

Garden Council provides the answers

Doug Barker of North Vancouver, BC, asks what he "should do with a bunch of begonia bulbs I kept over the winter in my basement?"

The Canadian Garden Council: though you refer to them as bulbs, they are actually tubers, and will produce even larger flowers this year than they did last. In Canada's mildest climate, tuberous begonia tubers should be started off indoors right away, and even in colder climates, early March is not too early to start them. Plant them concave side up (important) in flats or similar shallow containers of Canadian sphagnum peat moss, or one-half peat moss and potting soil. Tops of the tubers should be even with the planting medium surface (not buried), and they need to be placed only about five cm (two in.) apart, since once they have two or three leaves, it is best to transplant them individually to four-inch plastic pots, using the same planting medium. Once leaves appear, be sure to apply a liquid or

soluble fertilizer (according to package directions) about every two weeks. To speed growth, soak the tubers for 24 hours in a liquid or soluble fertilizer before planting them in the flat.

Mrs. Annabel Gilkes of Oshawa, Ontario, writes to ask about a "Midnight Blooming Serious" cactus plant which she grew from a leaf. She says, "the flowers were the most beautiful things I have ever seen. They were white. Only one flower appeared at a time and you had to almost watch it develop because it would only last about a day, then wither and die."

Apparently she lost the plant to a sudden frost one autumn and wants to know exactly what it was, and where to obtain another.

The Canadian Garden Council: the plant described is the Queen of the Night cactus, and could be one of at least two species. They may easily be grown from seeds or cuttings, as Mrs. Gilkes grew hers. We have advised Mrs. Gilkes of two pos-

sible commercial seed sources, but it may be possible to obtain a cutting from a parks department conservatory in her area. A gardening information centre such as the Civic Garden Centre of Metro Toronto will likely be able to give more specific advice.

Mrs. J.C. Lundy of Barrie, Ontario, wrote inquiring about the herbaceous perennials, Iris. "I am interested in obtaining catalogues, books strictly on growing Iris. I have been unable to locate anything but very general information on these flowers."

The Canadian Garden Council responds with the name of the Canadian Iris Society membership secretary: Mrs. Irene Specogna. Anyone in Canada may join the society and receive its bulletins and the names of hundreds of amateur and professional Iris growers. Cost of membership is just \$5 for one year of \$12 for three, and covers an individual or family. Mrs. Specogna's address is R.R.#5, Bolton, Ontario L7E 5S1.

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Halton Hills Weekend/Marketplace - Sat. March 10, 1990 Page 39

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