

Let's get growing

Barbara Pratt wins box of bulbs in gardening contest

By **MARJORIE MASON HOGUE**
Correspondent

Congratulations to Barbara Pratt, the winner of the box of bulbs donated by the Netherlands Flowerbulb Information Centre. Barbara, of Blue Heron Books, should be commended for the excellent floral display she maintains at the front of her store on Brock St. in Uxbridge.

Her question to "Let's Get Growing" was which vine would best grow up a trellis in a northern exposure and be able to overwinter in a box that is two feet deep and 14 inches wide. The location coupled with an above ground box makes this a real challenge. I suggested Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) or Boston Ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*).

Another possibility would be Big Leaf Winter Creeper (*Euonymus fortunei* Vegetus). Plants in containers left outdoors over winter are always at risk due to the alternate freeze and thaw patterns of our weather.

Moving large containers holding perennials or shrubs into an unheated garage will increase their chances of survival. If you wish to have bulbs blooming in these containers next spring, put them in plastic pots and bury them a foot deep in your garden. Mark the spot carefully so next April you can dig them up and place pot

and bulbs into the larger containers. P. Vanderwerf would like to know about the depth at which bulbs should be planted. I stress that "deeper is better." Small bulbs (crocus) 5-6 inches, medium bulbs (tulips) 7-8 inches, large bulbs (some daffodils, alliums, fritillarias) 9-10 inches. Deep planting will also help Grace Coxworth in her struggle against chipmunks!

Many people sprinkle the planted area with deterrents such as bloodmeal, cayenne pepper, moth crystals, human hair, etc... or soak the bulbs before planting in bad tasting solutions. You might try placing a piece of plastic mesh or screening over the planted area and covering it with 2 inches of soil so it is invisible. If you lose the war with these cute varmints, plant only narcissus and fritillarias which are not included in their list of edibles!

Valerie Cooke McTaggart would like to know how to get her poinsettia to flower in time for Christmas. This is not an easy task but even if you do not succeed the poinsettia is worth keeping because it is one of the plants which has been tested and found effective for its ability to remove toxins from the air. Poinsettia blooms are actually very tiny yellow flowers in the centre of red bracts (green leaves that have turned red). To trigger bloom and change of the leaf color the plant need long nights - at least 12

hours of uninterrupted darkness from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. for six to eight weeks (mid Sept. - early Nov.) Any artificial light at night can disrupt the triggering of bloom. Other factors to make a happy poinsettia are full sun during the day, adequate water to maintain constant moisture and a minimum night temperature of 62

degrees F. Although the bulb contest is over, you may still send questions or comments to:

Let's Get Growing
c/o The Tribune
88 Brock Street
Uxbridge, ON L9P 1R4
attn: Marjorie Mason Hogue

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