

Garden

Mark Taylor

Start Tuberous Begonias Now for Summer Garden Color

Perhaps no other flowering plant has been so widely received and accepted as has the Tuberous Begonia. For magnificent color, beauty of flower form, ease of care and the production of quantities of beautiful flowers, no other plant offers the opportunities for success and pleasure as does the Tuberous Begonia. No other plant, either has ever attained such widespread popularity among amateur and professional gardeners alike than has Summer's "Fair Lady", the Tuberous Begonia.

First, their culture is so simple, no green thumb is required! Just observe a few easy rules and success is, practically guaranteed.

The easiest way to start your Tuberous Begonia is to purchase some tubers. The size is more or less immaterial, for the small tubers will produce good plants though the larger tubers may develop more stems. It's best to make sure, though the tubers are firm and plump. Dried, shriveled tubers may not perform.

Next, prepare a flat, bulb pan or pot by filling with a mixture of sand, loam and peatmoss in equal parts. Place the tuber in the soil mix almost or barely covered, with the concave side up. Moisten the soil mix until all parts are thoroughly moistened, not wet, just damp, and set the flat in a moderately warm spot indoors away from direct sunlight. Keep the soil mixture slightly moist at all times, but never overwater as rotting may result.

In time, stems will emerge from the upper side of the tuber. Then, bring the flat into more light, but avoid direct rays of the sun, especially through glass windows. By the time danger of a killing frost is past, the plants will be ready for transfer to their outdoor beds where they may be placed in fairly rich soil in a spot that receives light only filtered through trees. An ideal planting site is beneath high-branching trees in good, woody soil.

If you prefer to start your tubers in individual pots for later use in the home, the procedure is the same, except that the pot and all can be moved into the garden for outdoor color. Sink the pot to the rim in the soil in a site similar to that already mentioned.

In the event of a warm, moist Spring, the only serious disease affecting Tuberous Begonias, mildew, may get a foothold. This is easily and quickly controlled, however, by spraying or dusting the entire plant with sulphur or karathane.

To gain the longest flowering period, tubers should be started in January, or February at the latest. Care during the summer, the plant's blooming season consists mainly of watering and fertilizing. The plants like shower baths and appreciate overhead sprinkling, even on the flowers. They are always hungry and should be given a balanced liquid plant food at weekly intervals during their growing season. The popular fish emulsions are most satisfactory as it can be taken through the roots or the foliage of the plant.

For those who like to raise all of their flowers from seed,

Tuberous Begonias provide a most interesting and enjoyable hobby. Even though it takes two million seeds to make an ounce, the raising of Tuberous Begonias from seed is not difficult or complicated. The thrill and excitement when the seedling plants come into bloom will be worth the extra effort for no two plants will be exactly alike and the plants will be more vigorous, tubers will form and flowers will bloom the first season!

To start Tuberous Begonias from seed, begin with light, fibrous soil to permit the roots of the tiny seedlings to penetrate. Use a seed flat or flower pot at least three inches deep. Mix equal parts of good garden soil, sand and rotted leaf-mold. Pour the mixture through a quarter inch sieve to remove any chunks or debris. Fill the flat or pot to within three-quarters of an inch of the top, firm it lightly. Place some extra soil mix in a paper bag for use later.

Place the flat and the extra soil in an oven at 180 degrees for 30 minutes. Remove and let the soil cool completely, then moisten thoroughly and drain off extra water. Sprinkle the surface of the flat with a thin layer of the extra soil in the bag. Then, take the packet of seeds and cut off one corner to make a spout. Sow the seeds sparingly by tapping the packet gently. Don't try to cover the seeds with soil.

When the seeds have been sown, place the entire flat or pot into a polyethylene bag, fold the open end of the bag over and secure it in place with rubber bands. Place the container where there is light but no direct sun. Keep at a temperature of between 65 and 72 degrees. Seedlings will appear in from 8-12 days and can continue to grow in the plastic bag for three weeks. The plastic bag acts as a miniature greenhouse, permits light to enter but conserves moisture. Do not

remove the flat from the bag until the first true leaf of the plant begins to unfold. Then, remove and give full light with an hour of sun daily.

In about two weeks move the flat or pot to where it is moderately sunny. Keep the same temperature range and make sure the soil does not dry out. Water by setting the flat or pot in a pan of water until beads of moisture show on the soil surface; remove and let drain. When the first true leaf is about the size of a penny, transplant the seedlings to a larger flat or pot, prepared as the original one, but with slightly coarser soil.

Make sure the seedlings are re-set at the same depth as originally growing and space them about an inch apart and keep the same temperature range. When the seedlings begin to crowd, transplant to four-inch pots, to pressed, peatmoss pots or a larger flat. Plants can take more direct sunlight.

