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Pulse Relax

On Thursday
Music meets modern life
in the School of Music's
Music Today Festival

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Contained planting for brown thumbs

I am officially turning into my mother. An acquaintance pointed it out last month when she said she was shocked I wrote about scrapbooks. While I fail to see how gold picture corners and rock 'n' roll are intrinsically opposed, I can see her point. Last month it was scrapbooks. Over spring break, it was spring cleaning. And on Friday, I eagerly browsed the gardening section at Smith Family Bookstore. Those spades are thrillas.

A friend of mine recently planted a tiny vegetable garden in a planter on her postage-stamp apartment deck. With my column deadline fast approaching and no ideas in sight, I stole hers. Planting season is starting, and growing vegetables seems very D.I.Y. in a Victory Garden kind of way.

The more I thought about it, however, the more excited I was at the thought. I'm brown thumb all over the place, as proved by many failed attempts at raising houseplants. Growing food, however, is different. I have vivid childhood memories of the sweet smell of fresh dirt, the sun on my back while sowing seeds, and snap peas fresh from the backyard. Houseplants just sit around looking green and pretty, but fruits and vegetables are workhorses. They produce something useful, something to look forward to. Growing a garden is like growing a baby — except then you eat it. I am confident my little neonate will live through the summer.

And it will be little. I have a huge backyard now, but I'll be moving in July to an apartment with limited space. I want to be able to take my produce with me, so I'm planting in containers. Container gardening is an easy way to grow in small spaces with almost guaranteed success. It is an "adventurous undertaking, complete with thrilling risks and extraordinary rewards," Barbara Pleasant wrote in the National Home Gardening Club's guide to container gardens. Stop laughing, this is serious. Pleasant knows what's up. She is guiding me into a brave new world of parsley, cherry tomatoes and leafy greens.

After finding a few books for advice, I set out to find some starter plants. Some vegetables are slow growers, so it's best to buy starters instead of seeds. Herbs, especially, should be bought as starters.

I wove my way through the patchouli clouds and the muu muu booth at the first Saturday Market. I picked up basil, parsley, oregano and chive transplants, as well as cherry tomato and snow pea plants and lettuce. I'm growing carrots and onions from seeds. Starters can be picked up at any nursery, but I wanted to buy organic, directly from a small, local farm.

Containers can also be bought at nurseries, but a more cost-effective and

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Nika Carlson
D.I.Y. living

Needles and pins

Acupuncture, a millenia-old treatment, has grown in popularity for alleviating headaches and back pain

Ryan Bornheimer
Senior Pulse Reporter

The numbers speak for themselves. When licensed acupuncturist Dina Harmon opened her clinic in 1997, there were eight such establishments in Eugene. As of today, there are nearly 40.

The ancient Chinese healing art might be a perfect fit for alternative treatment-friendly Eugene. However, the increased interest in acupuncture represents a more widespread trend: People suffering from various levels of ailments are seeking to relieve the pain without drugs or the prospect of going under the knife. Acupuncture has emerged from this demand as a viable treatment without side effects and with proven benefits.

Acupuncture has been traced back at least 2,000 years. However, some experts claim the art has been practiced in China for as long as 4,000 years.

The treatment involves the insertion of fine needles into the body at specific points for the relief of health problems. Depending on the nature of the ailment, needles are usually placed between a quarter-inch to an inch below the skin.

While modern Western medicine has failed to explain how acupuncture works, traditional practice is based on ancient Chinese theories of the flow of Qi (energy) and blood through pathways in the body. In general, acupuncture is believed to restore the energetic balance of the body.

Harmon said the most common treatment is for neck and back pain. But acupuncture is implemented for relief of allergies, headaches, reproductive complications, high blood pressure — even drug addiction and smoking.

Harmon recounted the story of a 40-year-old woman with a knee-related ailment who was wheelchair bound when she arrived for treatment. A series of operations left her with little relief and "knees the size of basketballs."

"A year later, she was snowboarding," Harmon said.

Stuart Greenleaf, resident practitioner at Acupuncture Alternatives, located at 1245 Charnelton St. #3, has been practicing acupuncture for 22 years. He said Oregon was among the first states to license practitioners in the early 1970s.

As widespread as the healing art has become, only two schools remain, both in Portland, that offer comprehensive acupuncture training.

Greenleaf said acupuncture is part of a larger practice of natural health treatments, which include herbology, nutritional supplements, heat and massage therapy.

He specializes in electrical enhancement acupuncture, a

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The Misanthrope' opens on Friday at the Robinson Theatre.

Molière's 'challenging' comedy addresses hypocrisy, deception

'The Misanthrope' reveals itself both as a stern comedy and as a challenge for the cast and crew

Theater review

Aaron Shakra
Pulse Reporter

The Robinson Theatre gets misanthropic Friday, when it opens one of Molière's most enduring plays, "The Misanthrope."

Director Jeffrey Mason said the main concern of "The Misanthrope" is the issue of conformity. It revolves around Alceste, a disillusioned man who decides to speak only the truth, no matter what the offense or consequence. Alceste eventually becomes enamored with Célimène, a coquette who embodies everything Alceste claims to protest. Mason said the theater department chose to mount the play because it was a challenge for both students and those

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