

Cosmos: bright colors, heavenly fragrances

The township of Uxbridge recently chose the Cosmos as its floral emblem.

Cosmos, like other warm weather annuals, such as dahlias and marigolds, originated in Mexico and South America.

Spanish priests grew cosmos in their mission gardens in Mexico.

The evenly placed petals led them to christen the flower "cosmos," the Greek word for harmony.

In 1897, the cosmos was taken into the United States, where it became known as the Mexican aster.

Only two annual species of cosmos are well known. *Cosmos sulphureus* has long

leaves with narrow lobes and hairy margins.

The flowers are always shades of yellow, orange or red.

The varieties "Diablo," "Bright Lights" and the "Sunny" series, belong to this group.

Cosmos bipinnatus has leaves that are finely cut into threadlike segments, giving a ferny appearance.

The flowers are white or shades of pink to dark rose.

The popular "Sensation" series grow to four feet tall.

Slightly shorter is the variety called "Seashells," which has an unusual flower form—each petal is rolled to form a tube.

The "Sonata" and "Versailles" series, which grow only two feet high, are suited to smaller gardens and

'Even more amazing was (the flower's) fragrance — also pure chocolate!'

containers. Cosmos are easy to grow and make an excellent plant for young gardeners. But there is a cosmos which is rather more challenging.

I saw *Cosmos atrosanguineus* in the Royal Horticultural Soci-

ety's garden at Wisley on my first trip to England in 1985.

I was amazed at the flower's rich chocolate-brown color.

Even more amazing was its fragrance—also pure chocolate!

This cosmos develops a tuberous root and is a perennial in England. I was able to get it to survive one winter in my garden by covering it



Let's Get Growing

Marjorie Mason Hogue

with a foot of leaves. Last summer I grew it in a large pot and then stored it dormant during the winter in a cool dark place.

In March, I brought the pot to

light and warmth, added water and it grew back very well.

Now it is part of my potscaping, a collection of unusual plants in pots.

New plants are propagated from cuttings and are an exciting plant to try to grow.

Next week, I'll report on my garden tour of France and England.

Don't forget to send in your letters to the Box of Bulbs Contest.

The draw will be made on Oct.

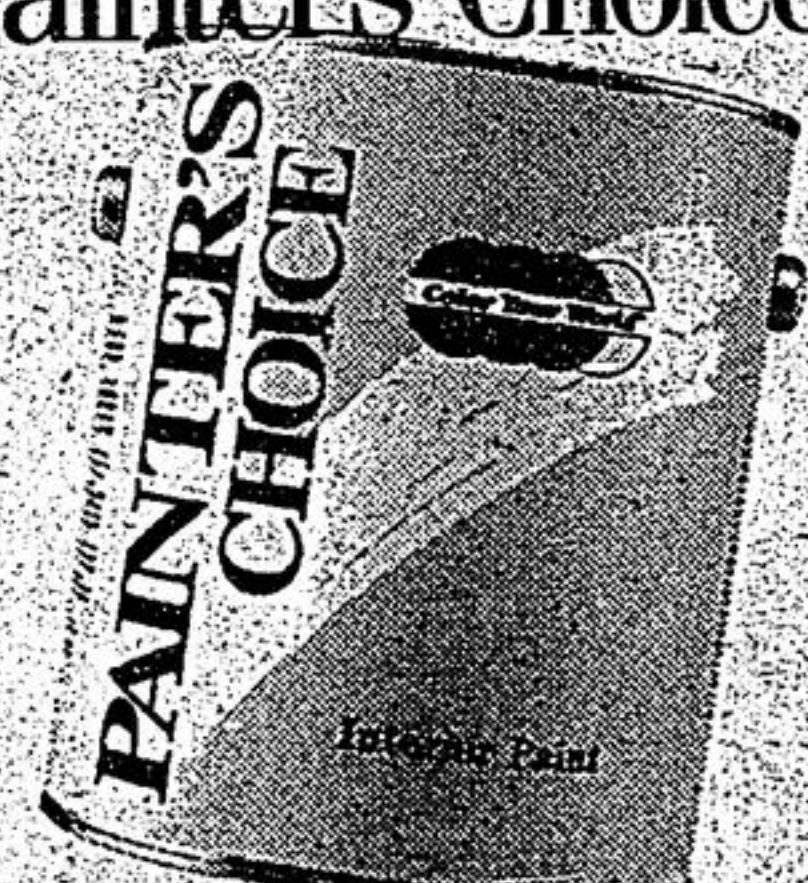
1—two lucky winners will each receive a box of more than 100 flower bulbs, donated by the International Flowerbulb Information Centre.

