

LAWN & LANDSCAPE *Digest*



While the Lawn and Landscape are Resting...

The winter months are a good time to assess your landscape and think about what you want to change, add, or delete from your landscape during the next growing season or two.

As the landscape matures, things change. Trees get taller and cast deeper shade, and bushes outgrow their original compactness. People's life styles change, and that area given over to a sandbox or a swing set may no longer be needed and the focal points of the garden has changed. Maybe you added a deck and now traffic patterns have changed. Or you may have purchased an older home with mature plantings that no longer work, or at least they don't satisfy you.

The time comes in almost every landscape plan when "re-engineering" is the way to go. Is there an orderly look to your landscape and garden, or has it just "happened" over time? Even "natural" gardens should have a plan that keeps them looking natural instead of wild.

Begin the planning process this winter by looking out your windows or while taking a chilly walk at the front yard, back yard, sides... concentrating on one area at a time and thinking about how you want it to look. If your landscape doesn't naturally break into "areas", think about ways to create them by varying garden bed sizes, shapes, and what they might contain.

Continued next page

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While the Lawn and Landscape are Resting...

Continued from first page

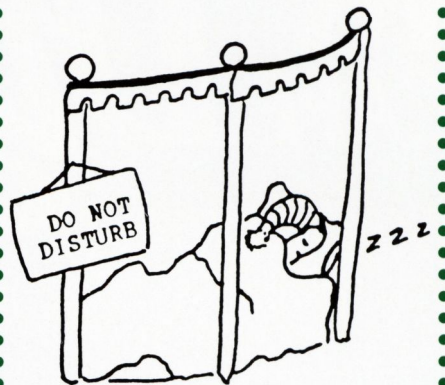
Almost every home has at least one problem area. Often it's the north side of the house, or a walkway along the side of the house, or an area behind the garage or a shed. Give your "problem" area some extra thought.

A north wall that never gets any sun can be brightened with containers of shade plants grouped or lined along the way. If there is an overhang, hanging baskets can be used, or they can be hung from wrought iron hooks. Alternating tall and short containers, and varying plant types and colors can turn a formerly drab area into a "secret garden".

In evaluating your existing landscape, think back to last summer and fall and note the areas where some of the plants didn't perform as well as they used to. It could be they need more light. Consider moving them to another area and finding

Blades of Grass

by B.C. Roberts



new shade tolerant plants to replace them in the spring and summer.

Begonias, impatiens and other shade tolerant plants can give a bright show of color where petunias no longer perform well. If you're uncertain how well a plant will perform in a problem area, plant one or two plants of the types you would want there (in the ground or in a container) and test them for one season.

Next time around, plant more of those that did well, and test some others for future plantings. Many homeowners/gardeners annually try out "new" plants on a small scale before really committing any amount of time or money to them. See *New Varieties for 1997 on page 10 of this issue of L&LD*

Trees & Shrubs Grow on You

One of the biggest changes that can creep up silently in the landscape is the growth of trees and shrubs. They not only grow taller and larger, but they can dramatically influence what can or can't grow under and around them. Trees can be trimmed professionally to thin out branches and allow more light to filter through to the ground. In extreme cases, such as too many trees planted too close together, removal of some of the trees in addition to trimming may be the answer.

Continued on page 4

Planting Hints

It takes an experienced eye to size up a piece of land, divide it, and shape its parts so that the proportion and harmony between them are balanced. This simplified guide to the basics of landscape planning might help you to better plan your site.

First, make a layout of the important facts of your house and landscape. Include sun direction, good views, poor views, service access, etc. (figure 1).

Fasten your drawing to a table by using masking tape at the corners. Next, fasten a piece of tracing paper over the drawing. Circle the three "major use areas" (figure 2). The next step is a more detailed space-use plan.

Place another sheet of tracing paper over your "major use areas". Rough in the locations for various activity areas (figure 3). This step allows you to study the interrelationships between activities. For instance, you might not want the children's play area next to the patio. Make several sketches trying various arrangements

As you make your comparison studies, evaluate each activity next to it and to the house plan (floor plan, entrance and exit, relationship to patio). After you have a logical placement relative to the house, compare activity location with what already exists on the site analysis overlay.

Finally, select the best solution for your yard, and include details of lawn and plantings (figure 4).

Try it, it's fun!

LAWN & LANDSCAPE Digest

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Figure 1 — Layout of important details.

