

Figley from page C1

tree, tree of life, is the tree for this time of year, the Feb. 18 through March 17. Its buds are the most distinctive part, and begin to ooze sticky resin as the sap begins to rise in the spring. Flowers are petal-less with purple stamens that appear in April.

Graham Stuart Thomas' Three Gardens: The Personal Odyssey of a Great Plantman and Gardener. Graham Stuart Thomas (Sagapress, \$29.95), is remarkable. It showcases his long career as a horticulturist and garden designer.

Thomas describes his gardens from the first shovelful of soil to the glory of the flowers, and along the way he "slips in" horticultural tidbits that he has found successful.

For 30 years Thomas was gardens adviser and supervised the restoration of many famous gardens in Great Britain when he worked for the National Trust. He spent several years working in nurseries and honing his skills.

His lively writing and his telling of stories and personal experiences are testament to the fact that he loved his work. A reference guide and plant index are thoughtfully included, as are his drawings.

Cutting remarks
Published by BradyLane Publishers Inc. in 2000, *Flowers are Almost Forever: The Care*

and *Handling of Cut Flowers*, Libbey Oliver (\$12, soft), is the most comprehensive book on the subject I have seen.

The latest techniques are featured. Oliver teaches how to prepare the flowers, care and handle them and make long-lasting arrangements.

She also tells how to pick them from the garden and how to choose the florists' latest offerings. Tips to make the job easier with less stress on the arranger are innovative.

A long list of flowers contains specific information, i.e. those sensitive to ethylene, vase life, temperature and Oliver's personal comments.

GOODGARDEN TIPS
■ Check your stored summer flowering bulbs and remove any that show signs of rotting.
■ Bordine Nursery is hosting a Garden 101 seminar March 9 (10 a.m. in Rochester Hills, 1 p.m. in Brighton). Call (248) 651-9000 for details.

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.

Tips can help organize kids' rooms

Q: My children's rooms are a disaster area. The floor is piled, the closet is full, and the dresser drawers do not close. I would like order but I am not sure where to start.

A: It is important to teach your children how to organize their room. You need order now and they need these skills for later on life so they will be able to function efficiently in their own home and place of employment. Maintaining clutter control in your child's room does not have to be an impossible task if you create a workable system. Whether your children are preschool, age, or teenagers, you can help them obtain and maintain order. Implement the following ideas and systems to achieve clutter control.

Containerize clothing, accessories, and toys by putting like items together. Use plastic or more decorative containers such as wicker, canvas, or wood. If every item has a specific place it is more likely to return to its place. Use lidded containers so you can stack them on top of each other.

Store few keepsakes in the bedroom and put the overflow in a container in a basement storage area. This would include

DOMESTIC PLANNER



DIANA KOENIG

items such as trophies, artwork, and knickknacks. For younger children, rotate toys from the bedroom to another location or use the top of the closet.

Children can be overwhelmed and bored if they have too many toys to choose from. As you periodically change the toys, it will feel like Christmas.

Exchange off-season clothing to another location so closets and drawers close easily. Limit the amount of "little pieces" from toys and games. Use zip-lock bags and small lidded containers to store small items such as Legos, Barbie accessories, building blocks, etc.

Make sure your child is able to make his bed by himself. Use a comforter because it is easy to make and you do not have to worry about wrinkles from the sheet or blanket. The bed should be away from the wall so the comforter can slide down the

side with ease.

Use under-bed storage containers for toys, stuffed animals, clothing items, shoes, and craft items. Containers with rollers make it easier to access the contents.

Use a hanging sweater or shoe shelf in the closet to store shoes, clothing, games and toys. Younger children do not usually need as much hanging space.

A bookshelf is a good storage place for books, however, it will also hold games, puzzles, and toys. Use a small square basket on the shelf to hold small books, which tend to fall over on the shelf. You can also use a bookshelf as a back-up dresser. Place wicker or plastic baskets on the shelf to hold socks, pajamas, T-shirts, etc.

