

Suburban Gardener

The Colorful Poppy: A Plant Of Many Uses

By BETTY FRANKEL

Poppies have been in the news lately when the Turkish government announced that it is banning the cultivation of the opium poppy. This has been a major crop in Turkey. The opium obtained from the juice is meant for medicinal purposes, but much

of it is trafficked illicitly. Nearly as valuable is the oil obtained from the seeds. Fine quality oil obtained from first pressings of light colored seeds is used for cooking and salads. An additional pressing and dark seeds produce oil used in paint and varnish, in soap making and for burning in lamps. The compressed seeds that remain are a nutritious food eaten by the poor in India and the orient.

The opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) is chiefly a tropical or sub-tropical plant. The poppies grown in this area include the oriental poppy (*Papaver orientale*), the Iceland poppy (*Papaver nudicaule*), and the corn poppy (*Papaver Rhoeas*). They all have exquisite blossoms with colors that

capture the hues of a sunset. The large flower petals are crumpled up tightly in the buds and when they expand the petals still have a crinkled texture that adds to their beauty.

THE ORIENTAL poppies are long-lived, easy to grow perennials with the largest poppy flowers. They are spectacular combined with iris and delphinium in the June garden. At this time in mid summer they become dormant and the leaves die down completely. This is a good time to transplant them. Later a rosette of new leaves appears and remains green all winter.

The Iceland poppies are also perennials but are so short-lived that they are best treated as annuals and planted each year. They have bright green foliage. The colorful flowers are borne on graceful, wiry stems 12 to 18 inches tall. The satiny textured flowers are excellent for cutting. For best results they should be cut early in the morning and before they are fully opened.

The corn poppies are common wild flowers in Europe where they brighten fields and roadsides. They have "gone wild" in this country, too, but to a lesser extent. They are annuals with hairy bright green finely cut foliage. Heights range from one to three feet.

The popular "Shirley Poppies" are a horticultural variety of corn poppy. They were developed in England in 1880 by the Reverend W. Wilks at Shirley Vicarage by selective breeding. They are exceedingly beautiful with their silken petals in soft shades of pink, salmon, rose and apricot. There are both double and single forms.

SEVERAL gardens in the area have bright beds of Shirley poppies. They present a spectacular display when grown in a mass with a range of hues and tones blended.

Garden Reminders
Rose blooms have faded and new shoots and buds are developing. To encourage another burst of bloom feed plants now and again the first of August. . . Remove faded rose flowers but don't prune overbearing climbers because new buds form at the tips of the branches. . . Water lawns deeply and thoroughly, or not at all. Light sprinkling causes shallow roots and encourages damage. . . Gum-like substance oozing from the trunk of a peach tree is indication of a borer. To control spray trunk and lower branches with malathion plus methoxychlor. . . Black vine weevil adults chew half circle holes in edges of leaves of yew, rhododendron, azaleas, and euonymus and the larvae feed on the roots of the plants. To control spray the plants, especially the lower portions, and the soil around it with chlordane or sevin. . . To control pine shoot moth spray with sevin.

Pest Control Requires Timing

Control of garden insects is often a question of timing. It may not be how much insecticide you use, but when you apply it, according to William Wallner, entomologist at Michigan State University.

In some cases, you can actually control some pests without pesticides, if you get busy early enough, Wallner believes.

"Get up close to your plants, shrubs and trees. Examine them. Don't just enjoy them from 20 feet away. When you can detect a pest from that far, you really have a problem," he says.

Wallner does not recommend preventive insecticide sprays, except perhaps for roses. Instead he suggests that homeowners inspect plantings often to detect a problem, identify the pest and take quick action when necessary.

Among the more common pests Wallner lists borers and aphids. Borers are difficult to control because they spend most of their lives inside the plant. The best control is to cut off the infected part of the plant and burn it. Rose borers live in the old canes. They bore through cut ends.

To prevent this, Wallner suggests using shears, tree paint or other substance to seal the cane after cutting roses. To control the common iris borer, Wallner suggests examining the canes as you divide or transplant them. Cut away any that appear infected and destroy them.

APHIDS are common on new growth of many plants. They suck the plant liquids, causing distorted leaves and blooms. Cool, damp weather encourages aphids.

The feeding of the spruce gall aphids causes galls on new growth. This pest can also be controlled to some degree by picking off the galls and destroying them before mid-summer.

Many insects and pests require control by chemical sprays. Wallner says that

information regarding the best uses of sprays is available in bulletins from the county Cooperative Extension Service office.

Before using any pesticide, make sure you have properly diagnosed the problem, he advises. Then apply a chemical recommended for the specific purpose, at the correct time of the year, and at the rate suggested on the pesticide label.

"Most pests have a 'weak link' in their life cycle of development. At that specific time they are easiest to

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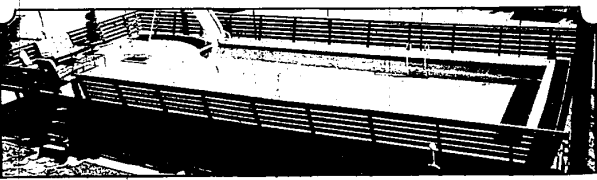
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