When the soil outdoors seems warm to the touch, the seedlings may be transplanted to outdoor beds, shaded from excess sun in the morning and late afternoon. Fertilize twice a month with a liquid plant food.

At the end of the season the plants will have produced, not only a summer of gorgeous blooms, but tubers will have formed, too, so that should there be a particular plant you want again next year, it can be saved and used again and gain for years to come. Starting from seed, though, should begin immediately if you are to get the advantage of a full season of bloom.

Pruning Guide Offered

Not all pruning will result in bigger and better blossoms on your ornamental shrubs, says Duane Hatch, Lane extension agent in horticulture.

In fact, dormant pruning of some spring flowering shrubs—forsythia, flower plum, peach, and quince, for instance—will result in fewer blossoms.

"These shrubs bloom before new growth is made," he explained. "Dormant pruning has nothing to do with the quality of the blossom."

The time to prune early flowering shrubs and trees, he notes, is immediately following the blooming period.

However, late January and February is the time to prune shrubs that bloom from mid-to-late summer such as the butterflybush, cotoneaster, and clematis.

For a reliable guide to pruning shrubs, vines, and hedges, call Lane Extension Service at DI 2-1311, Ext. 201, for the free Extension Bulletin, "Pruning Ornamentals."

Questions and Answers

Q—Why is it necessary, when pruning a limb from a tree, that the cut be made flush with the trunk? R.M.

A—This permits better healing of the wound. If a stub is left, sap flows around it, resulting in decay which can spread to the rest of the tree.

Q—I was unable to plant tulip bulbs earlier. Can I plant them now or should I hold them until next Fall? If so, how? Mrs. H. J.

A—You may try planting immediately and have some success, but it would be safer to store the bulbs until next

Fall in a cool and dry place. Q—When should I start annual seeds in the greenhouse for Spring planting? E. D.

A—Sow the seed in the greenhouse between mid-February and mid-March for planting outdoors in May. Most like 65-70 degree temperatures but some, like salvia and coleus prefer it warmer, 75-80.

Q—Should old flower heads of Japanese Pteris be picked after they have gone by? Mrs. T. S.

A—Yes, and this applies to rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias, too.

Books

Definitive Jefferson Biography Appears

JEFFERSON AND THE ORdeal OF LIBERTY: By Duane Malone. Little, Brown. \$7.50.

Malone's magnificent, multi-volume biography, "Jefferson and His Time," rolls majestically along like the Potomac; or, if Mr. Jefferson would prefer, like the James.

The present volume extends from Washington's second administration, during which the

president unhappily lost the brilliant services of his secretary of state through Jefferson's resignation, through the election of 1800 when Jefferson himself became President after a bitter ordeal.

The tremendous amount of information on every pertinent incident is what one would expect from a historian of the stature of Malone. But beyond this is the extraordi-

nary judgment which he brings to every controversial point.

Informing us without boring us, there is always the judicious comment, the caution against precipitate conclusions that makes him as fair to Jefferson's enemies as to the man himself. The climactic struggle with the forces typified by Alexander Hamilton is handled not as melodrama, but as credible history.

While the Sage of Monticello unquestionably is Malone's hero, he is a hero whom his biographer is wise enough to criticize when criticism is in order.

There is not likely to be

another such comprehensive life of Jefferson in our time. And the present series must continue to come from the presses. It has been 11 years since the previous volume, "Jefferson and the Rights of Man," appeared.

On the present scale, two more volumes are indicated. This must not be left an unfinished masterpiece. For that reason, more power to the Guggenheim Foundation and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation for giving Malone the time he now apparently has to continue his great work without the interruptions that have slowed him in the past.

—Ronald C. Hood

Stamps

U.S. Issues Flag Design

By SYD KRONISH
Of the Associated Press

The Post Office released its newest design for a 5-cent stamp recently in Washington. The stamp pictures the 50-star flag unfurled, with the White House in the lower right and 5c in the lower left. No words, not even U.S. Postage, appear on the stamp. Apparently the stars and stripes are sufficiently indicative that this is a United States stamp.

West Germany has issued another stamp in its Old Berlin series, reports the World

Wide Philatelic Agency. Featured is the town of Grunewald as it appeared in 1790. The Old Berlin series will be continued in 1963.

Australia will issue a new stamp in March to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Canberra as the capital city. The design of the new stamp will feature the code of arms of Canberra plus a portrait of the late Walter Burley Griffin, American architect who planned the layout of the city.

Tanganyika has issued a special set of four stamps depicting various local scenes. The 30 cents green shows a group of local inhabitants watching ground-breaking activities. The 50 cents multi-color illustrates the raising of the flag on Mt. Kilimanjaro. The 1 shilling 30 features the presidential emblem and the 2 shilling 50 shows the beautiful Independence Monument.



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by don herold

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