

## Pre-potted bulbs provide instant spring pick-me-up

If you forgot to plant your tulips last fall, or just want to jazz up your spring landscape with instant color, do what many professional designers do. Buy pre-potted bulbs at a garden center or florist and "plant them out" into your garden or entryway containers. It's just for fun—a few pots of snazzy red tulips or purple crocus can have a big impact. Consider them costume jewelry for the yard!

For the longest bloom time (and most fun), select potted bulbs with the plants already "coming up" but not yet close to flowering, suggests Frans Roozen, technical director of the International Flower Bulb Center in Hillegom, Holland. "Remember half the fun is watching the flowers grow taller, mature, and get colorful. One pot of tulips, for example, could grow up and bloom over a period of weeks, often a month, given springtime's generally cool days and cooler nights," he says.

Top candidates for planting out include: tu-

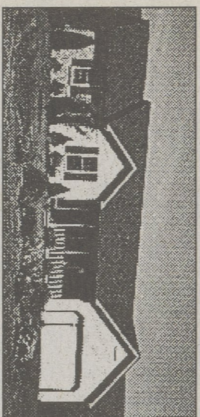


About 45 million U.S. households now purchase flowers at least once a month. In spring, shoppers will find cut and potted tulips in abundance nationwide.

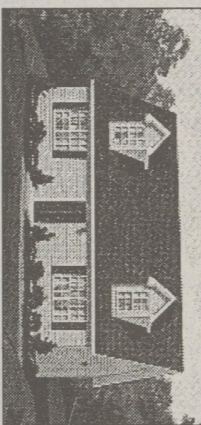
On the cover: A friendly frog guards a pool at Huntsville Nursery in Lehman. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

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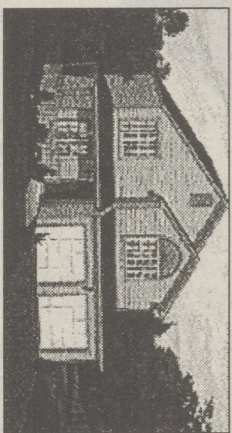
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hips, dandelions, little iris reticulata, crocuses, and hyacinths. All are readily available this time of year for use indoors or outdoors as decorative plants. Buy them when the flowers are closed, but just about to open. If weather in your area is still dipping close to freezing, acclimate the potted plants to outdoor weather in a protected but unheated spot for a day or two before planting. Once planted sudden snow shouldn't bother them. As with other spring-

flowering bulbs (which are generally planted directly into the soil in the fall and overwinter there till the spring), they'll just deal with the weather as it comes!

A tip to your local garden center or landscape professional will provide you with the information you need to plant bulbs in tubs or your garden. Visit the Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association's (PLNA) web site ([www.plna.com](http://www.plna.com)) for more gardening and landscape ideas.

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## Paint job

(continued from page 14)

to begin.

"The act of applying color to a surface should be a rewarding and exciting exercise for people," Rapps says. "Here you are creating a beautiful look to your home, increasing its value and protecting your investment with each stroke of a brush."

Where do you start? All exterior paint jobs should begin with the gables.

From there, move to the siding, painting from top to bottom. You'll want to paint windows next. Using a sash brush, paint upper windows first so that you won't need to lean a ladder against fresh paint.

After that, paint trim work and then doors.

Rapps offers these additional pieces of advice for painting an exterior:

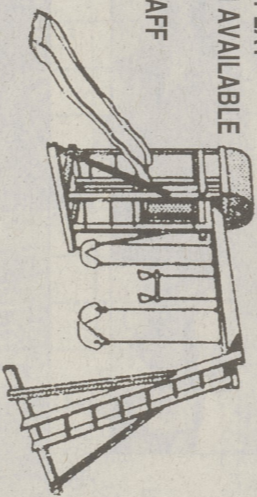
- Always paint away from the sun, and never in temperatures below 50 degrees
- Paint the underside of each siding slat before painting the face
- Don't close a painted door until it's completely dry
- Always work from unpainted to painted areas
- When positioning a ladder, one-fourth of its length should be away from the house at ground level
- And when you're finished, stand back by the curb and admire your work of art.

"If you've taken the time to do your homework and properly prepare your surface, then a paint job can become a paint pleasure," says Rapps.

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## Edible Landscapes

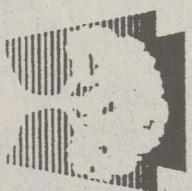
Do you feel adventurous? Like to live on the edge? Why not invite a few friends to dine on your landscape's edible plant life? The following plants are not only beautiful and exotic, but have some appear in May, growing by the production of 3-4" edible pod fruit. A partly shaded location is the best choice for the Akkiba. Arctic Beauty Kiwi is a hardy vine that really does produce fruit in the summer. Kiwi is a gourmet treat eaten fresh or in preserves.

covering the shrub with a fiery orange-red glow. The fruit, yellow-green with speckles, can reach 2-2.5" long and wide. Ripening in October, the raw fruit is bitter, but when cooked it is perfect for tasty preserves and jellies. Cornus kousa or Japanese Dogwood is the Asiatic counterpart to our native flowering dogwood with similar flowers. The tree produces a reddish-pink cluster of fruit in August that usually last until October. If the birds don't eat them first, the fruit resembles a raspberry in appearance, has the flavor of a papaya, and is edible raw!

## It takes more than a shovel...

It takes more than a pick-up truck, a wheelbarrow and a shovel to be a professional landscape contractor. When you're ready to select a firm to create your home's outdoor environment, ask questions. Is the company you're considering a legitimate business? Are they certified with the Department of Agriculture as required by law? Are they properly insured? Ask if the business is a member of the Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association. PLNA members are dedicated to providing quality service to their customers.

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