

Garden books share steps to success

Happy Holidays! I don't believe I have shared a giving story with you that is one of my sweetest memories.

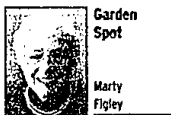
One snowy day, just a few days before Christmas (or maybe even Christmas Eve), my two middle children, Liana and David, really put the pressure on me to let them walk to the grocery store that was approximately a mile away. They were about 10 and 12 years old and assured me that they could run their errand with no problems.

They did have warm clothes, and there was a sidewalk on one side of the street so they would be safe from traffic.

With a tug at my heart, I agreed to let them go on this "very important mission."

After some time they returned home, all red-cheeked and flushed with excitement. With a flourish, they then presented me with a container filled with kumquats!

What a surprise! They knew how I liked the little fruits, and I had told them my memories of eating them as a child. I shall never forget their



Garden Spot
Marty Fligley

thoughtfulness. Now to the books for this column.

I encourage you to look at **Cubed Foot Gardening: Growing Vegetables in Raised, Intensive Beds**, Christopher Bird (Lyons Press, \$18.95).

Bird uses a very simple approach that isn't costly. His gardens consist of raised beds framed in 2-by-12 boards, custom-blended soil, and intensive plantings. He explains why and how in his conversational style and shares tips such as placing plants so they receive more or less sun (whichever they need). Most helpful are: The 10 Most Common Mistakes in Vegetable Gardening, and Rules of Modern Vegetable Gardening.

SUNNY SIDE

Brooklyn Botanic Garden

presents **The Sunny Border: Sun-loving Perennials for Season-long Color**, C. Colston Burrell (\$9.95).

First the gardener needs to know what plants to choose for a particular area and how to care for them.

More than 100 sun-lovers are featured and photographed according to their moisture preference. Great inspiration found in this little book.

The Intuitive Gardener: Finding Creative Freedom in the Garden, Marilyn Raff (Fulcrum, \$24.95), shares the many steps she has taken to transform a "nothing" landscape into a thing of beauty.

She encourages readers to become free to design what is pleasing to them, rather than to follow any set rules.

"The trick for intuitive gardeners is to discover and follow their own internal feelings of what is 'right' in their gardens," Raff says.

Her approach is to get out and do it; she doesn't draw a design first.

As she describes the many plants (native and those that have adapted to a site), she talks about placement, harmo-

ny and texture.

Her exuberance shows in the photos.

When you see Janet Macunovich's name on a book, you can be assured that the information is excellent.

Orlino's All About Successful Perennial Gardening (Meredith Books, \$11.95) is her latest one. Her name isn't on the cover; you have to open the book to see it.

Macunovich stresses the importance of proper soil, drainage, weed prevention and soil pH, and how to choose plants and care for them through the garden season. She shares tips that professionals use.

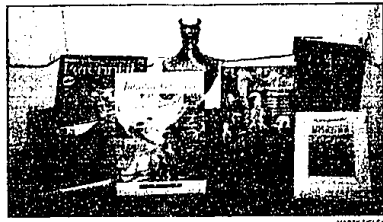
The plant gallery gives scientific and common names, light required, moisture, hardiness, family, season of bloom, shape and size, growth rate and general care, including her personal notes.

The \$12 cost is money well spent.

UNUSUAL

Two books published by Timber Press feature unusual plants.

The first, **Clivias**, Harold



MARTY FLIGLEY

Garden books cover a variety of topics.

Koopowitz (\$25.95), details the history, charms and horticultural future of the genus *Clivia*. Koopowitz reveals that the plants were discovered in southern Africa, and shares how to care for these container plants.

The bulk of the book examines the diversity of them, including the bright oranges, reds and yellows to the newer pastels.

The book concludes with a brief biography of Lady Clive, for whom the plant was named.

The second, **Carnivorous Plants of the United States and Canada**, Donald E. Schnell (second edition, \$39.95), is the field guide to these insect-eating plants where a greater diversity of them can be

found than anywhere in the world. Schnell examines 45 species and numerous hybrids of carnivorous plants.

He includes descriptions, preferred habitat, the range where they grow, season of flowering and trapping. The maps, drawings and 200 color photos will help in the search as well as introduce the reader to a new experience.

