

## Visit from page 20A

Gentians and primulas, unusual iris, dianthus, phlox and mossy saxifragas are some of the other plants displayed in the gardens.

Trough planters large and small were overflowing with plants when I visited. One is in an old piece of farm equipment to demonstrate how a scree looks with lots of loose rock, very well drained. It is three to four feet off the ground and shows that these tiny plants, such as saxifragas, sedums, sempervivums, oenotheras, eriogonums and the like can make it through cold Michigan winters. They do need a little protection in the winter — burlap, bales of hay, a piece of glass over the top all work well.

The trick to alpine gardening is to pick the right plant, Richard said. When I asked how to care for a trough garden, he replied, "Water if it's a drought period — no rain for four to five days — otherwise we don't really water. And we foliar feed infrequently with a diluted solution."

All the gardens are fertilized beginning in March with a low-nitrogen fertilizer, then a time-release fertilizer is used. Water is given regularly during the summer months.

### Unusual

Unusual trees and shrubs are another passion. Weeping Katsura, unusual varieties of common trees such as carpinus (Ironwood), Halesia (Silverbell), Quercus (English Oak) and Ginkgo biloba. Richard explained that the Gink-

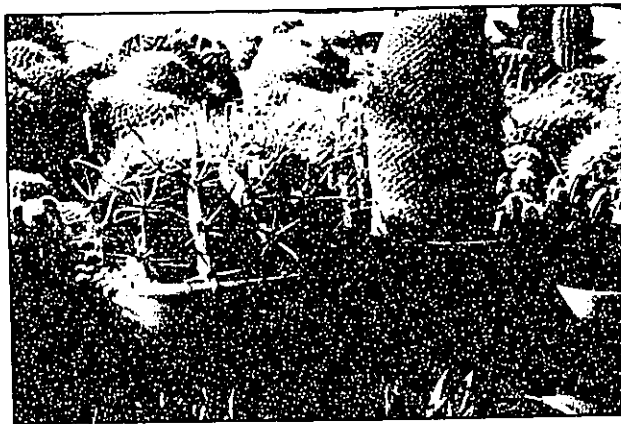
**The most expensive plant is a \$450 Ponytail palm about 30 years old that can summer outside and be kept indoors in the wintertime. It is slow growing and is a native of the Sonoran Desert.**

go is a classic survivor, not only the last of the genus, but the last of the whole order of this type of plant, a very primitive plant botanically.

"This was around during the time of the dinosaurs and would have gone extinct if it hadn't been grown in the temple yards in China."

In addition to all of the above, several ponds are on the property and pond plants such as pitcher plant, heather, unusual ginger, campanulas (lots of them), Jack-in-the-Pulpit relatives, bog rosemary and more are growing nearby with plants with like needs grouped together. They carry 20 kinds of water lilies, grasses, sedges, hyscinths, water lettuce, variegated iris, Japanese water iris — the list goes on and on. Seven or eight species of bamboo are also available as are many gorgeous varieties of dwarf conifers, all on display.

Another business of the engaging couple is cut flowers that Raven sup-



MARTY FOGLEY

Starting point: The business started with succulents.

plies on a regular basis to businesses. She creates large arrangements in the European style, which means they aren't florist arrangements but are more open and free looking. These are delivered Mondays and are guaranteed to last the whole week.

Richard's students from Matthaei Botanical Gardens come to the greenhouse and gardens to learn. Saguaro

Rare Plant Nursery has participated in the ROPARD show at Meadow Brook in Rochester and at the Ann Arbor Flower Show, as well as other shows. Last year they won a gold medal at the Cincinnati Flower Show.

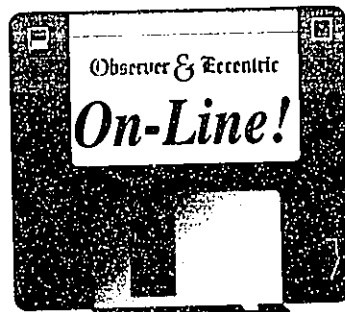
"We felt very honored when Martha Stewart gave a class at that show and told everyone to come and look at our display."

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