

DIA sets special programs

The Detroit Institute of Arts has scheduled a variety of educational programs this month.

The programs are free with museum admission unless otherwise noted. Call 833-7963.

A lecture, "Excavations in the Theban Necropolis: The Tombs of Dira Abu El Nagay," will take place 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 12, in the Lecture Hall. Lanny Bell, associate professor of Egyptology at the University of Chicago, will discuss the five seasons (between 1905 and 1977) of excavation in the tombs of Ramesed nobility on the west bank of Luxor, Egypt.

The Dearborn Traditional Arab Ensemble will present a concert 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 14, in the Lecture Hall. Using simple acoustic instruments such as the oud (lute), kanoun (dulcimer), nuy (flute) and tabl (drum), the ensemble will present the best of classical and folkloric music from the Arab world.

In conjunction with the exhibition "Decorative Arts 1900: Highlights from Private Collections in Detroit," DIA curators will lead a series of slide-illustrated talks 9:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 20, in the Lecture Hall. Topics will include the Darmstadt artists colony, Christopher Dresser, ceramic workshops, privately printed books and Louis Comfort Tiffany. Use the Woodward entrance before 11 a.m.

The highly acclaimed, one-hour documentary "Beatrice Wood: Mama of Dada" will be shown 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 21, in the Lecture Hall. Wood, an internationally recognized artist who recently turned 100 years old, is the last surviving link to the Dada art movement of the World War I era.

A Youthart puppetry workshop and performance will take place 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 27, in the Education Center. Children in grades K-3 and their adult friends will make puppets. The class ends with a short performance by participants. Fees, including supplies, are \$7 per child and \$3 adult, members \$6 child and \$2 adult. For information on this and other classes, call 833-7977. After classes, students may attend the Youthart puppet performance 11:30 a.m. in the Lecture Hall. Buy Youthart tickets separately by calling 963-2066.

A slide-illustrated lecture, "Handcarved American Canes: Personal Sculptures that Poke Into History," will be given by Bloomfield Hills attorney, art collector and author George Meyer and his wife, Kay Wilkie Meyer, 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 28, in the Lecture Hall. A book signing will take place after the talk. The lecture is on the closing day of the exhibition "Step Lively: The Art of the Folk Cane."

Americans find freedom in gardening

BY MARGE ALPERN
SPECIAL WRITER

Americans are sometimes criticized by gardeners of other countries as having a predilection for worry-free, self-sustaining plants and gardens.

They say we look primarily for "low maintenance" or "no maintenance" plants. The result is a large expanse of manicured grass, boring and repetitive foundation plantings, and huge areas of ground cover.

I don't believe this is a fair criticism of American gardeners today. Perhaps it was true in the past, but I believe that a revolutionary freedom has exploded in American gardening. Now, anything goes!

If it is pleasing to the owner, if it is at all attractive and if it looks cared for, the home managed garden is just fine. We don't have gardens like the English or the French. We have our own style!

In general, there is a softening of line in our gardens. They are more natural, more country-like, we are using a much greater variety of plant forms and textures.

GARDENING

Plants are also being assessed more critically by amateur gardeners. Plants have to be beautiful, yes, but they have to go on being attractive, at least not unattractive, after the bloom period is over.

It isn't enough for us to just enjoy a short splash of color and then have to deal with a dreary mess of dying leaves as well as dying flowers. No one wants to waste space on such a plant. In many cases, whether the plants are annuals or more costly perennials, they are frequently removed and replaced. This means additional work and expense.

The less there is don't waste money, space or labor on plants that don't work for you. Experiment with something else.

We don't always get it right the first time. If the plant isn't right or the way we planned or dreamed, and it didn't work out at all, the garden is a disappointment. Thank goodness, there is always next year, another chance, another dream, another spring.

Use ecology as a design factor. Ecology is not just endangering species and clean pollution. It is the relationship of plants to animals, to land and water, and then to us.