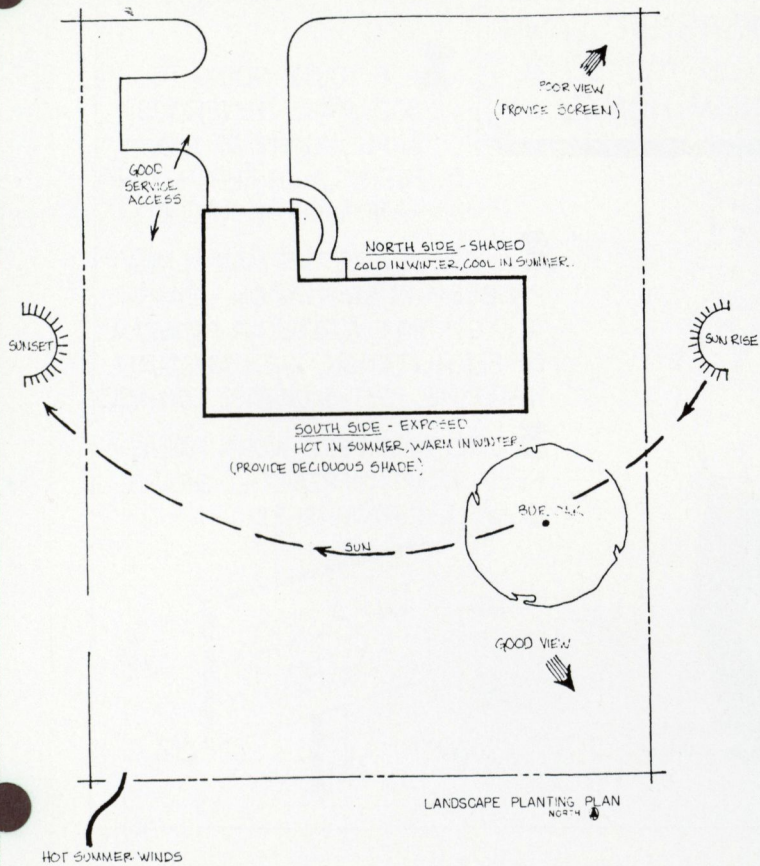


Figure 4 — The finished plan.

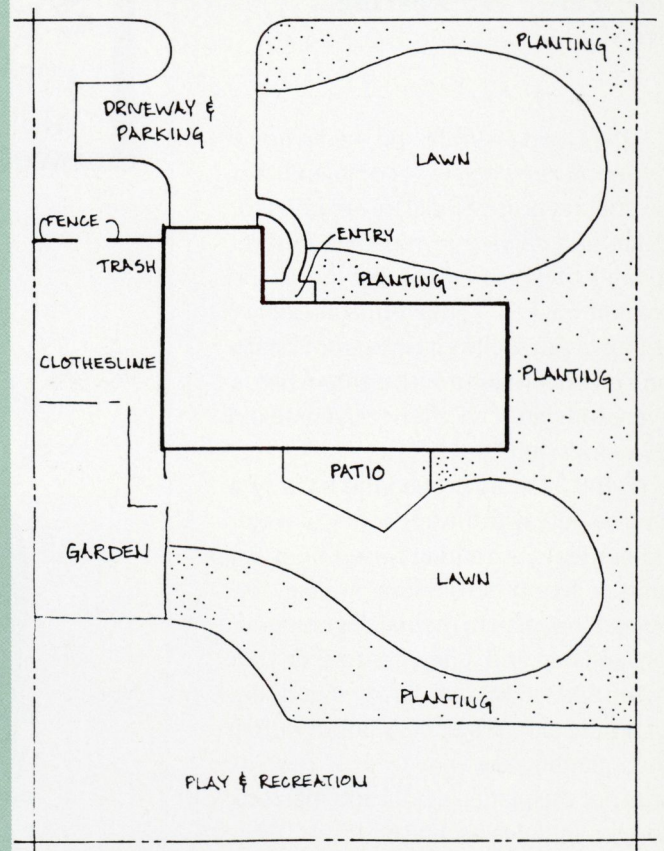


Figure 2 — The three major use areas.

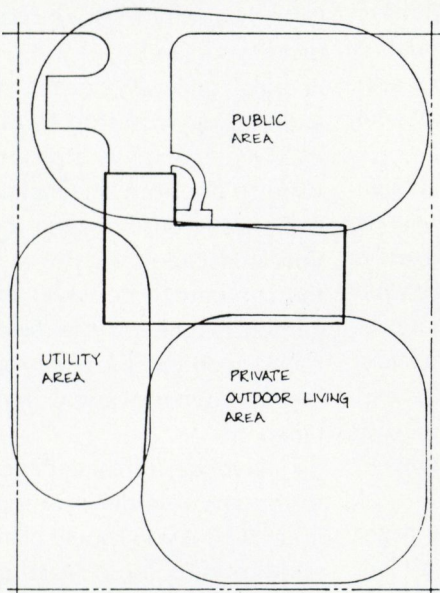
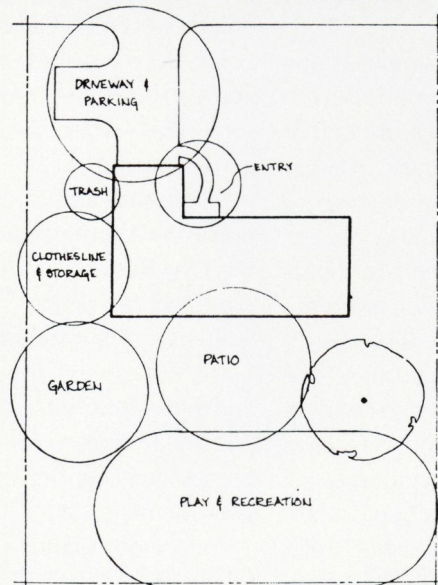


Figure 3 — The location of various activities.



While the Lawn and Landscape are Resting...

Continued

The Lawn Institute and the National Garden Bureau highly recommend that you contact professional tree experts for advice and service in trimming and removal. Overgrown shrubs should be trimmed back or removed if no longer desirable. As much as it hurts emotionally and be visually unattractive for awhile, a severe trimming can often rejuvenate old and woody shrubs.

Plants planted around the base of a tree compete with the tree roots for water and nutrients. Creating raised beds for plants is worth considering in your "re-engineering" plan to reduce this competition, and can add a new feature to your garden and landscape. If raised beds are not practical or not under consideration, when planting under a tree or near its roots put the plants in pots and then sink the pots in holes around the tree. This, too, will reduce competition.

