

THE TORRANCE HERALD HOME AND GARDEN

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Planters Prove Popular Present

Container gardening has become more and more popular in recent years in California, corresponding to the turn toward more outdoor living, as Golden Staters refer to gatherings and leisure time spent in patios and backyards. For when the gardener and his friends gather in the patio the occasion is made all the more enjoyable if there are plants growing about, reflecting and adding to the beauty of the climate and weather. An important part of container gardening is of course the container itself, says the California Association of Nurserymen. It stands to reason that succulents, miniature shrubs, small trees, hanging flowers and specimen plantings will be doubly appreciated if they are growing in attractive containers... redwood and pottery in all sizes and shapes. And certainly, says the nurseryman, you can give no finer garden gift for Christmas than such a container. Redwood takes many shapes and forms in out-of-door plantings; for instance, as raised beds, tubs, boxes, low walls and seats, hanging baskets.

The Nurseryman's Viewpoint

By DICK OEHLMAN

INDOOR GARDENING
From a nurseryman's viewpoint indoor gardening is more widely discussed today. In the last 10 years a complete revolution has taken place in indoor designing with plants.

The trend in the use of indoor plants is linked directly to the change from small windows to large walls of glass. It has come not only from the recognition that additional light provides a wider scope for indoor gardening as from the discovery that plants are structural forms as well as colorful or beautiful plants.

Today, in old and new homes alike, the dish garden, the portable planter, and all of the various containers of the florist and garden shops, have become designs with foliage plants.

Indoor plants depend completely on you and how you care for them. Their roots have no place to go, therefore, they must get along with the condition of the soil within the container and with the food they find there.

Success in growing plants indoors is more dependent on how well you control the moisture supply than on any other factor. Most people give their plants too much love and drown them in water. This holds especially true when plants are grown in dish gardens and other containers without provision for drainage. Drainage within such containers is provided by a layer of charcoal on the bottom and a layer of peat moss. Let the plant work in moist, but not saturated soil; using the soil beneath the surface as an indicator, withhold water until it is no longer moist. Your watering schedule will probably go something like this: Most small containers, on the average of twice a week; large containers, every week or every two weeks, depending on plant growth. You will soon develop a watering sense, and know just how much water to put in so that there is just enough to fill the sponge layer and no more. Remember that more plants are killed by kindness rather than neglect.

Your local nursery will handle a planting preparation for your planters. A rule of the thumb that's safe, it to use a diluted liquid fertilizer for watering once a month.

Very few foliage plants can take direct sunlight, especially when it is magnified through clear glass. For this reason, avoid placing even those which can take more light, directly behind or below unshaded windows that face the midday sun. Plants will live in the same element that the human can live although plants are shade lovers and like indirect light either by indirect sun or by artificial light.

It is a common misunderstanding that foliage plants benefit from an occasional outing in the garden. On the contrary, the shock of moving back and forth between two environments is often more than the plants can stand.

There are commercial leaf polishes available to keep your indoor plants shiny and clean. Don't use oil of any kind on the leaves, for it will clog them, and therefore, they won't be able to absorb the needed food that they get from the air. If you must use other than commercial leaf polishes, the best one to use is milk.

Gadget Gifts Good Choice for Gardeners' Christmas Present

Confucius didn't say "the way to a gardener's heart is through his tool shed" but if he had concerned himself with such matters he might well have. For it is true. Particularly around Christmas time when family members and friends are seeking just the right gift to please the gardener.

A big item in garden gadgets for a tool shed and certainly a special treat for any gardener is the spreader, used for laying grass seed or distributing fertilizer. The California Association of Nurserymen advise that of the great variety of types of spreaders, the shopper should choose only from those that let the seed or fertilizer out in a gradual, uniform manner.

Tools Good Gift
Of course, there are a number of tools—rakes, hoes, shovels and cultivators, that will be welcome in the tool shed. Each type of hoe, shovel and cultivator does a certain job best.

GARDENER'S CHECKLIST

1. Remember your gardening friends this Christmas with a "living" gift.
2. Spring flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths should be planted without delay.
3. Gladioli bulbs, which are best planted during spring and early summer, will be available in most nurseries soon. Gladioli bulbs make excellent Christmas gifts.
4. Pruning and spraying should be first on your garden chore list. Consult your nurseryman relative to the proper spray materials.
5. Every garden should have some type of "Christmas berry." Give a thought to the colorful pyracantha, Chinese Holly or the English Holly.

Check with your nurseryman when you select them to be sure you're getting the right type for your gardener. For taking care of pesky insects and diseases your gardening acquaintances will appreciate hose attachments, pump sprayers or dusters for spraying. He will certainly be able to use pruning equipment too—Anvil-type, drop-forged or lopping shears, each designed for a special job in that very important garden task of pruning. Among smaller garden gadgets that are pleasing to every gardener are gifts, hand trowels, redwood and pottery containers for miniature shrubs; or perhaps you'd like to present your green thumb friends with packets of seeds, bulbs or a special type of plant food or fertilizer.

Have Books Too
To many gardeners there's nothing so pleasing as a garden book and the wealth of subjects now being written on for the gardener provides a plentiful choice for those shopping. There are books on all phases of gardening; some tell their story in sketches and charts; others specialize on one aspect of plants. Any and all of these will be welcome gifts to a gardener. Another type of garden gift are the bird baths, small benches, statuary and ceramic animals that many gardeners enjoy using for decoration. Your nurseryman will have a fine selection of these—in fact, of all types of garden gifts. When you do your Christmas shopping for your gardener friend or relative, stop at your local nurseryman's to make your selections.

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