Send your questions or comments to:

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c/o The Tribune
88 Brock St. West
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Attn: Marjorie Mason Hogue

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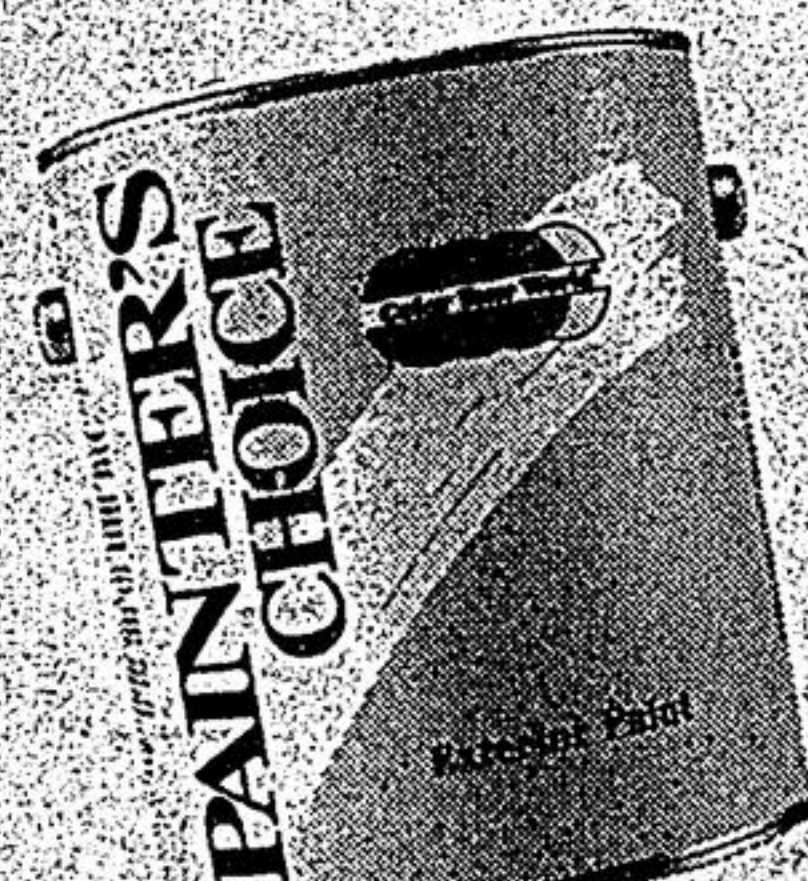
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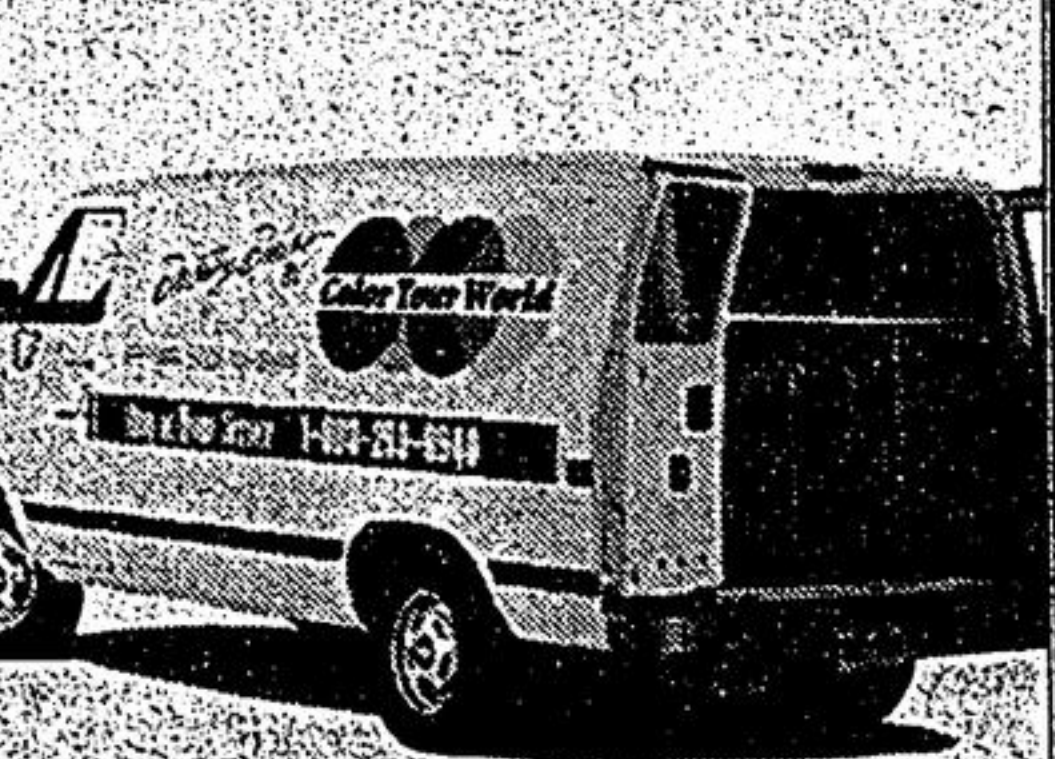
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