All landscapes need at least one focal point. A focal point draws the eye to a special feature or planting and helps give the rest of the landscape or garden a more orderly look.

Focal points can be as simple as one spectacular plant or planting among others, or a feature such as a water pond or a piece of sculpture or statuary. In larger landscapes focal points can be created for different areas. On a patio, for example, a grouping of different sized pots can serve as a focal point, with one large pot being the center of attention.

Tall plants grouped in a mass and surrounded by shorter ones can create a focal point in a garden bed, as can a contrast in color or plant type. A quick and easy feature to add to a bed is a bird bath or a bird feeder. An arbor trellis planted with climbing plants such as morning glories or thunbergia can be an eye catching focal point for a whole garden. A coordinated color scheme can really

pull a garden or landscape together and refresh one that might have gone stale.

Use a combination of three or four colors to create a color theme. Match the colors in your dishes or your placemats if you eat outdoors frequently during season. Red, white, and blue make your garden patriotic.

We saw alot of this color combination in the Atlanta area last summer during the Olympics. Pink, white, and green is cool and refreshing. Yellow, blue, and white is a bright summery combination.

You can break the scheme every now and then when you have a great plant that doesn't fit the "rules", and then it becomes the exception that points out what your theme is.

Consider planting **Salvia May Night** (Mainacht), selected as the Perennial Plant of the Year for 1997 by the *Perennial Plant Association* (See 'May Night' article on page 11 in this issue of L&LD.)

Lawn Care Tips

from The Fertilizer Institute

SO — YOU INHERITED A "DISASTER" LAWN WHEN YOU MOVED TO YOUR NEW HOME!



1 IF YOU'RE GOING TO SOD, MAKE GENEROUS APPLICATIONS OF A COMPLETE LAWN FERTILIZER —AND LIME, IF NEEDED.

2 CHANCES ARE, THE MAIN LAWN PROBLEM IS STARVATION. START AND CONTINUE A REGULAR PROGRAM OF FERTILIZATION, WITH ADEQUATE WATERING, PEST & DISEASE CONTROL.

3 SEED AND FEED WORN AREAS—KEEP TRAFFIC-FREE TILL GRASS IS WELL-ESTABLISHED.

Take some good long looks at your landscape while it's "resting" and jot down some notes and a sketch or two about what you want to do to change and enhance your landscape in 1997. "Re-engineering" generally doesn't mean a major undertaking or starting from scratch.

Once you have a plan of what you want to do, even small adjustments can make a big difference in the beauty of your landscape and gardens. A few looks through garden books at the library or garden magazines can help you begin focusing on specific plants once the general improvement areas have been decided on.

A wonderful place for getting ideas is the botanical garden or arboretum in your area...where you should plan on walking and browsing for at least an afternoon. And don't forget to pay a visit to your better lawn and garden center...who are also now making "plans" for spring! **L&LD**

READERS WRITE LAWN & LANDSCAPE DIGEST

Ask the Experts...

With the winter months, lawns in both the north and south are in dormancy... and not much needs to be done until we start experiencing warmer temperatures and the grass "awakens" for the next growing season. While the lawn is "resting", we thought we would share some of the more frequently asked questions that have been received over the last several months.

Now that we have a substantial base of Lawn & Landscape Digest readers, we plan to incorporate a Q. & A. section in each succeeding issue...covering a number of different landscape topics. If you have a particular question concerning your landscape, send it to: L&LD Questions, The Lawn Institute, Suite 200, 1501 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Marietta, GA 30062-6485.

Due to our small staff, we will not be able to respond directly to every question...but will answer as many as possible in future issues of the Lawn & Landscape Digest.

Q. *I have a hard time keeping my Bluegrass lawn from turning brown in the summer. Why?*

A. Kentucky bluegrass is a cool season grass that has an optimum temperature range of 65 to 75 degrees F. When the temperature gets above 75 F. any cool season grass begins to go dormant.

Dormancy in a plant is a way for it to escape any stress period like excessive cold, heat, or drought. In this case, to keep the high summer temperatures from killing the bluegrass, the plant shuts down and goes dormant. If the heat doesn't get too high and last an usual period of time, the plant recovers and begins to grow

when the cooler weather returns. Watering is the major key to keeping the lawn green. As water evaporates, it provides a cooling affect for the grass.

Q. *What is thatch? Do grass clippings contribute thatch?*

A. Thatch is a layer of decayed organic material that develops below the base of the grass plant and above the surface of the soil. It is generally caused by over-watering and/or the excessive use of nitrogen fertilizer. Mechanical devices called vertical mowers or power rakes are used to remove thatch from the lawn, usually if the layer is more than 1/2 in. thick. No, grass clippings are 80% water, and do not contribute to thatch build up.

Q. *Are the new "named" Bermudagrass varieties better than common?*

A. Common Bermudagrass is considered by many turf experts to be the best turfgrass available. If it grew better in shady

conditions, there wouldn't be much need for any other kinds of grass in the south. The new "named" varieties are just as good and tend to be finer in texture, which is something many homeowners are looking for.

Q. *Is dormant Bermuda sod that has been over-seeded with perennial ryegrass something I should consider?*

A. Yes. The actively growing perennial ryegrass will root down during cool weather well before the Bermudagrass begins to grow. That increases the chances of a better rooting of the sod when laid during the cooler months. The perennial ryegrass will die out when the hot weather returns and the Bermuda roots begin to grow.