Use laundry baskets, large plastic containers, or a wooden toy box for stuffed toys, trucks and larger items.

Use another area other than the bedroom as a play area. When our children were young, we bought a small area rug for our unfinished basement so they had another play area other than the bedroom. This was a good place to roll cars and build with blocks.

Donate or sell outgrown clothing and toys to avoid crammed

closets, shelves, and drawers.

Designate a basket or shelf in the closet for shoes. An alternative for shoe storage is to store shoes in a hall closet, laundry room, or garage. Use a shoe storage system in our garage to keep dirty shoes out of our bedrooms.

Some children need to share a room because of limited bedroom space. It is important that each child has his own space in the bedroom. Our boys shared a room for many years and we divided areas in half. Each son had one side of the closet and their own dresser drawers. They were each responsible for their own area.

It is important once you have helped your child organize his room, that you help him maintain order. You need to check the room daily to make sure everything has returned to its home.

Today's Refrigerator Bulletin:
"Order in a room brings order to the house!"

Diana Koenig is a writer, educator, speaker and consultant. Send your questions and success stories to: Diana Koenig, P.O. Box 1702, Manchester, MO 63011; e-mail: diana_koenig@hotmail.com Visit www.domesticplanner.com

Publication helps manage fertilizer runoff

The late spring and early summer when in flowers, gardens, manicured lawns and, all too often, over-fertilization.

Nutrients from excess fertilizers run into storm drains that empty directly into the region's streams, rivers and lakes and degrade water quality.

SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, offers *Managing Fertilizer to Protect our Water Resources*, a publication to help local leaders weave through the regulatory confusion that often accompanies the topic and gives suggestions for solutions through education and regulation.

"Every stream in southeast Michigan empties to a major

waterway," said Chuck Hersey, SEMCOG environmental programs manager.

"If I put too much fertilizer on my lawn in Northville, it can end up in the Rouge River and, ultimately, Lake Erie. In that way, every home in southeast Michigan is on waterfront property."

Upon reaching rivers and lakes, nutrients from fertilizer cause excess weed growth, which depletes the oxygen supply for fish and aquatic insects and makes the water unusable for boating and swimming.

The publication is an outgrowth of the revised *Water Quality Management Plan for Southeast Michigan*, which places greater emphasis on

reducing pollution from storm water runoff from streets, yards, farmlands, driveways and parking lots.

Water that was once absorbed into the ground — replenishing groundwater and controlling flooding — now flows directly into rivers and streams, picking up dirt, oils and other contaminants along the way.

Both the *Water Quality Management Plan for Southeast Michigan* and *Managing Fertilizer to Protect our Water Resources* are available from SEMCOG Information Services and are in PDF on the SEMCOG Web site (www.semco.org/cgi-bin/products/pubs_all.cfm)

Many residents look to their

local governments for guidelines to help them implement safe and healthy environmental practices.

"People look to their elected leaders to make sure that the health and safety of the food they eat, their medicine, and the products they buy meet safety standards," Hersey said.

"The same is true for the environment. People expect elected officials to look out for their best interest and protect the resources they enjoy; that's why we developed this guide."

SEMCOG is a regional planning partnership of local governmental units servicing 4.8 million people in the seven-county region of southeast Michigan.

CLARIFICATION

The Feb. 7 article about Diane Salim's garden should

have said that custer beans are annuals, not perennials.

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Homeowners find safety, savings with propane

(NAPSA) -When it comes to selecting a home energy source, homebuyers, homebuilders and remodelers all look for the same qualities - a fuel that's reliable, safe, clean and economical.

Increasingly, whether for heating water, fueling a furnace or powering a clothes dryer, the energy source they select is gas, and for many homeowners, that means propane gas.

"More and more homeowners are becoming aware that they have different energy options, and they trust propane because it feeds their families with a feeling of warmth, comfort and safety," according to Roy Willis, president of the Propane Education & Research Council.

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