

DOWN TO EARTH

By ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

What's Your Favorite Season for Gardening?

The annual debate continues: IS SPRING THE FAVORITE SEASON OR IS FALL THE FIRST CHOICE OF HOME GARDENERS?

My answer comes quickly: fall is my choice season because I take more time to enjoy the beauty around me.

In the springtime gardeners get so carried away with the spring bulbs and flowering trees, plus the cleaning up program, that they are unable to see the "woods from the trees." In the fall the gardener's attitude seems to be "let's take it easy."

I hope you won't close up your flower beds until at least November 15th, due to mice seeking their winter quarters in new straw and twig mulchings.

They love to settle at the base of a newly mulched rose and eat it beneath the surface like a piece of celery. By the middle of November mice have "leached" their winter quarters.

I HAVE tried all methods of giving winter protection to rose bushes, and now have returned to the old fashioned method of shoveling up soil around the base from the flower bed itself. With this method I have lost less roses than the new methods.

It only takes a minute to bank each rose, and you don't have money lay to remove in the spring and take up from around the property where the wind has scattered it.

If you have occasion to drive down Broadway boulevard, you are aware of the fine grooming each occupant gives his lawn and plant material. I chuckle every time I think of one comment I had from a friend living on Broadway: "We just can't go to Europe during the summer months because of the neighboring competition on having a fine lawn."

YESTERDAY I finished planting my stainless steel circular raised strawberry bed with small spring flowering bulbs. It has five levels, I don't think this styled raised flower bed has enough "oomph" when used for strawberries, so next year's space use will be for a salad bowl.

The top small circle has planted in it one bulb: Praesent Fusilier. It will be 7" high and will have, I hope, four orange-scarlet tulips. The next row has 12 yellow "bunching" crocuses, followed by 21 blue scilla, 30 regular crocuses,

and 38 grape hyacinths. It is near the driveway and should be an asset in color. We now have giant double flowering gladioli on the margin which can be grown from seed by house plant fans. The flowers are the result of a new hybridization and are like a rose around 4" in diameter.

WHILE IN Rome one of the finest treats I had was to visit the home grounds of the American ambassador, Villa Taverna is located on Viale Rossini and is believed to have been constructed at the end of the seventh century. It occupies at this time nearly three acres.

Through the years it has been occupied by Cardinals and nobility of Rome. Today, many features in the home, as well as the gardens date from its early history. As an example, there is a long row of twelve pines with the last tree a little out of line from the rest, representing Judas Iscariot.

The Villa was purchased by the United States government in 1948. The gardens were beautiful. Being typical Italian, the beauty of the garden was carried by the geometric placement of hedges of all heights, adorned by exquisite sculpturing.

VILLA TAVERNA is considered a national monument for the ages

and cannot be changed in design. The entrance from the street to the villa proper within the grounds was a wide driveway flanked with tall lilies. In the formal area used for hospitality, the trees were planted in raised flower beds 18" high. Besides the trees, stones and myrtle were used as interesting detail.

But this is what I liked best of all in these raised beds with huge ornamental trees. Along the edge of the raised beds at intervals were enclosed 40-watt fluorescent tubes with a green color, placed flush with the earth. My host said that night lighting with the green light gave a natural effect. It provided enough light to give an atmosphere of mystery, but showed the profile of the trees to a good advantage.

Can't you just visualize a ball there, and dreamy music as you wander down the wide paths of this lighted wonderland?

PEA GRAVEL was used for the paths, and it was raked to give a very neat appearance. Climbing roses were climbing up a form to ten feet high to give the effect of an open umbrella eight feet in diameter. These roses were not like the varieties we know today which give constant flowering.

I told our friend, Bud Goodman, how I wished we had some new rose introductions in this garden which is the center of diplomacy

in Italy, so that they could enjoy constant splendor. He said: "Leave that to me."

Here we saw the great splendor of Italian landscape architecture as depicted at the residence of the Ambassador of the United States. Italian architecture is expressed by geometric designs shown by textures of plant material, disciplined by a fine clipping technique, adorned by sculpturing, commonly known as the "green garden." This style of landscape architecture is expressed in the winter garden of our Kirk in the Hills church, Bloomfield Hills.

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**Alpha Xi Delta's Bi-Annual Bazaar**  
Birmingham alumnae of Alpha Xi Delta met Monday at the home of Mrs. W. D. Gallentine of Pontiac. The American Cancer Society furnished the program. Co-hostesses were Mrs. Charles Allen and Mrs. Paul Brownell.

Members are asked to bring all finished articles for the Nov. 8 bi-annual bazaar and tea to be at the home of Mrs. J. J. Hogan, 1274

**Northbrook PTA**  
Northbrook elementary school PTA met Tuesday in the multipurpose room. Topic for the meeting was "What More Than The 3 R's," a panel discussion by the special education teachers of Northbrook. Refreshments were served by the seventh grade room mothers.

Westwood, Birmingham. Proceeds will go to the Oakland County TB sanitarium.

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