



DREAM ROOM — For a little girl growing up, Miami designer Bob Rubenstein, A.I.D., designed a bedroom neither too young nor too old. A pink and green ceiling flowers overhead like a canopy. Bedspread matches the wallcovering on the ceiling. Green wicker headboard, rocker and arches over white chests keep the light, airy touch.



The Green Thumb

By GEORGE ABRAHAM

Early tomatoes: Right now's a good time to be planning on getting the first ripe tomatoes in your neighborhood. If you order seed, keep in mind that you should select to early varieties, especially if you live in a frost pocket.

There's an advantage to starting seed early indoors and then transplanting the

seedlings into pots. Many of you have tomatoes well along the way now, and they're quite spindly. Some even have blossoms on, which means they'll soon have small green fruits. When warm weather rolls around you can set the tall plants in the soil deeper, so they can root up and down the stem.

Some gardeners like to use blossom-set hormone sprays to ripen their tomatoes from one to three weeks earlier. The spray comes in aerosol cans, or in liquid form, ready for dilution. You spray the flower clusters when they are open or are partly open. The blossom-set hormone sprays make the fruit set, holds them on the plants. Tomatoes do not set fruit when the outdoor temperature is 59 degrees F. or lower.

You can get around this by spraying the blossoms with the hormone material, found in garden centers.

FREE...Send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope and ask for a copy of my bulletin, "How to Get Early Tomatoes First." My guide tells how to prune and stake tomatoes, and how to grow them on a wire corset. This system is called the Chinese tomato ring and it works like a charm for those who do not have much space to grow tomatoes.

A GOOD MARIGOLD: Last year we grew a marigold called Moonshot, a low growing hybrid which starts to bloom early. Flowers are fully three inches in diameter, and a handsome clear yellow. Plants grow 14 inches high. Apollo hybrid marigold grows 14 inches high, and is loaded with orange blossoms right up until frost in fall. If you've been having poor luck with the giant marigolds, try a blooming, I'd try some of these new hybrids.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: a reader writes, "I have a chance to get some hardwood bark and wonder if it can be used as a mulch around evergreens."

Answer: No reason why you can't. In fact, it's being marketed in bags containing three cubic feet of the bark mulch, enough to cover 36 sq. ft. of surface to a depth of one inch. It's a good idea to fortify the mulch with a liquid plant food such as 23-19-17, drenched on two or three times during the season. This will prevent a nitrogen shortage.

Gardener's Schedule Adjusts To Nature's

By BETTY FRANKEL

Spring has arrived. For the next three months, traversing the zodiacal signs of Aries, Taurus and Gemini, the sun moves north, the days grow longer, and the earth miraculously comes alive again.

Hesitantly and much too slowly the season comes. We joyously note the arrival of the red winged blackbirds, the first robin to strut across the greening lawn, the swelling buds on pussywillow and forsythia and silver maples, and the first crocus offering its cup filled with sunshine.

The gardener has been waiting through long, icy, barren months, while the sun passed through Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. Now he can gather up the bright packets of seeds and take rake and spade and commence his arduous but soul satisfying labors.

The season can't be rushed, however, and the work must be adjusted to fit nature's schedule.

Early chores that can be done right away include cleaning up any debris that may have accumulated during the winter months. Loosen up leafy mulches on shrub and flower beds, but don't remove them until the nights are warmer.

CHECK TREES and shrubs for broken branches that should be pruned off and check for an remove any insect infested branches. Pruning to improve the shape or to control the size of trees and shrubs can be done now, too, but to avoid loss of flowers prune the early bloomers after they have had their crop of flowers. Remember to use tree wound paint, especially on any cut larger in diameter than a 25-cent piece.

Cut a few branches of forsythia and forcing quince to force into bloom ahead of time in the house.

Seeds may be started indoors now so the little plants will be ready for the vegetable garden or flower beds in late May. Try petunias, snapdragons or others that take a long time to reach blooming size, or start marigolds or zinnias merely to give them a head start.

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Breathing cleaner air is something we all crave—knowing how foul our environment has become.

It is this desire for a cleaner home environment that has created a surge of popularity in air cleaning devices. For not only do people wish to clean the polluted air that enters the home, but they desire to remove the pollution they create right in their own home.

Home comfort experts of the West Bend Company, manufacturer of the Air Care electronic air cleaner, point out that an air cleaning device is remarkably effective in removing airborne particles such as tobacco smoke, dust from mattresses, fabrics and rugs; powdered foodstuffs such as flour; and grease and smoke that come from cooking.

Feed lawns, trees and shrubs.

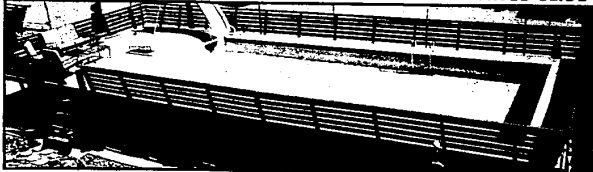
DON'T TRY to do any digging or outdoor planting until the soil is "friable." This means that it is dry enough that a small handful of soil will crumble apart when it is squeezed. Sandy soil becomes warm, dry and workable sooner than clay soil does. If your soil is clay don't even walk on it too soon or it will become compacted and hard to work and hard for plants to grow in.

Make a plan for any planting or landscaping to be done and set up a schedule of work to be accomplished as the season progresses: Lawn seeding and feeding in late March and early April; Planting of deciduous (leaf-losing) trees and shrubs and roses in April; Planting seeds of hardy vegetables and flowers in warm, dry and workable soil in April and early May; Transplanting perennials and evergreen trees and shrubs in May, and finally at the end of May planting seeds and bulbs and setting out plants of tender vegetables such as tomatoes and beans and flowers such as zinnias, petunias, marigolds and geraniums.



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