Q. *I've read that Zoysia is a good low maintenance grass for a lawn. I have some shaded areas, so will it grow?*

A. Zoysiagrass is not as shade tolerant as St. Augustine, but considerably more shade tolerant than Bermuda. It has good heat and drought tolerance and is the most winter-hardy of the warm season grasses, and does go brown and dormant in the winter. It seems to do best across the middle of the U.S. in a belt from Kansas City through St. Louis on to the Washington, DC area. It is most often planted as sod or plugs, and may take as much as two growing seasons for the plugs to form an adequate lawn cover.

Q. *Why is the seeding rate, 8-10lbs/1000 sq. ft., for tall fescue so much higher than most other kinds of grasses?*

A. The seed is larger than most other turfgrasses, so there are less seeds per lb. The biggest reason, however, is that tall fescue is a bunch grass and doesn't spread.

Don't forget the birds in Winter!



Continued next page

Ask the Experts...

Continued from page 5

Thus, if you don't put a seed in a particular spot it will remain bare. Turfgrasses that spread by runners (stolons and rhizomes) can fill in bare spots on their own; so they can be seeded at lower rates. A small percentage of Kentucky bluegrass, 5-10%, is being found in a growing number of tall fescue blends to assist with covering bare spots. Most turfgrass seeding rates are set so the initial seedling stand will be about 1,000 plants per sq.ft. Overseeding rates for an established lawn are generally 1/2 the initial rate.

Q. *My lawn has both Bermuda and St. Augustine. Since they have different mowing heights, which should I use?*

A. The best height for St. Augustine is 2 inches, and that's a bit high for Bermuda. If the lawn is somewhat shady, cut it at the St. Augustine height. If mostly sunny, cut it at the Bermuda height. If in doubt, set it at the higher height.

Q. *What does soil pH mean and what is the best level for growing a healthy lawn?*

A. The pH of the soil is a measure of how acid or alkaline it is. The pH scale runs from 0-14, with 7 being neutral. Almost all soils contain nutrients the plant can use and the pH of the soil determines if those nutrients are available to the plants.

A soil pH of 6.5 (slightly acid) is considered to be ideal. The best way to determine your soil's pH level is with a soil test. Kits are available at many nurseries and garden centers; or contact your local extension office. Sulfur can be used to lower pH if the soil drains well. One of several forms of limestone can be used to raise (sweeten) the pH level.

Q. *What is a "nurse" grass?*

A. Some species of lawn seed are slow to germinate. In order to keep the soil from eroding, a faster germinating grass is included in the mixture. This temporary grass, which is generally annual ryegrass, should generally not be more than 10% of the mixture. Annual grasses will not produce a healthy, permanent lawn.

Q. *What is slow release nitrogen fertilizer, and why should it be used instead of regular fertilizer?*

A. The grass plants need more nitrogen than any other nutrient. Nitrogen is available in either a completely water soluble form like ammonia nitrate, calcium nitrate or urea. This form of nitrogen gets into the plant quickly and tends to cause very rapid leaf growth.

The other form is slowly soluble (slow release). These fertilizer products have a coating around a soluble nitrogen particle. The coating slowly degrades in the soil environment and in time the nitrogen is released. Other nitrogen materials are slowly soluble because they depend on organisms like bacteria to make the nitrogen available to the plant.

The slow release forms of nitrogen are becoming more and more preferred because of the slower leaf growth rates produced. The slow release forms are less leachable and are not the potential problem to the environment that the soluble forms can be.

Additionally, slow release fertilizers minimize the possibility of fertilizer "burn". Fertilizers are salts, and if over applied, the effect is to draw water out of the plant; killing it. The slow release and organic fertilizers do not have the same high salt levels as do the soluble and inorganic types.

Q. *What is winter kill? How can I make sure my lawn gets through the winter in good shape?*

A. All turfgrass are susceptible to winter kill. It is an inclusive term that covers several reasons why a grass does not survive the winter. The first cause is called "direct low temperature" injury. It just gets too cold for the grass; particularly on slopes with no snow cover and low wind chill conditions.

Another cause is called "dissection". Plants may die if it is too dry too long even though they are dormant in the middle of the winter.

Plants can also die under ice conditions where the photosynthesis process is blocked. Yes, plants still take in oxygen and give off carbon dioxide even in dormancy. The other cause is that plants may die from a cold weather disease.

All of these causes may be labeled as "winter kill". There is no "sure" way to make certain your lawn doesn't suffer from

winter kill. However, get a soil test before it's time for the last fertilizer application. This will help make sure the lawn has an optimal nutrient supply.

Don't let the soil dry out completely even though it has stopped growing. Unless there has been adequate rainfall in the fall and winter before the very cold temperatures, continue to water the lawn with about 1 inch per week. Continue to mow the lawn at the regular setting as long as it's growing.

Do not scalp the lawn on the last mowing of the season. These suggestions are no guarantee, but can certainly increase the chances of getting through the winter in good shape.

Q. *What's the difference between a pre-emergent and post-emergent herbicide?*

A. A pre-emergent chemical control is one that must be applied before annual weeds begin to germinate in order to control them. Check with your local garden center, nursery, or local extension office for approximate dates in your area. A good rule of thumb in determining when crabgrass seed will germinate is to keep track of the full flowering of lilacs.

The pre-emergent herbicide should be spread a week or two ahead of full lilac bloom in your area. A post-emergent chemical is used to control weeds after they come up. It is also used to control all perennial weeds.

