

In the garden with Shobha Vanchiswar



Exterior wall of the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris; see close-ups in “Read more...”

January 28, 2011

Something to sow

I have a serious request to ask of you and I hope it will be considered in earnest. This year, when you are planning and planting your garden, how about adding a row of flowers or vegetables for someone else's benefit?

Each of us knows at least one person or group that would appreciate the fruits of your labor. It might be an elderly neighbor, a family going through a difficult spell, or someone without any space for a garden.

Just think, for hardly any extra work or expense, you could bring cheer and comfort by dropping off fresh flowers or produce throughout the season. I'm sure many of you already share your bounty, but I think extending ourselves beyond the usual and reaching out to those who think they are unnoticed would be a particularly kind thing to do.

Something to know

While the earth lies frozen under a couple of feet of snow, here are some reading suggestions to expand your horticultural knowledge. In the depths of winter, I luxuriate in the time afforded for such pleasures. The titles are all available at the Chappaqua Library.

Seeds, Sex and Civilization

by Peter Thompson. This book is about how the hidden life of plants has shaped our world.

Garlic and Other Alliums: The lore and the science

by Eric Block.

The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating

by Elizabeth Tova Bailey.

The Winter Harvest Handbook: Year round vegetable production using deep organic technique and unheated greenhouses

by Eliot Coleman.

Somewhere to go

Think Paris! I know, I know, you can't just fly off on a whim to the City of Light. But I'm only recommending that you make a quick trip a short distance away to the City of Brotherly Love. Philadelphia is hosting its annual international flower show March 6 to 13. The theme is "**Springtime in Paris.**" Sounds perfect for reviving our winter-weary selves and getting into the spirit of the season to come. For details, go to http://www.theflowershow.com/ShowInfo/future_dates.html

Now you know

For those who wanted to know about the photos in last week's column, they are from community gardens in France. The gardeners were very amused that I took pictures of what they consider rather mundane efforts. Clearly, they have no idea how exalted I think they are.

Patrick Blanc's vertical garden at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris are featured this week. From the moment I first saw it on a beautiful summer afternoon, I've been totally captivated. I've since taken to gazing dreamily at the facades of my house.







