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A potpourri: Facts about perennial care, Bonsai Show, poisonous plants

June is Perennial Gardening Month, according to the Perennial Plant Association, which offers this advice: These plants will provide much satisfaction if they receive regular care this month.

GARDEN SPOT

Shear the tops of spring bloomers to ensure a uniform and ornamental foliage effect for the remainder of the season. Use grass shears. Cut back by half tall, late season bloomers to control height and eliminate the need for staking.



MARTY FIGLEY

Plant new perennials that will flower in June and beyond into summer and fall. Amend the soil with organic matter so moisture retention is enhanced. Water deeply each week. Apply a 2-inch layer of mulch, keeping it away from the crown.

The 29th annual Bonsai Show and Sale will take place 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, June 8, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, June 9.

The show is sponsored by Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Michigan and will take place at the Washington Square Building on the corner of Washington and Fourth Street in Royal Oak. Admission is \$3, free for under age 12.

Enjoy this ancient, delicate art form of miniature Japanese trees. The exhibit is the result of many hours of growing and training the plants.

Free demonstrations about growing your own bonsai will be conducted noon to 2 p.m., 3-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. Saturday; and 1:30-3 p.m. and 3-5 p.m. Sunday. Equipment and plants will be available for purchase.

For further information, visit www.geocities.com/figley or call Todd Renshaw at (248) 585-9916.

Arch support

In January I wrote about the vines growing in Jan Zikakis' garden in Troy. Her husband, George, has devised a method to inhibit rust from forming on the metal arches.

"I purchased one 10-foot section of electrical conduit just large enough in diameter to fit around the 'legs' of the arches," he

said. "I used a hacksaw to cut 24-inch pieces and used four for each arch. I hammered them in to the ground leaving 1 foot out of the ground. I then set the arch into the conduit."

"The first rung of the arch keeps the 'legs' from going too far into the conduit, consequently the arch is a bit higher and the metal of the arch doesn't touch the ground, because it's encased in the conduit."

A nationwide program, Plant for the Cure, raises money to support the work of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. It is credited as one of the nation's leading catalysts in the fight against this dreaded disease.

When you are buying annuals this year, look for Americana Miracle Pink Spinach Geraniums and Accent Miracle Collection Impatiens, something for both sun and shade. A portion of the proceeds made from the sales of these plants will go directly to the Foundation.

Safety

We are all responsible to be alert to practices that assure the quality of our water supply is clean and safe.

The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program, Michigan Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing 48909 (phone (517) 335-6629), encourages us to do the following:

To get rid of unwanted pesticides, take them to a "Clean Sweep" site. To find one near you, call the number above.

Read and follow label directions when applying pesticides. Collect spilled pesticide and reuse it, or dispose of it at a Clean Sweep site. Cat box filler will absorb the spilled product.

Avoid using pesticides and fertilizers when rain is predicted. Fertilize your lawn at least three weeks after spring green-up to improve turf health and reduce risk for groundwater contamination. Have plant problems diagnosed by an expert; consider all treatment options.

Sweep fertilizer off the sidewalk and driveway into the lawn. Get rid of unwanted household hazardous products at a local collection program. Don't dump them down the drain.

Hire a licensed well driller to close an unused well. Pump your septic tank every three to five years.



MARTY FIGLEY

Beautiful bonsai: This bonsai, a paper flower "Mayogi," has been trained since 1977 as an informal upright.

Michigan State University Extension bulletins are available from your county extension office.

Here is a list of poisonous plants that families with small children should know:

■ Flowers – Bleeding heart, daffodils, delphinium, foxglove, hollyhocks, lily of the valley, lupine and sweet pea.

■ Shrubs – Azalea, mountain laurel, oleander, privet, rhododendron and yew.

■ Houseplants – Caladium, dieffenbachia, philodendron.

■ Wildflowers – Buttercups, jimson weed, autumn crocus, may apple, poison hemlock, moonseed berries and water hemlock.

■ Weeds – Nightshade, pokeweed (at certain times) and various mushrooms.

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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