

Christmas Gifts To Please The Gardener

By BETTY FRANKEL
Special Writer

How about some garden tools or equipment, a good book on gardening, or a beautiful and unusual house plant. Unfortunately it is not too

easy to find good gardening equipment at this season. Many of the nurseries have closed up for the season, and others are filled with Christmas greens and tinsel

and the gardening things and growing plants have been displaced. However, some stores have kept a small stock on hand.

are designed to go atop a pole. Don't forget to include a supply of birdseed, too. Plain sunflower seeds are great.

It might not be a bad idea to include a bracket for suspending it, too.

There are quite a few books on general gardening now available. One of the very best is an old favorite called "Americas Garden Book" by Bush - Brown (Scribner). Another good one is "Wyman's Gardening Encyclopedia" (Macmillan). Among the most attractive garden books to be found are the volumes in the Time - Life garden encyclopedia. They are well written and liberally illustrated with luscious full color pictures, and include many clear drawings, too. Each deals with a separate topic and is complete in itself. One would make a nice gift, but the whole set would be really great. Volumes include Roses, Lawns and Ground Covers, Trees, Evergreens, Landscaping, and others. They are a good buy at \$6.95.

Beginners Can Make Christmas Wreaths

EAST LANSING four-to-six inch sprays are recommended. Smaller lovely evergreen wreath has dampened your Christmas spirit a bit, consider making your own, suggests J. Lee Taylor, Michigan State University horticulture specialist.

With a minimum of equipment and a little practice, you can turn out beautiful wreaths suitable for either indoors or outdoor decorating.

For the foundation of a small wreath, a coachbag shaped into a circle or a plastic foam frame is satisfactory. For a larger, heavier wreath, Taylor recommends a length of number-9 wire bent into a circle.

The size of the evergreen sprays wired to the frame is determined by the size of the finished wreath. For a wreath about 14 inches in diameter,

If your wreath will be placed against a wall or a door where the back will not show, you need to bind greens on only one side of the frame. For a window or on a glass door where both sides will be visible, add one or two sprays to the back of the frame at the same time the greens are bound onto the front.

The finished circle of greenery may be decorated with cones - natural, shellacked, or painted - bells, tiny gift-wrapped boxes, colored ribbons, glass or plastic Christmas tree ornaments, gourds, nuts and berries, even fresh fruit.

Remember that materials on a wreath used outdoors must be waterproof, Taylor adds.

BEGINNERS usually find it easier to point all the sprays in the same direction, Taylor notes, but you can also point half one way and half the other. Or you may make the wreath thicker at the bottom.

If you are looking for something really special for the gardener - and good for the environment, too, a "shredder-bagger" may be the answer. This is a machine that grinds up leaves, twigs, grass clippings, and other garden debris so it is compact for disposal, or even better is in perfect condition for the compost pile. They are available for less than \$200.

If you want an even more impressive gift to go under the tree, you might put a red ribbon on a rototiller. Even a new stainless steel trowel would be welcome. Or a new very lightweight, easy to handle portable sprayer for the rose bush.

If the gardener is a bird-watcher, too, how about a birdfeeder. They come in all styles from cute and coy to rough and rustic, and include ones that look like barns, A-frame chalets, and even satellites. The latter are supposed to be squirrel proof. Some are to hang and others

WATERING CANS, either the big utilitarian kinds to use outdoors, or smaller decorative ones for indoor plants, are another possibility. They can be presented with a bouquet of cut flowers or a pretty little plant tucked into the top opening.

Pots are another possibility, and these, too, run the gamut. They can be small and simple and inexpensive, or they can be large and impressive. A good-sized decorative pot is nice to have to slip flowering plants into. Choose a size that will accommodate a seven inch diameter pot which is the size that azaleas, mums and poinsettias often come in.

There are beautiful Japanese porcelain pots available, or shiny brass ones, as well as handsome pottery. A ceramic pot crafted by one of the artists in the area would be especially nice.

There is a real vogue for hanging pots, and a pot equipped with chains or cords for suspension could make a real hit. These, too, come in all kinds from the simple red clay type to handmade pottery in bizarre shapes. Tuck in a fern

NOW FOR THE books. They come in all kinds and sizes, including many nice paperbacks that make good "stocking stuffers." Among the paperbacks look for "Greenhouse Gardening for Fun" by Clare Blake, published by W.M. Morrow; "The Joy of Geraniums" and "African Violets" by Helen Van Pelt Wilson (Scribner), and "The After - Dinner Gardening Book" by Richard Langer (Collier) which gives information about raising house plants from seeds, pits, and other parts of plants that are normally discarded in meal preparation.

For the specialists there are books on roses, and on growing plants under lights, and on organic gardening. There are books on landscaping. And books on plant names and the history of plants, or books about other peoples gardens. The latter includes "The Gift of a Garden" by Beverly Nichols, which is a condensation of three famous English garden books.

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Jerusalem Cherry For Christmas

EAST LANSING To keep the fruit on the plant as long as possible, Michigan State University horticulturists advise giving it bright sunlight and cool temperatures (45-55 degrees at night.) Water the plant thoroughly; both leaves and fruit will drop off if the plant wilts.

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