A post-emergent herbicide may also be classified as a contact or systemic type. A contact type, as the name implies, destroys only the part of the plant the chemical contacts.

A systemic herbicide enters the plant, moves throughout it, and thus kills the whole plant. No herbicide controls all weeds, so properly identify the problem weed(s) and make sure the product is labeled to control them. Again, your better garden centers or local extension office can assist you. Always follow the label directions.

Q. *My yard is in really sad shape. What can I do?*

A. Keep reading the *Lawn & Landscape Digest* and follow the advice given in each issue. If you do, you'll have one of the nicest looking lawn and landscape in the neighborhood in the next couple of years! **L&LD**

DEAR MR. FULGHUM, **Concerning Your Poinsettia...**

I had planned to write a piece on the post-Holiday Season care of the poinsettia, which 99% of us had in our homes and over half us still have into February....and I still will. But, I was diverted in my thinking of a "straight" editorial approach to "home care tips" by an author I have come to enjoy and admire...Robert Fulghum!

No, he's not a fellow garden writer, but he gives "earthy" expression to many of the encounters we have with life...family, friends, strangers, mostly ordinary people like you and me. If you've not yet encountered Robert Fulghum, do so after this "brief encounter" with the "poinsetta". His publisher will probably sue me for not getting "proper permission" to print the excerpt...but it's worth the risk! Hopefully, they'll go easy on me after I tell you to go get and read all four of his wonderful books...**All I Really Needed To Know I Learned In Kindergarten. It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It** (my first encounter), **Uh-Oh...**, and **Maybe (Maybe Not)**, the latest book from which this excerpt is taken. They're all available in hardback and paperback at bookstores. Now...to a road many of us have traveled. — Jim Brooks

At the end of January, at the end of my desk, sits a potted poinsetta.

Yes, I know that the correct spelling and pronunciation are "poinsettia".

I don't care.

And I'm trying hard not to care about this particular plant. For my role in its life is that of executioner.

Every year in December for as long as I can remember, at least one potted poinsetta has appeared in my life. I never buy one. Someone always gives me one. Unlike other seasonal gift flowers - lilies, daffodils, carnations, and such - poinsettias do not just bring their message and then die and leave your life in a graceful way. They have a life span comparable to a sea



turtle, and are as tenacious as cacti. Even if neglected, they will hang on and on and on. Encouraged, they can become bushes sixteen feet high.

Do you know how these things got into the holiday package in the first place? Joel Roberts Poinsett is to blame. He lived from 1779 to 1851 and spent his life as a South Carolina politician, elected first to the U.S. Congress and serving most of the rest of his life as a diplomatic envoy in various countries south of the border, most notably Mexico. Poinsett was a manipulative sort, and he managed to meddle in Mexican politics so often that he was officially declared *persona non grata*. The Mexi-

cans coined the word *poinsettismo* to characterize his kind of intrusive behavior.

When Poinsett returned to the United States, he brought a flowering plant with him, formally labeled *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, but popularly called *poinsettia* in his honor. Its winter foliage of red and green leaves quickly gave it a place of honor in our Christmas traditions. And a place of nuisance in January. As I contemplate the potted plant on my desk, I comprehend the personal meaning of *poinsettismo* — this problematic plant intrudes upon my life.

If my wife had her way, we would have kept every poinsetta that ever entered our domicile. Our house would become a poinsetta refuge. Lynn the Good would not knowingly end the life of any living thing. It does no good to explain to her that poinsettias are not puppies. And she can't stand leaving them neglected around the house while they slowly wither and expire. She covertly waters them when I am out of the house. In times past, we had poinsettias struggling on into July. We have finally agreed that "something" had to happen to poinsettias, but she doesn't want to know exactly what.

As usual, my lot is being the family criminal. I do the dirty deeds. Exterminate bugs and mice, throw out wilting flowers, and empty the refrigerator of mummified leftovers. And make the poinsettias disappear.

Continued next page

Fulghum on Pointsettas

(or Pointsettias) *Continued from page 7*

At her insistence, I did try a few humane tactics. But I learned that giving away a poinsetta in January is like trying to unload zucchini in August. Neither the neighbors nor the Salvation Army had any interest. Leaving one on a bench at the bus stop in hopes it would be adopted didn't work. The poinsetta was still there three days later. My wife rescued it and brought it home again. Tossing it in a nearby Dumpster brought the same result.

I tried to interest her in a ceremony called "the Setting Free of the Poinsetta." This involved taking the plant out of the pot, lowering it reverently off our dock into the water, and letting it float away on the lake. Maybe the wildlife would eat some of it, and the rest would blend into the great cycle of decay and return of which all living things are part. An organic solution with cosmic overtones. But a bird-watching friend told us the plant was toxic to waterfowl. Those pretty red leaves are poisonous.

One year I left a poinsetta outside in the falling snow. It looked so nice out there - and an easy way to go. If it couldn't handle the cold, so be it. We still had it in March.

We've finally settled on an unspoken plan where one unannounced day in January I will surreptitiously pick up the poinsetta as I'm going out the door. I carry the poinsetta off to my office, where it will live for a while until it dies. The janitor tosses it out. And that's that. Easy.

Well, not quite.

In truth, in my secret life, I am of two minds on this subject.

As in many cases, something that may be trivial may also be important.

Part of me thinks I should be on the side of anything so beautiful that hangs on to life without much help from me. It brings vibrancy to winter's gloom. And will outlive me with only an occasional watering. I should hold poinsettias in esteem and have them planted on my grave.

