

GARDENING

Clever gardeners reap compliments with plants

GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

It never ceases to amaze me when I learn of the clever ideas people come up with to grow plants.

Here are some examples:

Traci Ricelli, daughter-in-law of Rose and Leon Ricelli of Bloomfield Hills, fashioned a most unusual "container" that has captivated everyone who has seen it. It's on the property of the Ricelli home.

"Every weekend we have 'lookers' drive in to get a closer look," Rose said.

"Several come to the door to ask questions and most want to know where we got it. In fact, one lady banged on the door and said, 'I want one.' When we told her how it was made, she decided that would be too difficult."

Traci stuffed moss into plastic chicken wire, secured the edges with plastic ties and stuffed many different annuals in each little space of the wire. She made sure there was soil around the roots.

Some of the plants used were petunias and dusty miller. This year Rose planted it and used all impatiens.

Either display is outstanding with the reds, pinks and whites, but what makes this "container" so unusual is it is wrapped three times around a very large tree—it is nailed to the tree.

To keep the plants alive and happy, it is watered daily; they have found that fertilizer isn't necessary.

The attractive display was planted around the time of



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Hugger: This unusual "container" brings many admirers to the Ricelli home.

Memorial Day and will last until frost. The family calls it the Tree Hugger.

Our grandson, 3-1/2-year-old Ben, can reach his vegetable garden very easily.

His daddy, Dave, and momma, Annette, decided they didn't want to take up too much space for a garden in their small, shady yard, but had an extra-wide driveway that is in the sun. So Dave built two "mobile gardens."

The first is 2 feet by 4 feet by 16 inches deep and has wheels from an old wheelbarrow. They

■ Traci Ricelli fashioned a most unusual 'container' that has captivated everyone who has seen it.

are growing potatoes from seed potatoes and the plants are about 20 inches high. They will add more soil around each plant to encourage growth so there is room for the potatoes to develop.

The second garden is 30 inches by 8 feet, 8 inches, and has wheels from an old lawn tractor. In this the family planted seeds of Swiss chard and green beans and plugs of head lettuce. All are growing right on schedule.

Dave and Annette experimented with soil mixtures and the first combination, topsoil and sphagnum moss, was much too heavy and didn't drain. This was dumped out and they began again.

The successful mix is potting soil, manure and sphagnum moss and is much lighter. To help with drainage, Dave drilled additional 3/4-inch holes in the bottom, 6 inches apart, and drainage is fine.

Every so often K-Grow or Miracle-Gro is applied with a hose-end sprayer. They are all anticipating their first harvest.

In a small area of the yard pumpkins for Halloween, cherry tomatoes, sunflowers and carrots grow.

"Each day Ben asks if it is time for him to pull a carrot," Annette said.

When we try new ideas in our gardens, especially when we include the family in on the fun, we learn together and build strong relationships.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734)953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248)644-1314.



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On the grow: Grandson Ben is learning and having a good time watching his "mobile garden" grow.

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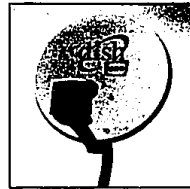
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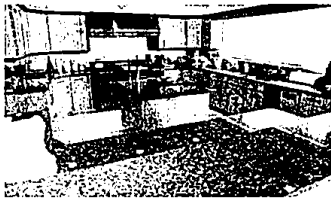
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