

Children's Garden Club
Volume # 7, Sheet # 4
April 1st, 2006
An Easter Basket Centerpiece
For the Garden at Haefner's Greenhouse
6703 Telegraph Road

Welcome to the April 1st Meeting - No Fooling -

I would like to Thank you all for coming and especially Marsha and Greg Haefner for Hosting us here at For the Garden at Haefner's Greenhouse.

I would also like to thank the ladies of the Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri – East Central district for there Support.

Today Marsha has a really neat project planned for you, a Easter Centerpiece. You will see Marsha's write up attached. Also here is some information on the Pansy.

PANSY

Today we are going to focus on a cool weather flowering plant, the Pansy (*Viola X wittrockiana*) an annual. The Pansy is used as bedding, edging rock garden, container, cut flower, and is edible.

Nothing says Spring to me more than pansies; pansies parents are native to Europe and possibly Asia Minor. As you can see they are the first flowering annuals in the garden center, these brilliant yellows, blues, burgundies, pastels, pinks, white, and orange, some of them even have a sweet fragrance. They grow in full spring sun and part shade with moderate moisture, rich well-drained soil. Once established, they need no special care other than regular watering and dead-heading for continuous blooms. Beware the deer also really like them as a great salad.

Pansies – Cool Season Bloomers

Pansies are cheerful flowers that grow best in cool weather. They are one of the most loved annuals, with jubilant faces in a rainbow of colors that are among the first blooms that welcome spring!

Often customers ask garden center employees what the difference is in pansies, violas and Johnny-jump-ups. They are all in the same plant “family” but each has it’s individual’s traits.

Pansies are the largest in this family, both in leaf size and flower size. They are great companions to early spring bulbs, such as daffodils and tulips. They also mingle well with ivy when planted in pots. Their smiling “faces” are a true delight at a time when other flowers cannot survive outside.

Violas are often called mini-pansies because they look so much like pansies, only on a smaller scale. Leaves, stems and flowers are all smaller. The smaller size of viola blooms reminds many of violets – perhaps that is where their name came from!

The smallest of the family, Johnny-jump-ups is also known as Good King Henry. They often reseed, and end up in surprising places – between stones, in gravel or between cracks of a driveway! Their colors range white, lemon to violet blue.

Growing Pansies

Deciding which pansies to grow is hard! With well over 100 varieties to choose from growers have to pick ones that they feel will grow the best in their particular climate, and will offer their customers the traits and colors they want. One of – for the garden Haefners Greenhouse – seed suppliers offered 11 new pansy colors for this spring! The palette continues to grow with awesome new colors each season.

St. Louis Growers transplant the pansies seedlings in October or November so that in mid January & February, they control the temperature if it is above freezing (32 degrees F) they open the greenhouse to begin slowly hardening them for the cool season outdoors.

By March they stay outside unless it goes below 20 degrees F. to get used to the cold weather. If it does dip below 20 they have white thermo blankets they can place on top of the plants while on the ground where they will continue to grow until they are ready to be shipped to retail sales areas.

How to Select Pansies for Planting

- Look for pansies that are used to cold weather, or hardened off.
- Decide what color or colors you like – you have many choices!
- Look at the roots. Are they well formed? Do they like strong?
- Avoid leggy looking plants. They have stretched from being in a greenhouse too long.

When planting pansies, if they are going in pots or other containers, be sure to use a potting soil. (not just mother earths ground) When planting them in the ground, make sure to dig in some organic material such as peat moss. Pansies will grow best in well-drained soil. Be sure and water them in, if you add a grow start fertilizer it helps the roots get established quicker into mother earth.

Because pansies are low growing plants, they make great borders and edging that delivers brilliant color, and can be used for mass landscape beds. They're also a great choice for pots and window boxes, and are delightful for cut flower bouquets! They also make a great edible flower each color has its own flavor.

If they just liked hot weather, they could possibly be the perfect plant to perk up any garden year around !!!

Pansy Potato Salad

4 medium potatoes, steamed, cooled and cut into chunks.
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
 2 tablespoons parsley, finely, chopped
 2 chive flowers, broken into florets, chopped
 15 pansies flowers (reserve 3 whole for garnish), chopped
 Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

In a large bowl, mix all ingredients together. Let stand for at least 30 minutes at room temperature for flavors to meld. Garnish with whole pansies. Pansies as you can see come in such a range of colors, you can create different effects using different colored pansies --- a rainbow of

different colors, sunny yellows and oranges, cool blues, vibrant reds and purples. Serves (4) four.

Eat only the edible flowers that have been organically grown or grown without use of any pesticides or herbicides. Remove pistils and stamens from flowers before eating. Eat only the petals of most flowers. If you have hay fever, asthma or allergies, it might be wise not to eat flowers.

Children's Garden Club Schedule for 2006

May 6, 2006

Hanging Gardens

Sherwood Forest Nursery & Garden Center

2651 Barrett Station rd.

June 3, 2006

Tasting Herbs & Herb Vinegar

Gilberg's perennial Farms

2906 Ossenfort Road

July 8, 2006

Summer Flowering Shrubs & Horticultural Therapy – Gary

Wanger with Children's Hospital all at

Sappington Garden Center

11530 Gravois