



# THE TORRANCE HERALD HOME AND GARDEN

## GARDENER'S CHECKLIST

1. Fertilize Rhododendrons, if they need it, and Azaleas and Camellias with an acid plant food as soon as they finish blooming.
2. You'll get better roses and many more of them if you adopt a regular program of fertilizing. Ask your nurseryman to give you his recommendations for your area.
3. Container grown shade trees can still be planted.
4. Don't forget California native plants. Many of the native shrubs are drought resistant and have great ornamental value.
5. Watch lawns for evidence of lawn moths—your nurseryman can suggest a suitable control.

## Asters Are Hardy Plants, Outstanding for Gardens

As an annual, perennial and shrub the Aster is an outstanding garden performer.

The shrub, Aster fruticosus, makes a fine hillside or dry garden planting; the perennial Stokes Aster (Stokesia laevis) can be treated as a permanent member of your garden border and in bouquets it combines well with other cut flowers. Another perennial Aster, the Hardy Aster, often called Michaelmas Daisy, produces a greater profusion of daisy-like flowers than the annual Aster. It is a fine selection for backgrounds, combination plantings or, in dwarf form, rock gardens.

In all these various forms the Aster is a hardy plant, preferring sun and requiring only a minimum of care, says the California Association of Nurserymen.

In recent years insects alone have killed annually more than one billion board feet of timber in California.

California's forest industries employ more than 100,000 persons with an annual payroll of more than \$400 million.

California Association of Nurserymen. And the varieties and species available mean a great assortment of bloom colors and forms. In the Hardy Aster clan there are many more species and varieties, blooming in blues, pinks, purples, red with yellow or orange centers. Among these types are the Wonder of St. Paul (Aster Fricartii) and the New England Aster, plants that reach about three feet, and the low growing Alpine Daisy, only six to 10 inches high.

Stokes Aster blooms in blue, purplish-blue or white daisy-like flowers and grows to 1 1/2 feet. The Shrub Aster grows into a rounded bushy plant three to four feet high and three feet wide. Its flowers are lavender and long-living. Dependable and easy to care for—the Aster will gladly serve as the basic planting in your garden.



LOVELY Miss Penny Harris, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. R. C. Harris of Orange, poses with "The Whistler." Together they will be competing with other entries in the forthcoming Eighth Annual Open Horse Show to be held at the Portuguese Bend Riding Club, June 2nd and 3rd.

## Garden Chatter

By LORING BIGELOW

Coleus should be more widely used as a source of color in the shade garden than it is. The plants are available now from your Nursery and Garden Supply Dealer either as rooted cuttings from flats or larger plants in pots.

We derive color every day from the coleus through its attractive leaves with many interesting color combinations of red, purple, yellow and green and soft shadings thereof. The plant itself is perennial, but is tented to frost. It grows quickly so should be pinched back occasionally to keep a bushy form. The flowers are rather uninteresting, so should be kept removed from the plant.

The coleus also makes a very interesting pot plant for the cooler sections of the patio, or if the exposure is proper, will grow well inside the house.

It can be used in very interesting color combinations with other shade loving plants such as begonias, fuchsias, ferns, azaleas, and as a foreground planting in front of taller plants such as camellias. The coleus also likes the same cultural requirements as the others and thrives very well with a minimum of care. The plant should never be allowed to dry out.

Any shade garden plant growing where it is cool and moist is an attraction to snails and slugs, so keep the area well baited with a proper snail and slug bait. It is also necessary to keep a sharp lookout for mealy bugs on coleus, and as soon as observed they should be removed.

The plant roots itself very easily from cuttings, so when you discover a particular plant that has an especially nice color combination, you can have very satisfactory results by taking tip cuttings and rooting them in a peat and sand mixture.

As we go into warmer weather, we should pay a little more attention to our lawns to be certain they are getting the summer in as fine shape as is possible.

It is my belief that the mowers should be raised at this time, so that you do not cut the grass shorter than 1 1/4 inches. By raising the lawn at this length, you can overcome to a large degree the sunburning and excessive drying out that sometimes is quite evident.

If you have not done so lately, it is a very good time to add a plant food to the area. There are many excellent types available and some contain an insecticide which will go a long way into controlling soil pests and the sod web worm in particular. Do not apply plant foods in a strength greater than 1/4 ounce per 100 square feet of turf, for if you do, excessive growth will probably result with the accompanying frequent mowing.

In many instances, especially where the seed bed was improperly prepared, excessive drying out may be experienced. Remember this—that it is not the amount of water that you put on, but the depth to which this water penetrates. Water with a fine spray as possible to avoid run off, and do this early in the morning so that the westerly breezes do not blow the water into adjacent areas.

There are many excellent sprayers at your nursery and garden supply dealers, or you may prefer one of the soil soakers that is also carried. If you use one of these, only open the faucet enough to compensate for the flow off through the tiny holes of the soaker. If the faucet is opened too far, the soaker will eventually rupture.

The steps that I have outlined above will perhaps save your turf this summer. Once again, cut your grass so that it is not scalped, feed often, keep the big population down, and see that sufficient moisture is present at all times.



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## Hibiscus Gives Gardens a Breath of Tropical Isles

A breath of tropical isles will enter your garden with the lush, showy hibiscus. Some grow as an evergreen shrub and others as hardy perennials. If the climate in your locale isn't warm enough for the hibiscus, the California Association of Nurserymen says, you can learn to grow the hibiscus successfully by studying your own particular climate and correcting it to suit this shrub's needs.

For example, if you garden in the cooler areas of Central and Northern California where there's light frost (Southern California weather, of course, is perfect for the hibiscus) you will probably not want to plant the evergreen species of this shrub in the open garden. Try it in sheltered spots—a southwest corner of an L-shaped building, or near a solid wall facing south or west. The wall will reflect sun and transmit heat from the building to the plants. In the cooler areas, portable containers are the right home for your hibiscus plants for you can place them in a warm spot during the blooming season and then move them to a frost-free place—a porch or patio—in the winter.

Needs Full Sun

Of course, in Southern California the evergreen hibiscus (H. Rosa-sinensis) a tropical plant will be right at home. Here, you can plant it in the garden. Give it full sun and try it in self-groupings or with evergreens that don't offer too much contrast.

One of the perennial species of the hibiscus (H. syriacus) Rose of Sharon is generally a hardy grower in all parts of the state. It is deciduous in winter and comes back in spring, blooming from mid-summer on. It should be planted in the sun in cooler areas, but in part shade in warmer sections.

The color range available in these two hibiscus species makes them very worth while plantings. The tropical hibiscus features six-inch broad flowers in single and double forms of pale yellow to amber, white to shell pink and rose and on to various shades of red.

Rose of Sharon's flowers are single or double, hollyhock-like, three inches across in all the colors of its cousin plus the bluish-purple shades.

For best blooms, water your tropical hibiscus often—daily showers are good and sprinkling the foliage will help maintain soil moisture at root level by thorough soakings. Feed your hibiscus plants regularly, too, and in the warmest summer months provide protection for the roots and help retain moisture in the soil with a mulch of leaf mold. Prune and pinch to encourage many growing tips—as you do with fuchsias.

Nurserymen offer hibiscus in many varieties and colors. Very easy and very popular is Binkie, also called San Diego Red, which blooms profusely in vivid red. A blend of cerise, coral and yellow in single blooms is borne on the Kamapua and the flowers of Butterfly, a free-blooming variety, are yellow.

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