

Timely Tips on GARDENING

By Betty Frankel

EARLY TULIPS
Early tulips are coming into bloom and the gardeners who planted bulbs of species tulips last fall are now enjoying their gay display. They are especially effective in the rock garden, but are equally colorful when grouped at the edge of a flower bed or planter or tucked in front of evergreens. There are numerous species available, but all are characterized by relatively short stems and clear, bright colors. One of the most charming is the "lady tulip" which has rosy-red and white blossoms on 8 inch stems. Kaufmanniana tulips have cream and carmine red flowers and are only six inches high. Hybrids of this kind are known as "waterlily" tulips and have wide-spreading blooms close to the ground.

The Fosteriana tulip is scarlet flowered and is a foot tall. Its hybrids are among the most magnificent of the early tulips. Most popular is the brilliant Red Emperor. Other Fosteriana hybrids have flowers of glowing orange, pure white, scarlet or vermilion.

FRUIT TREES
Fruit trees pay a double dividend to the home gardener. They are both decorative and utilitarian. In addition to the fruit they yield, they have beautiful blossoms and can have a pleasant or picturesque shape. A fruit tree can shade a terrace or play area, or can be trained flat against a wall or trellis, or can serve as an ornament or specimen plant on the lawn. Dwarf fruit trees can be used where there is not enough space for a large tree. The fruit they produce is full-sized.

Early Spring is the best time to plant fruit trees in this area. Young trees transplant easily and become established more quickly than do large trees.

APPLE TREES are best planted on gently sloping high ground. Good circulation and soil drainage are important, but apples will grow in either clay, loam, or sandy soil. Young trees need careful pruning to shape them properly. Several years are needed before they will start bearing fruit.

Peaches are another popular backyard fruit although they are a little less hardy than other fruit trees. Peaches grow best on light, well-drained sandy loams where air circulation is good. Apricots are not planted as often as they should be. The large handsome trees are hardier than peach trees and the flower buds are less subject to frost injury. It is the first of the fruit trees to bloom. The same sandy loam that is good for peaches is suitable for apricots.

PEACHES PREFER THE heavier soils, but need good drainage. Very fertile, moist soils are avoided because the resultant vigorous growth is susceptible to blight. Peaches are generally self-sterile and two or more varieties should be planted near each other.

Plums are the most versatile of fruit trees and there is a variety to suit any locality. There are native American plums, Japanese plums, and European plums.

Cherries are classified as sweet, sour, and dukes which are hybrids of sweet and sour. The soil must be well-drained but they will grow in either sandy loam or clay loam.

A large apple tree will yield 5 to 10 bushels of fruit and a dwarf apple will yield 1 to 1½ bushels. A pear produces 1 to 4 bushels and a dwarf pear 1 to 1½ bushels. Plums yield 1 to 2 bushels per tree; peaches, 2 to 4 bushels; and cherry trees, 1 to 2 bushels.

Floors Come Into View

With the return of the area rug to home decorating popularity, wood floors are coming into view again. As a result, an important home improvement project on the agenda for many households is the refinishing of wood floors.

"Improved wood stains add a touch of floor color and bring out the grain, texture and natural beauty of the wood," points out Anne Cain, color consultant for Rez Wood Stains, Inc.

It makes little difference how old the wood is. When unsightly scuff marks, scars or other defects of paint are sanded off, the original personality of the wood will reappear.

Every species of wood takes a stain in a different manner. The finished look depends on the color of the stain, how much is applied, the type of wood, its grain and texture. Oak is the most popular flooring because of its durability, rich, warm color and countless combinations of grain and texture. However, many people prefer the softer, more uniform texture of maple floors. Older homes will often have pine floors.

Any of the three flooring styles — strip, random-width plank or parquet — can be personalized through the application of liquid wood stains.

NO GROPING
If the light switch in a room is hard to find, install one of the new luminous switchplates that glow in the dark.

Think About Storage Outdoors, Too

With all the talk about built-ins inside the home, little has been said on the subject of outdoor storage. Yet it is important to have a place to store garden and lawn equipment, tools and perhaps some toys or sporting equipment.

Such items should be protected from inclement weather and vandalism and should be organized in such a way as to provide for easy access.

Before planning any type of outdoor storage unit, you should check local building codes, and then survey your

storage needs. Make a list of things you plan to store and group them logically according to size and shape.

Then plan sections of your storage unit to accommodate the different groups in a shelfless area for storing long handled items such as brooms, rakes and shovels; a series of bins for bulky products such as fertilizers and mulch; a shelf area for medium-sized containers and jars.

Plan doors wide enough so that large articles can be moved with little trouble. Sills should be kept low so that wheeled articles can be moved easily.

And always keeping in mind the possibility of future expansion, don't build yourself into a corner.

Basically, there are three different types of outdoor storage units, one of which might be adapted to your needs. They are as follows:

1. Those that adjoin the house, garage or carport. They may be either of the cabinet

type, walk-in closets or a combination of the two.

2. Free-standing units such as a playhouse-storage structure. Closely allied to the free-standing unit, but more modest in concept, is the type of unit that makes use of an existing solid fence to act as one wall.

The height of a fence-storage unit is determined, obviously, by the height of the fence. But even a low fence can provide enough height for adequate storage space since tall items can be stored on racks parallel to the ground rather than in an upright position.

3. Storage units based on the utilization of existing space under or in a portion of the home. The third category of storage unit takes advantage of the under-sundeck or porch area.

Since a sundeck will provide a considerable degree of overhead protection, the storage structure will need only a minimal roof, such as tar

paper; but it should be sloped gently to carry off water dripping from the deck overhead.

The foundation of the house can form the back wall. Enclose the other three sides and install a door.

Natural choice for outdoor storage units is lumber, such as the Western Pine region woods.

To provide utmost protection for stored items, the units should be built solidly of 1-inch boards over 2 x 4 framing lumber in Utility or similar grade. Ship-lap pattern lumber, used to enclose the storage unit, will produce a tight wall with minimum cost. Finish off with battens over board joints for complete protection.

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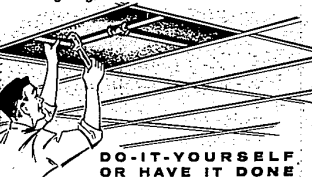
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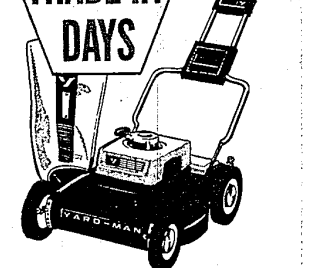


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Take Steps To Inure Safety In Family Pool

Here are some safety tips for the pool owner. Post them in the area and see that family and guests follow them.

Make sure that an adult is always present whenever children get in the pool. Let it be known that neighborhood youngsters will not be permitted use of pool unless accompanied by an adult.

Keep swimmers out of the pool for at least an hour after eating.

Erect a high fence around the pool and keep the gate locked whenever the pool is not in use. (This is required by law in some communities.) Have a life preserver handy at all times.

If you plan night swimming, provide electric lights in the pool area.

When swim season ends, cover your pool with a plastic or canvas top strong enough to support anyone who might fall or step onto it. If you remove the cover for ice skating, see that it's replaced when the weather turns warmer.

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