



Containerized Plants Chosen For Color

EAST LANSING — The designer's job is to coordinate color. The gardener puts roots on it. Unfortunately, most home gardeners tend to look at the plant, not the color," laments Michigan State University horticulturist Roy Mecklenburg.

Be aware of color value and warmth when deciding which containerized plants to use in your house or yard, he advised.

Color value is physical. White and yellow are more visible than blue or dark red; the difference is value. Choose high-value flowers for doorway and other areas you want to show up well at night.

Color warmth is emotional. Yellow and orange seem warmer and more stimulating than blue or green.

Choose high-intensity, warm colors such as red, orange, yellow and pink for active areas; near the picnic table on the patio, in the kitchen and recreation room.

For serene, restful areas use blues, lavenders and whites. Green and yellow are suitable background or blending colors. White can also be used to tone down high-intensity colors.

An advantage of containerized plants is mobility. Mecklenburg points out. Fill the windowbox with potted yellow and orange flowers — or warmth — in spring months. Switch to pots of cool blues and lavenders in July and August.

Don't overlook cacti and plants with variegated leaves for color, Mecklenburg adds.

And don't be afraid to use a lot of color. Brighten the patio with a large pot filled with marigolds. Or place a permanent planter box on the porch and plant lots of ivy and red, white and blue petunias.

Mortgage Law Signed

Gov. William G. Milliken has signed into law a bill which permits an increase in the amount of group life insurance a person may use as part of the security for a home mortgage.

Under previous law, the buyer was allowed to furnish a limit of \$25,000 in group life insurance as mortgage security. The bill (H-476, I.E.) raises that limit to \$50,000.

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The Green Thumb
By GEORGE ABRAHAM

With onion sets selling for 69 cents in many stores, you can be pretty sure it'll pay you to grow your own onions this year.

"Sets" are small onions, 1 1/2 to 3/4 inches across, produced from seed soon the previous year. Both early green bunching onions and large dry onions are easily raised from sets.

Some gardeners make successive plantings of sets for green onions during early summer and spring.

NOTE: We leave many onions in the ground over winter (without protection), then in spring and early summer we get scads of green scallions. They're great eating, especially after going through the winter without green onions.

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If you like the large "hamburger" onions, set out seedling onion plants in spring. These plants are grown in the south, and you buy them in bunches ready to plant.

Next year, if you want to raise your own onion plants, it's simple. Start them in the house about Jan. 1 from seed. Use a light rich soil. When plants are six inches high, trim them back to four inches with shears.

Set out in open ground as early as possible, four to six inches apart in rows.

GREEN THUMB BONUS: Smart gardeners want to know their onions. Send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope and ask for a copy of our bulletin, "How to Grow Onions, Leeks and Garlic." It's got information on multiplier onions, tree onions (Egyptian), chives, leeks and other members of the onion family.

One of the finest and largest groups of foliage vines we have is the English Ivy or Hedera. Some are solid green leaved, and others are variegated.

Look for red spider mites on your leaves now. The foliage may be stippled, cupped, covered with cob-web growth, or even yellowed.

CONTROL: Wash under a faucet in bathtub. Or dip in a bucket of soap and nicotine sulfate. Root English ivy in plain tap water. Rooted plants take a mixture of sand, peat and loam, equal parts.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: A reader writes: "Please tell us some good marigolds, some that will flower before frost."

Answer: Try Moonshot, grows 14 inches tall and blooms early and lasting right through the season. Flowers are three inches across. Apollo grows 14 inches high, and is glowing orange.

Jubilee is a "hedge type" marigold, reaching about 30 inches high. There's Diamond, Golden, and Orange Jubilee, all tall and ideal for background plants.

Wood Products Help Slow Energy Drain

Use of wood products and easily insulated wood framing in residential building helps to slow the national energy drain, the Western Wood Products Assn. points out.

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