And the other side of me says to hold back on the heavy thinking. These things are dispensable holiday decorations. No metaphorical anthropomorphic thinking need apply. A poinsetta is a potted plant, not a paradigm of existence. When its usefulness is served, it goes to the dump. Come on.

It was looking droopy when I came in this morning. So, I watered it.

Not a lot. I don't want to encourage the thing too much. Maybe it will expire over the weekend. Maybe not.

— Robert Fulghum

Maybe Robert Fulghum is a garden writer!



Reflowering your Pointsettia

Reflowering Your Poinsettia is a project for the dedicated green thumb. Many people who attempt this strict regime lose track of it along the way - and all learn to appreciate the skills of the professional greenhouse grower who provides a new crop of bright and beautiful poinsettias each year. If you still have a poinsettia or two around the house...or on your desk...you can reflower your poinsettia by next Christmas by carefully following these instructions.

FEBRUARY - Color may fade. Keep near a sunny window and add house-plant fertilizer according to label instructions. Cut stems back to about eight inches.

JUNE 1 - Loosen pot and remove root ball to see if circling. Plentiful roots indicate the need for repotting. If so, use a slightly larger pot, filling it with commercial potting soil. Continue to water when dry to the touch. Move outdoors under light shade where temperatures do not fall below 50 F.

LATE AUGUST - Move plant inside to a sunny window. Cut stems back, leaving three to four leaves per shoot. Water as needed and fertilize again according to label directions.

SEPTEMBER 20 TO DECEMBER 1 - Keep the plant in its sunny window location only from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Place it in complete darkness from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. This is the hard part! Some have found it helpful to attach a tag to the front door as a reminder to bring the plant to light in the morning and put it in darkness when arriving home from work. Some put the plant in a closet; others cover it with a large box.

If you have followed these instructions, you should have a colorful poinsettia reborn for your next holiday season. Greenhouse environments with high intensity lighting, temperature controls and expert pinching techniques usually result in bushier, larger-bracted plants than you can achieve under home conditions. But give it a try, and let us know if yours made it for the 1997 Holiday Season! **L&LD**

Professional Plant Growers Association

Feeling Chilled? Warm up with Garden Catalogs!



Winter time. The days are short, the nights long. The cold, blowing wind commands falling snow to perform a wild dance before it blankets the ground in white. A pretty sight to watch, perhaps, from the inside looking out. Better yet, cold winter days are an ideal time to insulate yourself in your favorite easy chair, under a nice warm afghan with an armful of new gardening catalogs.

Gardening catalogs are soothing to the soul, especially during the cold days of winter when it's not conducive for doing much, if any, gardening outside. Catalogs also stimulate your mind to dream and plan about the lawn and garden season ahead.

Yes, gardening catalogs are usually full of beautiful, colorful photos and detailed illustrations that bring plenty of ideas to ponder. Most importantly, they can help you envision what your mature plants (or the fruits of your plants) will look like. Additionally, gardening catalogs usually contain plenty of tips for growing a successful garden. Garden catalogs are great sources for seeds, plants, trees, tools and other garden supplies. And there are a number of advantages to garden shopping by mail.

Sound Guarantees. Few garden centers offer the same kind of guarantees as do mail order garden catalogers. Their individual guarantees may vary somewhat, but they assure complete satisfaction with the plants when you receive them and further guarantee them to grow in your garden.

Greater Selection. Gardening catalogs offer a diverse selection of plants, and if you shop a number of catalogs, this diversity is even greater. Most companies work with leading hybridizers, or have plant breeding programs of their own, so they can offer the newly developed hybrids and exclusive selections unavailable from other sources.

Convenient Armchair Shopping. With mail order catalogs you shop

from the convenience of your home, office, or car...wherever and whenever it's convenient for you. Purchases are delivered to your door.

You also have the advantage of ordering your plants in advance of the planting season, generally long before the stock is available in retail stores.

If you want to begin exploring the wonderful world of garden catalogs or add to your stack of favorite ones, you need to contact the Mailorder Gardening Association. This non-profit, member organization of more than 100 garden catalog companies publishes a very helpful booklet entitled **Garden Catalog Guide, Where to Find Them, How to Use Them.**

The booklet contains information about how to read and use the gardening catalogs, tips for caring of plants

when they arrive, a glossary of catalog words and phrases, and record forms for keeping track of mail order purchases.

To order the Garden Catalog Guide by mail, send \$2.00 (check or money order) to: Mailorder Gardening Association, P.O. Box 2129, Dept. DEC-PR, Columbia, MD 21045. You may also access the booklet through the Internet on the home page <http://www.gardenscape.com>.

L&LD

The Good Life

Percent of U.S. adults saying selected items are part of the good life in 1994 and percentage point change, 1975-1994.

ITEMS	1994	% CHANGE FROM 1975
Own home	90%	+5%
Car	77	+6
Yard/Lawn	63	+1
A Lot of Money	63	+25
Above Average Paying Job	63	+18
College for Children	62	+3
Color TV Set	58	+12
College for Self	52	+18
Really Nice Clothes	48	+12
Travel Abroad	43	+13
Second Car	46	+16
Vacation Home	44	+25
Swimming Pool	37	+23

Data LinkUp: Synergetic Business Research

New Varieties for 1997

What's new? Here are some new introductions that will be found in 1997 seed catalogs and at garden centers this spring. The varieties are listed alphabetically by class, with the seed source listed in parentheses after the description.

