by the acquisition of a floor-to-ceiling window that a neighbor was discarding, included extending the bay a few inches and bringing it down to ground level.

Matching windows were installed on the sides of the bay and the opaque roof was replaced with a panel of translucent corrugated white fiberglass. An extra ceiling panel of transparent plastic provides additional insulation against cold without blocking necessary light.

The brick floor, which contributes to the garden atmosphere, is practical and was easy to install. Peel made two shallow trays from sheet aluminum fitted to cover the floor area. The bricks are laid in these without mortar. In addition to holding the bricks in place, the trays protect the wooden flooring

beneath from dripping water. A louvered door, which separates the little greenhouse from the kitchen, helps keep the humidity relatively high and the temperature relatively low in the garden room.

TIERS OF GLASS and wooden shelves were installed next to the windows and these are lined with plants—geraniums, begonias, ivy, red-leaved coleus, kalanchoe, aluminum plant, Jerusalem cherry, white poinsettias, and many others with exotic, colorful foliage. Tub and large pots are grouped on the floor and tall leafy plants such as angel wings begonia and philodendron stretch to the ceiling.

Peel says that the plants, which are the summer out of doors, are brought inside in September and placed in the garden room. He rearranges them on the shelves about every two months. The geraniums, now lined up on an upper shelf in prominent

view, were kept on the floor when they were first brought indoors because they were having a period of rest.

The rearranging is done primarily to adjust to changing conditions of light and temperature. The bay is on the west side of the house, so the garden room is bright all afternoon.

Over-watering has been Peel's greatest problem and he has lost some plants because he watered them too much or too often.

The only other problem has been an occasional attack of mealy-bugs, an infestation that causes cottony looking wads to accumulate in the axils of the leaves and stems. The have been easily controlled by rubbing them off with a cotton swab moistened with rubbing alcohol.

The little greenhouse room seems perfectly compatible with Peel's old centennial house, and the plants seem especially verdant when viewed against the background of a snow-covered lawn.

## Fruit Trees Need Space and Care

Tantalizing seed and nursery catalogs are arriving. But before your dreams get too big, consider several things.

First, how "green" is your thumb and how much do you enjoy using it? "Select fruit crops for home plantings according to your desire to perform the recommended cultural practices," says Jerome Hull, Michigan State University horticulturist.

Cultural practices for tree fruits are more numerous and demanding than for most other fruit crops," notes Hull. "Pruning and insect and disease control must be performed with precision for satisfactory fruit production."

When selecting fruit crops for home plantings, consider that strawberries require the least space to yield enough fruit for a family, suggests Hull. Raspberries and grapes require more area than strawberries, and tree fruits require more space than other fruit crops.

Plant fruit crops in areas receiving full sunlight, not in the shade.

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**The Green Thumb**  
By GEORGE ABRAHAM  
The best foliage plant: If I had to nominate the most handsome foliage plant my selection would be the Episcia, sometimes erroneously called "Flame African Violet." There are several pronunciations for the name, but the ones most commonly heard are E-pis-ee-uh, or epi-SSEE-uh.  
Most episcias form a rich tapestry of foliage with scarlet, yellow or pinkish flowers of unusual beauty. Episcias belong to the gesneriad family, somewhat related to the common African violet. A commercial grower dubbed one variety "Flame Violet" and promoted it widely as a trailing African violet with scarlet flowers. That shows how confusing common names can be.  
African violet is no violet itself, and the episcia is not a violet (only related to it), so it's fair to call it a "flame violet." To add to the confusion, some people call the episcia peacock foliage plant, and some call it heavenly strawberry, the latter because it sends out stolons or runners like a strawberry.  
These plants like tropical warmth, a range of 65 to 85 degrees being fine during the winter months. A temperature of 50 degrees will cause plants to collapse, as if frosted. Light is important too. Episcias with dark leaves can take more direct sun or bright, open shade. Good light gives the leaves better color.  
Jiffy-7 Pellets: More and more gardeners are discovering the usefulness of a new type of peat pot ideal for starting seeds and cuttings, namely the "Jiffy-7" pellet. These highly compressed pellets are only about one quarter inch thick, but when you soak them in water, they swell in minutes into a cylinder 1 3/4 inches in diameter and about 2 1/2 inches high, all ready to receive a seed or a cutting such as geranium.  
Jiffy-7 gets its name from the fact that the pots absorb seven times their weight in water and expand to seven times their original size. Roots grow into the nutrients and when ready, you plant the

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**GREEN THUMB CLINIC:**  
A reader writes: "Last year we had pepper plants two feet high and hardly any peppers. Is it true they have to be planted close together for cross-pollination?"  
Answer: No. It's the variety. Some are later, need a long growing season. Try Vineland or Penn Wonder and see if they don't bear for you.  
**FIX-IT TIP**  
To cover a small cigarette burn in a carpet, clip off the black ends and then treat with the following solution: Mix one teaspoon of white vinegar added to one teaspoon of neutral detergent.

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