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and mulch  
more**

*For the avid gardener*

### Tips For a Springtime Planting Spree

Put a gardener in a garden center in May and he'll act like a kid in a toy store the week before Christmas.

With all those colorful flowers, tasty vegetables and graceful trees and shrubs, even the most experienced gardener's heart beats a little faster. It's a temptation to buy one of everything and enjoy an orgy of gardening.

But follow a few simple steps and take a minute or two to examine the plants before you buy, and you can bring home lots of healthy plants which will last all season long.

Many gardeners have favorite garden centers where they receive good service and healthy plants each year and know they can rely on the greenhouse to provide the best in plants. Talk with gardeners in your area to find where they shop. Garden clubs are excellent sources for information.

Don't be swayed by the size of an operation — either large or small. There are thousands of excellent greenhouses and garden centers across the United States — some small, some acres in size. Choose one with good service, and a

variety of healthy, well-cared for plants.

Look for centers that do their best to help their customers. Larger stores may have a number of employees; they should be knowledgeable and helpful. Smaller centers might not have as many employees, but can still provide information through signs, posters and displays. You should be able to have your questions answered and find the plants you need quickly and easily.

Once you've decided where to shop, you should know what to purchase.

Many gardeners rush straight to flats in full bloom with big, nearly mature plants thinking they'll get a head start on the season. But for peak performance all season, look for flats of plants just beginning to come into flower. Choose varieties that are early to bloom, such as 'Pulcino' zinnias, 'Super Elfin' impatiens or the 'Hollywood' geraniums.

Choose plants, especially impatiens, petunias or begonias that are still compact and bushy. Tall, stretched plants must be pinched when set in the garden delaying

flowering for several weeks. Short, compact plants with good basal branching will flower within days and produce thick growth all season. Varieties such as the 'Morning Mist' vinca, 'Sherbert Mix' impatiens or the 'Bonanza' marigolds — which are bred to naturally form short, dense plants — are good choices.

Dark green foliage is another key to a healthy, happy plant. The deeper and greener the foliage the better. Avoid plants with yellowing foliage, a signal they haven't been properly fed. Check also on the leaves and stems for insects or disease. Vegetables, especially tomato varieties such as 'Champion' and 'Celebrity', have been bred with high disease resistance.

If you need instant color, pots are the way to go. Plants, such as 'Summer Madness' petunia grown in 4-inch pots, will be far more fully developed than those grown in cell packs. They're the choice for containers or garden spots where you want instant color. Because each plant grows in its own pot, with more soil and greater space, the price will be higher. But the plant will be far more developed than the same variety grown in cell packs.

If you need many plants for a long border or a large bed, and can wait a week or so for flowering,

plants grown in flats are the answer. The plants are less expensive, but are not as fully developed.

Many more gardeners are looking to containers as their very own mini-gardens. You can buy containers already planted, or plant them at home yourself.

Look for varieties specially suited for containers — many garden centers will highlight good container varieties such as 'Blush Cascade' petunia, 'Red Fountains' geranium or 'Super Elfin Lipstick' impatiens.

Choose pre-planted containers that are full and colorful when you buy them — with sufficient watering and feeding they'll stay just as beautiful all summer. Whether you buy a pre-planted container or do it yourself, make sure drainage is good and a planting is in a good soil mix such as Jiffy-Mix.

Container vegetables continue to grow in popularity. Tomatoes are a popular item for containers, whether hanging baskets, pots or containers. 'Florida Basket', a variety bred for hanging baskets should be planted in containers of at least 10-12 inches in diameter. 'Florida Lanai', a variety perfect for patios and porches, needs pots of at least 6 to 8 inches in diameter. Size is important, too, since plants

in smaller pots will dry out very quickly.

Other container varieties worth planting include 'Pot Luck' cucumber, 'Bush Star' cantaloupe or 'Sweetheart' strawberry. As with plants in flats and packs, look for container plants with deep green, dense foliage.

Many other flowered varieties such as 'Magic Carpet' vincas or the 'Bonanza' marigolds are available for containers. Ask questions or look for helpful posters or signs to provide you with ideas for container plantings.

Finally, look for hybrid varieties of flowers and vegetables. They include the earliest, most free flowering — heaviest yielding and most disease resistant flower and vegetable varieties. Check for plant tags and labels which bear the designation "F1" or marked "Hybrid". Hybrid varieties such as 'Super Elfin' impatiens or 'Champion' tomato are your keys to healthy, vigorous flower and vegetable plants.



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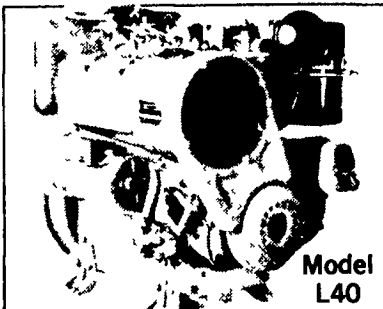
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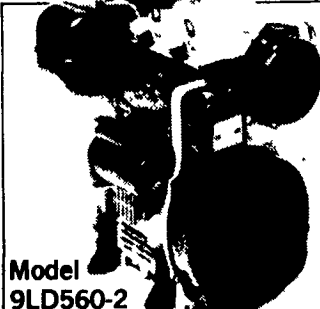


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