The designation "R" means a retail seed company from which gardeners may purchase seed directly by mail order, or also in stores that carry the variety in seed packets. A "W" designation indicates a wholesale seed company which does not sell directly to consumers, but these varieties should be available at seed suppliers or as bedding plants at garden centers this spring.

Begonia semperflorens "Ambassador" and "Senator" series feature new colors. Ambassador Rose Blush is a soft rose, and complements Ambassador Deep Rose. Senator Deep Rose is also a new addition to the bronze-leaf Senator series. Both series feature extremely large flowers on dwarf, compact plants. (Daehnfeldt) W

Begonia F1 Hybrid Tuberous rooted "Nonstop Apple Blossom" has blooms that are white or blushed with a soft pink. All flowers have a rose "back petal" that creates a striking contrast. The unopened buds are a showy bright pink. (Benary Seeds) W

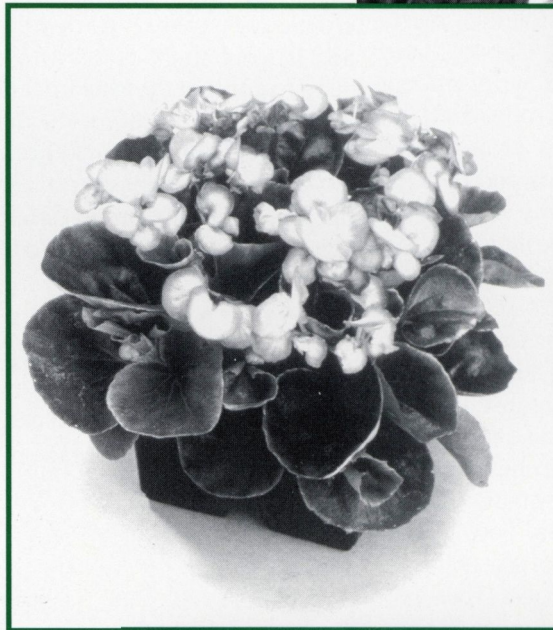
Celosia "Castle Orange" is a new addition to "Castle Mix" joining Pink, Scarlet, and Yellow. Plants produce long-lasting, non-fading, feathery 6-inch flowers with the ability to withstand summer heat and drought. Grows 12 to 15 inches tall in the garden. (American Takii) W

Cosmos "Sea Shells" offers intriguing blooms in shades of carmine, rose, pink, and white. The tubular petals have fluted edges, giving a two-tone and three-dimensional effect. Grows 40 to 48 inches tall, and blooms in 110 to 120 days. (Johnny's Selected Seeds) R

Gerbera F1 "Rumba Hybrid" is the only fully double gerbera from seed. It has 4 to 5 inch blooms in yellows, fuchsia, rose, scarlet, orange, and apricot, and the flowers are filled to the center with petals. (Park Seed) R



Cosmos
'Sea Shells'



Ambassador
'Rose Blush'
(left)



'Cascade
Pink' (below)

Impatiens F1 "Hybrid Dazzler" series features new colors and mixes. Lilac Splash is lavender with a dark magenta eye, Burgundy is a rich, velvety color, and Deep Pink is deeper and rosier than Pink, but lighter than Rose. The new Merlot Mix is a rich blend of Burgundy, Bright Eye, and Lilac Splash, while Peacock Mix is a combination of all eyed colors, featuring shades of blush, white, lilac, lavender, salmon, apricot and cherry. (Ball Seed Co.) W

Impatiens "Cajun Mix" and separate colors are specifically bred for Southern gardens. It is "stretch resistant" by virtue of its short internodes and an initial horizontal growth, so it doesn't get long and leggy in heat and humidity. Large flowered and available in seven bright non-fading colors and a mix. (Vaughan's Seed Co.) W

Impatiens "Impulse Coral" has warm salmon-pink flowers with a center splash of scarlet. Well-branched and outstanding garden performance. Flowers average 20% larger than other series. (S & G Seeds) W

Impatiens "Mosaic Lilac" is the first color in the new Mosaic series. Shade loving and free flowering, it features a unique color pattern of mosaic-like splashes of white in the lilac, giving the illusion of texture. Slightly larger plant habit than Accent impatiens. Good for beds, baskets and containers. (Goldsmith Seeds) W

Impatiens F1 Hybrid "Super Elfin" Deep Pink and Melon are two new colors added to the Super Elfin series. Deep pink is a deep, rosy shade. Melon is an intriguing salmon rose. (PanAmerican Seed) W

French Marigold "Disco Mix" is a formula blend of the popular Disco series. Multi- and single-colored flowers of deep red, bright yellow, and pure orange are borne on dwarf plants 6 to 10 inches tall. (Chas H. Lilly Co.) R

French Marigold "Troubadour Yellow" features large double blooms in a brilliant, bright yellow. Early, vigorous and free flowering, it offers excellent garden performance from the first bloom. (Waller Flowerseed Co.) W

Continued

Salvia 'May Night' (Mainacht)

The Perennial Plant Association has announced that **Salvia "May Night"** ("Mainacht") has been selected as the Perennial Plant of the Year for 1997.

Salvias, members of the large mint family, are known for their aromatic foliage, attractive leaves, and long season of bloom. May Night is one of the most versatile cultivars.

Bred and introduced in 1956 by the famous German plantsman and philosopher Karl Foerster, it is thought to be a hybrid between *S. pratensis* and *S. nemerosa*. It has the typical square stem of mints, deliciously fragrant foliage, and its flowers are attractive to honey bees and other garden-flower pollinators. Leaves are slightly blue-gray in color, finely toothed, hairy, and about 2 to 3 inches long.

