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The Green Thumb
By GEORGE ABRAHAM

GROW OLIVES INDOORS? Gardeners like a challenge and nothing challenges them more than raising an olive tree from seed. We have readers (mainly men) who have had many success stories of olive trees started from seeds.

Olive seeds are not easy to start, but they can be started. One reader takes seeds from the ripe (black) olives, places them in ice cube trays and freezes the seed for a couple of weeks. She tells us that freezing is the secret needed to get

the seed started. Others file a notch in the seed and plant them in a pot of sand-peat mixture. At first, it takes a few weeks for the seed to germinate, but eventually it will.

One of our friends, a native of an olive tree country (Portugal) writes: "Over there, any time a farmer wishes to grow a new olive tree, he just cuts off a branch and sticks it into the ground. Within a short time (and without fall) there is a new olive tree growing. If you have a friend who has an olive tree growing, take some cuttings from it and root them in sand.

A GOOD FOLIAGE PLANT: If you want a small shrub-like foliage plant try the Schefflera (Cher-leaf-uh), a fast growing item with large palmately leaves on a long stem.

It's sometimes called "Umbrella tree." Plant tends to grow as a single trunk, but branching can be induced by cutting the top back. Best soil mixture is equal parts sand, peat and loam.

Water the plant thoroughly and then not again until the surface is dry. Start new plants from seed which will germinate in about two weeks in a 65-70 degree temperature.

You can also start plants from cuttings rooted in sand.

CHRISTMAS ROSE: Here's an item worth growing around your home. Foliage is evergreen and flowers are two inches across with white floral parts. They bloom all winter.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: A reader writes: "Our clematis has been doing fine and we want to protect it from winter. What care do we need?"

Answer: Clematis is very hardy and I doubt if you need a mulch. Straw or evergreen boughs are sometimes used.

FREE: Send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope for my bulletin, "How To Grow Clematis."



PLANT SOME MONEY — Dried, peeled leaves from the Pope's penny look like real coins and may be used for interesting and attractive arrangements. Seeds grow in most climates and should be planted in the early fall.

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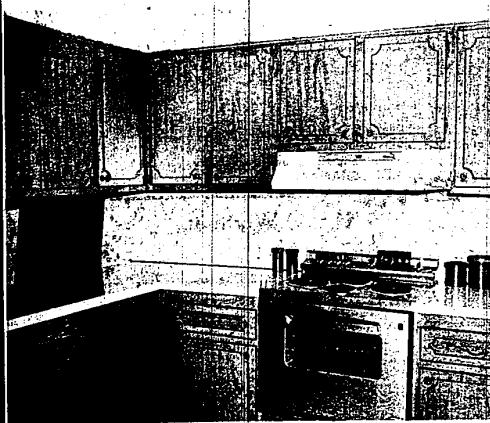
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