

# The Green Thumb

By GEORGE ABRAHAM

**Bonsai Art:** Bonsai (pronounced "bone-sigh") is a Japanese word composed of two characters meaning "tray" or "pot," and "to plant." Roughly you can translate it to mean a small tree in a pot or tray.

While everyone speaks of it as being a Japanese art, actually Bonsai culture originated in China and it was brought to Japan many centuries ago.

Is the average American equipped with temperament to practice bonsai? I doubt it, although many are interested in it and are attending workshops to learn this delicate and demanding hobby.

On one of the membership rosters of a Bonsai society is this: "Bonsai is an art form which has developed and matured over the course of eight centuries. It is a miniature living tree grown to great age in a handful of earth in a shallow container. . . a perfect little landscape. Truly the creation of its owner."

**FREE:** If you're interested in growing Bonsai, send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a copy of my guide, "How to grow plants Bonsai." While I'm not a Bonsai expert, I gathered information from specialists and put it together as best I could for the benefit of our readers.

**WHY PLANTS change colors:** Did a lot of your gladiolus change colors and did you wind up with a lot of white blooms this year? And did your garden mums show up a different color? Every year we try to explain why colors "change".

Actually, there's no change involved. What happens is that the weaker bulbs peter out, leaving the stronger ones to multiply. Cucumber-mosaic causes conspicuous variegated patterns in gladiolus, and some of these changes are attractive to customers. However, commercial growers cannot tolerate them because they act as mixtures and in time the infected glads become much shorter than normal ones.

There are several fungus diseases which kill off gladiolus corms. Garden mums and iris "change" for the same reason. Iris sometimes form seed which drops to the ground and produce different colors. With gladiolus, the colored ones are more susceptible to disease and the whites are more resistant.

**GREEN THUMB CLINIC:** A reader writes: "Is it all right to let our parsley winter over? Or should we sow new seed in spring?"

Answer: When parsley winters over, usually the old plants go to seed the following year and you lose out on fresh parsley. I'd sow a fresh batch of seed next year.

**Actuals:** There's no change involved. What happens is that the weaker bulbs peter out, leaving the stronger ones to multiply. Cucumber-mosaic causes conspicuous variegated patterns in gladiolus, and some of these changes are attractive to customers. However, commercial growers cannot tolerate them because they act as mixtures and in time the infected glads become much shorter than normal ones.

There are two weeks left 'til we put the nursery to bed for the winter. We have beautiful shade trees ready for planting at this time. Don't wait until the snow is deep...plant this week!

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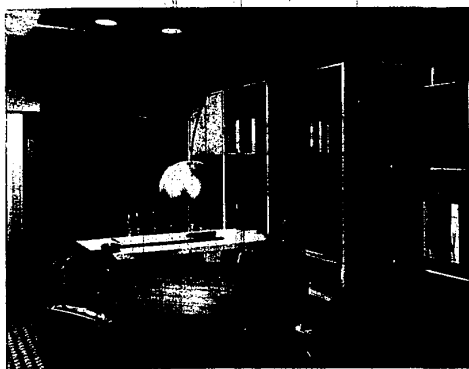
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