If we can see all of nature as our garden, we will be more sensitive to our own small home plots. It is helpful if we can understand what is the relationship of plants that grow naturally all around us. Prune away the excess of nature and create your own garden in harmony with the natural background.

Within your private space, create individual rooms in your garden. Even in a small yard, one can create special spaces that can be designed with unusual plants and character, but all of which add to the effect of the whole garden.

Establish one or two focal points in each room. Use a rock, sculpture, bench, path or fence to define the space. Let it be central to your design, but avoid it.

These additions to the garden remain in place all year and can be very beautiful during the winter months when there is little else of interest to be seen in the snow.

If it works once, do it again! If a plant does well for you and you are pleased, use it again. It can be equally or even more effective if it is repeated again elsewhere.

When planted with other neighboring plants, it will look somewhat different but the repeated

appearance of a choice plant in a different part of your garden will establish a continuity of color and design that can be most appealing.

Network

"The New York Times recently observed 'Gardening is becoming a national obsession.' Growth of sales in the horticultural industry outpaces all other segments of the economy. New nurseries, garden centers and floral outlets have appeared in unprecedented numbers.

"A vast information and education network is developing. There is an amazing arsenal of resources for easier, more rewarding and environmentally benign gardening. From new and better plants, to new and better ways of growing them, horticulture is moving forward as never before. It's a great time to be a gardener."

The above quotation is from the special issue of "The Avant Gardener." The Avant Gardener is a monthly publication that is celebrating 25 years of bringing excellent cutting-edge information to American horticulturists.

I think it does an fine job, and I recommend it to all serious gardeners. If you are interested, write to "The Avant Gardener, P.O. Box 489, New York, N.Y. 10028. Cost is \$18 yearly.

Year-round

Even the formerly ignored seasons of fall and winter are now receiving our attention. We are continuously exploring ways to make these months in our gardens more interesting by selecting plants with special attributes to be enjoyed during these seasons.

Planning principles

Many gardeners, including me, find designing the garden much more difficult than planting the garden. I am a horticulturalist, not a landscape designer. The following principles have been helpful to me, and I pass them on to you.

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Festive dining ideas find place at Cranbrook holiday tables

Cranbrook House Auxiliary presents spectacular holiday table settings designed by local residents Thursday-Sunday, Nov. 18-21.

Nineteen holiday tables, displayed throughout historic Cranbrook House, offer the public an opportunity to gather many ideas for festive holiday dining.

In addition to the tables reflecting the interests and style of each individual, Holiday Tables '93 will include refreshments, a gift boutique and prize drawings.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Nov. 19-20, and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 21. Admission is \$8 at the door or in advance. Shuttle service is available from the Christ Church parking lot on Lone Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills.

An elegant Patron's Tea will take place 1-4 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 18. Tickets priced at \$50 each admit one patron and one guest.

For individual and group reservations, patron tickets information, call 445-3149. Proceeds will benefit the restoration and preservation of Cranbrook House, the historic Booth family home.

Unusual tables ranging from whimsical to opulent are designed around creative, seasonal or holiday themes such as Artistic Kenyaphardel's "Misty Chompagne Christmas Buffet" featuring sil-

ber peese with Liqueur and Baccarat crystal, artist Julie Dawson's African theme setting with whimsical papier-mache bush animals and Carole Larson Wenzel's red and green "Tea Time at the Grand Hotel" featuring unusual articles from the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.

Annie Green will design Tiffany & Co.'s table around Audubon china and Audubon sterling silver flatware.

Other table designers include Sharon Chatham, Mrs. Paul Czarnomski, Joan and Karen Emde,

Libby Stein Follis, Gerry Goodman, Mrs. Leonard Jaques, Anna and Suzanne Rea, Mrs. William Sankovich, Linda Schafer and Blanche Pollock, Roy Slade, Rena Toton and Mrs. Ben Weinberg.

Cranbrook House Auxiliary and Cranbrook Gardens Auxiliary will also design tables for the event.

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