But it is the gorgeous floral display that sets this gem apart from its plainer cousins. Florets are borne on upright spike-like inflorescence which are deep, rich, indigo-black, outlined with delicate purple bracts. When mature, this plant will be 2 to 2 1/2 ft. tall and 1 to 2 in. across. The main flowering time for May Night is in May/June and the bloom time extends into July.

Place this 1997 PPA Winner in the middle of the perennial border, or use it as a specimen plant. In the perennial border, it is especially good in combination with the yellow *Achillea* Coronation Gold or with pink or red herbaceous peonies. "May Night" does best in hardiness zones 4 through 8, and it likes a winter mulch in colder areas. However, as with so many perennials, placing it in soils that are well drained during the winter increases plant vigor and extends its life. It has no serious disease or pest problems, although in hot humid areas it will occasionally be attacked by spider mites.

In northern gardens, *Salvia* prefers sunny locations, but would probably benefit from light shade in the more intense summer heat of the south.

"May Night" can be easily established from container-grown plants anytime during the growing season, or from bare-root field divisions during spring.

When planting, make sure to dig a hole twice the diameter of the plant, and place at the same depth as it was in the container or in its previous location. Firm the soil around the plant and water-in thoroughly. *Salvias* do best in a moderately rich soil, so a spring application of an organic fertilizer or general purpose fertilizer such as a 10-10-10 or 10-6-4 at a rate of 1-2 lbs./1000 sq.ft. should be adequate.

Most all of us can surely find a place to grow and display the 1997 Perennial Plant of the Year..."May Night"!





1997 Varieties *Continued*

Morning Glory "Tie Dye" features huge, 6-inch, sky blue flowers over-laid with stripes and swirls of navy blue. The vines reach 6 to 8 feet tall, with beautifully variegated foliage. (Park Seed) W

Nicotiana "Havana Red" and "Havana Purple" are additions to the Havana series. Havana Red is a true red, and Havana Purple is a unique purple. Both have excellent branching and noted garden performance. (Daehnfeldt) W

Nicotiana F1 Hybrid "Heaven Scent Mix" features great fragrance and an improved habit. The plants are very floriferous, with compact flower heads and upward facing flowers of good size. Reaching 24 inches tall, the mix includes crimson, rose, red-purple, light purple, and blush white. (Floranova Ltd.) W

Ornamental Grass "Highlander" has eye-catching bronze seed heads that are pendulous and 3 to 6 inches long. Grows to 28 inches tall, and blooms in 90 to 110 days. Attractive grass to use fresh or dried in arrangements. (Johnny' Selected Seeds) R

Pansy F1 Hybrid "Fama Lilac Shades"

is a pleasing blend of bold and subtle hues of lilac. Large flowered and compact, it is excellent for spring and fall. (BenarySeeds) W

Pansy "Skyline Pink Shades" and "Clear Sky Rose" from the Sky series have a superior root system that helps the plants survive tough weather, set more buds, and recover quickly after frost. The only series recommended for overwintering as far north as Minneapolis and Detroit. W

Pansy Ultima Lavender Shades has soft colors ranging from pale lavender to light blue shades. A medium-sized pansy with good pot and garden performance in fall and spring. (Sakata Seed America) W

Papaver nudicaule "Meadow Pastels" is an Iceland Poppy that produces large flowers on 24 to 30 inch stems. A good cut flower, it blooms in over 10 shades of whites, creams, pinks, roses, yellows, oranges, and bicolors. A biennial, it will flower its first year. (Kieft Seed USA) W

Penstemon barbatus "Cambridge Mix" is a unique dwarf variety that produces a multitude of dense flowering spikes 12 to 16 inches tall. The spikes are covered with blooms in shades of pinks, roses, blues, purples, and lavenders, and are persistent up until frost. A first-year blooming perennial, it is a half-hardy perennial in the Midwest. (Kieft Seed USA) W

Petunia "Bravo Mix" and series are single grandiflora petunias with large flowers and excellent garden performance. Tightly

branched plants tolerate weather without breaking apart. Available in Red, White, Pink, Salmon, and Blue. Superior for pots, tubs, and mixed planters. (Vaughan's Seed Co.) W

Petunia Double Grandiflora "Double Cascade" series has more flowers and a better plant habit than other double petunias. Blooms two to three weeks earlier than other doubles. Colors include Burgundy, Pink and Plum Vein. (PanAmerican Seed) W

Petunia F1 Hybrid Horizon "Lavender Sunrise" is a single multi-flora petunia with the unique color combination of clear lavender with a yellow starburst throat. The florabunda-sized blooms cover the basal branching plants. (Floranova Ltd.) W

Petunia "Merlin Light Salmon" is a bright pastel salmon, new this year as an addition to the Merlin series. It features a dwarf, compact habit and good garden performance. (Sakata Seed America) W

Petunia "Pink Wave" trailing petunia is a complement to AAS award winning Purple Wave. Produces an abundance of 3-inch flowers on cascading plants that also make an excellent ground cover. Only 6-inches tall, it spreads up to 3 feet. Better branched and less aggressive habit than Purple Wave. (PanAmerican Seed) W **L&LD**

—National Garden Bureau

Look for more of the new, exciting '97 varieties in the Spring issue of *L&LD*.

Lawn & Landscape *Digest*

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