

In Your Garden . . . Flowering Shrubs Can be Forced Indoors Now

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This year, spring can come early to your home. How? Just snip some branches from your flowering shrubs and force them into bloom. By now many shrubs have flower buds that are formed and ready to bloom. There has been sufficient cold weather to break dormancy and all that the buds require to burst open is warmth and moisture.

This procedure is quite simple. Anyone, even apartment dwellers, can succeed with this project. Start by selecting branches loaded with flower buds. You can identify the flower buds because they are more plump and more round than leaf buds. When cutting, select branches that have curves or bends that will create interesting blooming arrangements.

Since the branches will be in water several weeks, many of the clean cut ends will have a tendency to heal or form callus. This is not desirable because it restricts the water uptake. To prevent this healing, thoroughly pound with a hammer and shred the cut ends of the branches.

After the ends are prepared, submerge the bundle of branches overnight in a deep pail or tub of water, or wrap them in a damp cloth and put them in a plastic bag for a few days. This moistening and soaking loosens the bud scales and helps them to readily fall away as the flowers expand.

After the moistening operation is completed, stand the branches in a pail of water in a place where you can control the temperature. Sixty to seventy degrees is best for the developing flowers. Although the branches will force at higher temperatures, the color, size, and keeping quality of the blooms will be reduced. For this reason, it is also best to keep the branches out of direct sun.

Most branches will be well on their way to full bloom in two weeks or sooner. They will stay attractive for about one week. So, if you cut a few branches each week, you can have a succession of fresh flowers the rest of the winter.

Some of the most popular shrubs to force are forsythia and flowering quince. Other good plants for forcing are flowering crab, flowering almond, and spiraea, especially the double flowered spiraeas. Magnolia forces easily, too.

Although white flowering dogwood can be forced, it opens slowly and bracts never develop as fully as outside. Lilac, because it is a complex compound flower, is also a challenge to force.

Finally, don't overlook trees when collecting branches for forcing. Red maple has an attractive but seldom noticed flower. Oak branches produce very interesting tiny leaves that change color as they unfold. And don't forget the pussy-willows. They are almost the trademark of spring.

Dr. Fred Grau writes that one of these days you will hear about a new zoysia that has been under test under various degrees of management, mostly without irrigation. So far in 42 years it has not required irrigation, fungicide, insecticide and there is no thatch when properly fertilized. As soon as sufficient sod is produced, they hope to put it in several sport fields because of its toughness.



Toro Dedicates Shrine Gardens to Golf Superintendents at PGA World Golf Hall of Fame

BLOOMINGTON, MN — The Toro Company announced today that it has become the founding sponsor in the development of the Shrine Gardens, located on the grounds of the Professional Golfers' Association World Golf Hall of Fame in Pinehurst, North Carolina. The garden was created to recognize golf course superintendents' service and contributions to the game of golf.

The beautifully landscaped gardens, located near the entrance to the shrine building, include a plaque that dedicated the gardens to golf course superintendents around the world. The project, which began in 1988, and was completed in August 1989, was publicly dedicated on November 2, 1989. The gardens replace a moat that previously encircled the Shrine area.

According to Mike Hoffman, Toro's director of marketing for commercial products, the Shrine Gardens project is an effort to provide golf course superintendents with much deserved recognition. "Golf course superintendents are key members of the golfing industry. They have made and continue to make major contributions to the game," says Hoffman. "It is our hope that they will receive the recognition in this special hall of fame that they have earned through hard work, expertise, and dedication to the game."

The majority of the golf course superintendents in the United States are members of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), an organization of golf course superintendents serving more than 9,000 members worldwide.

The Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) of America, the world's largest sports organization, is made up of 16,000 members and apprentices, and is represented at more than half of the nation's 12,000 golf courses. Formed in 1916, the association strives to both elevate the standards and promote interest in the game of golf.

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