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ONE OF THE REASONS visiting a shopping mall has become a top leisure time activity is the opportunity to watch craftsmen at work. Potterer Leon Kula puts the finishing touches on a teapot at the Livonia Mall. (Observer photo by Doug Johnson.)

Suburban Gardener

Jack Frost Or Pigment? Results Are Beautiful

By BETTY FRANKEL

Jack Frost, that impish creature who is supposed to put in an appearance at this season of the year, is often depicted with pots of paint and a big brush with which he paints the autumn foliage red and gold.

The experts claim that frost has little to do with this seasonal color display. It is due to other causes such as soil conditions, amount of sunlight and other such factors.

This year, though, the trees have remained green until late in the season, and although frost warnings have been posted several times, there has been no real frost in this area. Can it be that Jack Frost has something to do with it after all?

Leaves are green because they contain a complex material called chlorophyll. It is continually being produced in the plants and keeps on being broken down. Ordinarily, throughout most of the growing season it is manufactured and destroyed at about the same rate.

It is through the action of chlorophyll that plants use the energy from sunlight to manufacture the food they need.

SOMEHOW when autumn comes the leaves do not manufacture any more chlorophyll and the chlorophyll already in the leaves is gradually broken down. As the chlorophyll disappears, other pigments that have been in the leaves all along are revealed.

There is a yellow pigment called caroten and another called xanthophyll. They are the same pigments that color egg yolks, carrots and some yellow flowers.

Some plants also have red pigments in their leaves. This red is called anthocyanin and results from the accumulation of sugars in the leaves. In others the red pigment is due to the accumulation of tannins

in the leaves. The latter is thought to account for the rich red color of oaks. The color of maples is due to sugar accumulation.

Among the trees that tend to turn yellow are redbud, birch, beech, poplar, gingko, and Norway maple. Those noted for their red or orange autumn color include red maple, sugar maple, sassafras, dogwood, sweet gum, black gum, and the various oaks.

THE COLOR follows a pattern in each species, but shows variation from individual to individual, and also varies from year to year.

The yellows are less dependent on weather and location, but it is the combination of red and yellow that makes the autumn scene so brilliant. The play of one hue against the other makes them appear even more brilliant.

If particular colors are desired it pays to visit the nursery at this season and select your trees when they display their autumn colors.

Also, for brightest reds, plant the trees in a sunny spot, such as a western exposure.

Seasonal variations are due to the fact that the best reds develop when there are warm sunny days followed by nights below 45 degrees.

SUGARS are manufactured during the sunny daylight hours and somehow are trapped in the leaves if the nights are cool. The more trapped sugars the brighter red the leaves.

Colors tend to be dull if the season is warm and cloudy or rainy.

Whether 1971 will be a good color year remains to be seen, but some experts have predicted that the dry summer we had should do no harm.

FIX-IT TIP

Frozen water pipes should be thawed slowly. Fast thawing causes steam to form at one point, causing bursting. For this reason, and so as not to cause fire hazards, do not use a blowtorch. Heat lamps, hair dryers, heating cable, light bulbs can be pressed into service. Move the heat along the pipe. Work close to the faucet at the opposite end from the shut-off valve. Keep the faucet open, so the water can flow as the ice melts.

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Rose Society Sets October Meeting

The Detroit Rose Society will hold its October meeting in the UAW Local 771 Hall, 20424 John R. (between State Fair and Eight Mile Rd.), Friday, Oct. 22. There will be a pot luck dinner at 6 p.m. and the meeting will start at approximately 8 p.m.

Winter protection is a necessity in our area if we are to take care of the plants in a proper manner. The methods used in protecting the rose plants vary considerably, and the measure of success should be weighed against the amount of preparation necessary.

A panel discussion will delve into this facet of rose-growing. William Marshall, Joe Winchel and Mrs. Eva DeFillippo, all qualified rosarians who have considerable experience are to comprise the panel.

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It's Time To Prepare Rosebeds

Prepare rosebed soil now for spring planting, says William Carlson, Michigan State University horticulturist.

Any good garden soil will produce good roses. If the soil isn't good, improve it by adding organic matter.

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