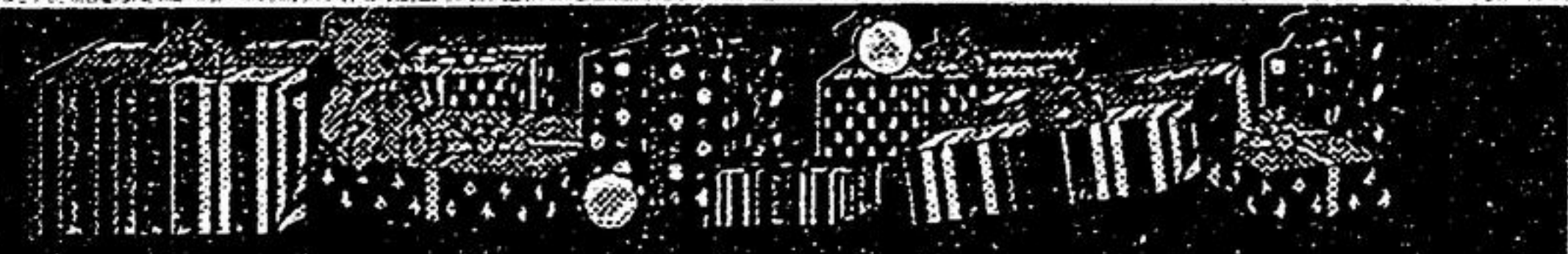


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Z. ART GALLERY

As blankets of white snow envelop the outdoors, bring in colorful flowers and plants to add beauty to your home or office.

Whether you're buying for a relative, friend, or yourself, the following list of gift suggestions is sure to brighten any environment.

Potpourri

Lace-trimmed satin sachets of potpourri add a delicate scent to drawers, closets and jewelry boxes.

Attractive yet inexpensive, sachets can be used in place of a bow to add the finishing touch to a wrapped gift.

Loose handfuls or potpourri in vibrant shades ranging from lavender to primrose compliment pottery or glassware gifts.

A shallow pottery bowl or large brandy snifter filled with potpourri can be used as an aromatic display centerpiece in the dining room or on the coffee table.

Once the original scent of the potpourri has faded, it can be revived by adding two drops of brandy, or a second scent can be achieved by adding a new oil.

Lavender and pine scents, for example, are reported to have a relaxing effect. Treat yourself to some after completing your Christmas shopping!

Basket and Plants

Mixed indoor garden baskets make versatile gifts because the plants can be altered throughout the year.

For Christmas giving, incorporate traditional Christmas plants, such as poinsettia, with other varieties.

eties.

Plant varieties that are especially fragrant include potted freesia, gardenia and jasmine. The beauty of basket gifts is threefold: you can make your own; buy one already made; and baskets don't require wrapping, just a bow.

Perfume

Floral scents are once again gaining popularity because of their sophisticated, elegant fragrance.

Some varieties of flowers which are used in perfume-making include roses, jasmine, freesia, lily of the valley and tuberose.

Did you know that a top quality rose oil costs \$3,500 a pound? But then, it takes a roomful of roses to yield a pound of rose oil.

For the Bath Lover

It's no secret that a hot, steamy bath is a great way to pamper yourself when you want to rejuvenate your spirit, not to mention your body.

Keep a few sprigs of fresh eucalyptus in a corner of your bathroom and their fragrance will unfold as soon as the steam begins to rise.

Keep your poinsettia thriving

A traditional flowering plant at Christmas, today's poinsettia is available in several shades ranging from pale pink to deep red.

The poinsettia was named for Joel R. Poinsett (1755 to 1851), a gardener, botanist and diplomat of South Carolina. He was the first American ambassador to Mexico and introduced the plants to his friends in 1833.

Care Tips

Select poinsettia plants with green foliage extending all the way down to the soil line. This is a good indication that the plants have active, healthy roots.

Look for plants that have small green buttons (cyathia) in the centre of the colored bracts. These buttons will eventually develop into little yellow flowers.

Protect plants from temperatures under 50 degrees. Chilling causes the leaves to drop. Place plants in a room where there is sufficient natural light. Poinsettias must have at least six hours of bright indirect light to thrive.

Water plants thoroughly after purchase. Discard excess water. Never allow poinsettias to sit in water and only water when the soil feels dry to the touch.

Keep plants away from drafts, radiators and hot air registers; do not place on top of TV.

A Clean Bill Of Health

Noted horticulturalists have eaten poinsettia leaves on TV to help dispel the myth that poinsettia leaves are poisonous. However, chemicals used on the plants in the form of pesticides are poisonous, so please don't take chances.

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