

Gardeners have many reasons to be 'glad' planting

DOWN TO EARTH



MARTY FIGLEY

responsible for 46 percent of all the gladioli grown throughout the world.

The name gladiolus comes from gladius, the Latin word for sword, which refers to the sword-shaped foliage. Luther Burbank included this plant in his hybridizing projects, and his successes revolutionized gladiolus breeding.

Gladioli fall in three general classifications: spring-flowering from Africa, winter-hardy from Europe, and the summer-flowering ones from southeast Asia, which are the most popular.

Planting plans

For summer-long bloom begin planting the corns in May as

soon as the ground can be worked and continue until later June.

Gladioli come in many colors from pure white through black-red, including lime green. There are bi-color blooms, and those that blend several colors are known as smokies.

Plant these easy-care annuals in waves in the garden. Rotate the planting site each year to avoid a corn infection. A well-drained, sunny location is necessary; average soil is OK, but they prefer a slightly acid soil. Fertilize moderately with a formula such as 3-8-8.

In late September, when the corn is dug, the original corn has withered during this time and a new one has formed on the top. Underneath and attached to the older corn are little cornels that, after being stored for the winter, can be planted in the spring along with the larger corns, giving you additional plants. They will reach full size in about two years.

If you want to take flowers indoors, cut them (don't disturb the leaf) when the lower buds begin to open.

Light touch

After you have planted your gladioli, or at least cleaned up the garden, you might want to install low-voltage lighting to extend the time you can spend outdoors after the cold, cold winter. We'll want to be outside as much as possible when warm weather arrives — and it will!

Floodlights, tier lights, cylinders, globes and other kinds of fixtures will provide the specific kind of lighting you may need. Bright lights for children's parties, a softer glow for more intimate evenings, or lights for safety or to welcome guests — all are available at reasonable prices.

We have enjoyed the lights we installed along the curved walk leading to our front door and only wish we had done it sooner. They provide a soft glow for guests. The lights added a warm note when they shone through the snow this winter.

Now we have a new set of lights for the herb garden, which is adjacent to the deck. Needless to say, one of the first-on-the-agenda items is to install them this spring. We so often barbecue and

sit on the deck with friends and family, I know we will wish we had added this night beauty long before. A spotlight on the small dogwood tree will make a wonderful focal point.

We have chosen Malibu lights, made by Intermatic Inc. This company suggests:

Place them so they don't shine into the neighbors' yards or windows. Install them so the glow will be softly cast. Don't overdo (a little light goes a long way). Place lights along paths and sidewalks so they can draw attention to possible curves or steps. Eventually a bulb will need to be replaced — make sure it can be done easily. For special effects, colored lenses are available for some lights.

You may order a brochure, "Light Up Your Life," by sending a check or money order for \$1.75 to: Lighting Book, Intermatic Inc., Intermatic Plaza, Spring Grove, Ill. 60081.

Travel tips

If you are planning to travel south this year, try to schedule a stop at the butterfly dome at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain,

Ga. This lovely resort is about 1 1/2 hours from Atlanta. We recently took grandsons Jeff, 10, and Chris, 8, and both of them were entranced, as were the adults. You'll never forget the experience.

Have you eaten at the Eagle Tavern at Greenfield Village? Food is served 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in an 1850s atmosphere, at long tables. You can pretend you have stopped by the tavern after a long journey. A treat.

"Cultivating for the Senses: The Sights, Sounds and Aromas of the Garden" is the title for Colonial Williamsburg's 47th Symposium. Among the speakers are Roger Swain of "The Victory Garden" and author and gardener Ray Reddell. The program promises to bring much information. Go, learn and enjoy! For registration information, call Deborah Chapman at 804-220-7255. Do it now!

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859.

Club meets

The Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Oakland County officially becomes the Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Michigan at its general meeting 2-4:30 p.m. Sunday, April 25, in the second level community room at Summit Place Mall, Telegraph and Elizabeth Lake Road in Pontiac.

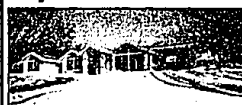
Entrance is near Ruby Tuesday's restaurant. Call secretary Marge Clayton at 667-0185 for more information.

The season starts with a workshop for both novice and advanced Vance Wood will work with members on styling, pruning and wire. Scotch tools will be featured. Tools should be brought to the meeting. Call Wood at 772-7708 for tree orders.

Handcolor photos

The Paint Creek Center for the Arts is offering a one-day adult "Hand Coloring Workshop" 6:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 4.

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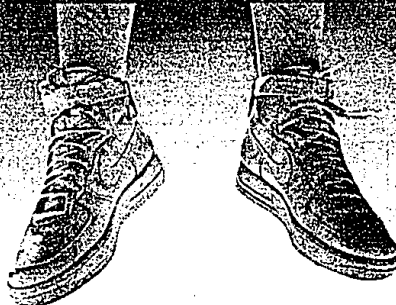
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