GOOD GARDEN TIP

Will you share a short, thoughtful story that concerns a food or flower?

Marty Fligley 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.

Did you really say what I thought you said?

Ah, the holidays. A time to sit back and think about the things that have made your life worth living the last 12 months.

OK, I'm personally drawing a blank.

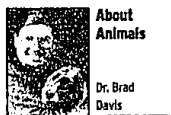
Let's just talk about the things people say at my clinic that don't exactly make sense.

I realize this happens everywhere. I'm sure every music store has a story about someone wanting the new Shrimp Bizkit CD, and every toy store has had someone ask how to distinguish the right shoe from the left.

I've been guilty of this myself. I have no knowledge of cars, but I learned that mechanics have to give back the old parts if you ask for them.

I did this consistently, and each time would examine the old part carefully. (Frankly, it could have been a wad of chewing gum in tin foil and I wouldn't have known.)

One day I blew my cover when I went into a service station in East Lansing for a lube job and asked for the "lubes" back. After the mechanic explained to me that lube is short for lubricant, I left with



About Animals
Dr. Brad Davis

my tail between my legs. I'm sure they laughed about it for weeks. I assure you that thereafter my repair bills showed an increasing sense of humor on their part. Anyway, I keep track of my favorite misheard words, mangled phrases and mistaken concepts. The people who said them shouldn't feel insulted - this is all in fun. As a matter of fact, I said the first one myself to a client late this year.

Enjoy.

■ "I think the sink has something to do with the smell."

■ "My wife and I are locking into infertile fertilization."

■ About a frightened dog: "Careful - he might be a little skinnish."

■ "We're sending the dog to a farm in 'ew Bostonmore."

■ "He was winching in pain."

■ "You're not supposed to touch the turtles in Florida - they're worried they'll go instinct."

■ Owner: "I haven't seen any worm eggs in my dog's stool."

Me: "You can't see them."

Owner: "What do they look like?"

Me: "They're microscopic."

Owner: "I haven't seen that."

■ "I've only seen a little drastic improvement."

■ I very slowly read blood work results over the phone to an owner who was writing them down:

Me: "The Alkaline Phosphatase was five hundred and eight."

Owner: "How could it be both?"

■ "I think the dripping is just compensation for the air conditioner."

■ "Should I try a tropical antibiotic?"

■ "Do you do the euthanasia or the cremation first?"

■ "Six of one, 1/6th the other."

■ "He's itching a lot - could he have the mumps?"

■ "How long do dogs have to be cooked together to become pregnant?"

■ "After they were born, the manna dog broke all their backs!"

■ "She hasn't eaten in three days - I'm scared she's going to

become emancipated!"

■ "They both fought, but he took the blunt of it."

■ "Do! Hurry! He's blushing gadi!"

■ "Every morning she wakes up with constipation on her eyes."

■ "So when she came back in from the woods, she had kookaburras all over her." And, in the same week: "When she came in from outside, she was totally covered in burros!"

■ "Oh, no - the leaf is rooking!"

■ "He has no get-up and go - he's just nerthargic."

■ "I think he was dramatized by the other dog biting at him."

■ "I feed him Escanaba dog food."

■ "I used to have one of those Mannix cats."

■ I asked a 4-year-old what he would be for Halloween. He replied, "The Green Weeper." (His dad corrected him: The Grim Reaper.)

■ "The proceeds go to leader blinds for dogs."

■ "I'm getting my new kitten tomorrow - it's a Siamese Persian Himalayan."

■ "I cleaned the ears yesterday because they were full of derbis."

■ "I'm worried he ruptured the cartridge in his knee."

■ "Is he old for his age?"

■ And, in what I hope was merely the word "food" left off

the end: "He won't eat anything - not even people!"

No take home message to be found - just wishes for a prosperous and safe new year, full of happiness and devoid of malapropisms!

Dr. Brad Davis is the medical director for the VCA of Garden City, 2085 Inkster Road, Garden City, MI 48135. Feel free to write him there with questions and comments. He is also one of the hosts of the nationally syndicated radio show *Animal Talk*. Visit the Web site at www.AnimalTalkRadio.com. You can send e-mail questions or comments to DrBrad@AnimalTalkRadio.com.

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