

Winterize Your Plants to Weather the Season

No flower evokes images of paradise like the tropical hibiscus. With its dark, glossy foliage and large blossoms of brilliant red, pink, apricot, orange or yellow, this plant will lend an exotic accent to your home or office.

Selecting a plant with lots of buds will guarantee new blooms daily for many weeks. Each blossom lasts only one day, and when picked, does not have to be put in water to stay fresh. For this reason hibiscus blooms are more versatile than other cut flowers, but they are equally lovely displayed in a traditional manner, such as floating in a bowl of water on a table or desk.

Outdoors, hibiscus will be very happy, and bloom continuously as long as temperatures stay above 55 degrees. But these tropical plants will suffer severely if left outdoors during a frost. In the Washington D.C. area, the hibiscus must spend winters indoors. A bright, sunny spot with at least four hours of good, strong light is best. Bright light insures a more continuous bloom. During the winter, when temperatures are cooler and the light is less intense, your hibiscus plant may take a rest and cease blooming for a time. However, the dark green, glossy foliage will still make it one of the more handsome plants in your home.

The soil should be kept moist, but not wet. Give your hibiscus enough water so that the excess drains into the saucer, then empty the saucer promptly. This method ensures the plant has received a thorough watering, and also helps to flush fertilizer salts from the soil. During March through November, the period of active growth, feed hibiscus plants regularly with a houseplant fertilizer recommended for blooming plants. Repotting can be done any time.

The ideal time to prune hibiscus is very late winter or early spring. Prune freely at this time, and you will reap the benefits of a flush of new growth in spring. Equally important, you won't be lopping off the flower buds that will form later in the season.

Move your plant outdoors for the summer. Gradually introduce the hibiscus into brighter light to avoid scorching the leaves. (In the fall, repeat the procedure in reverse, gradually weaning the plant from the abundant sunshine and humid air.)

Feel free to call our houseplant experts if you have any questions about hibiscus care.

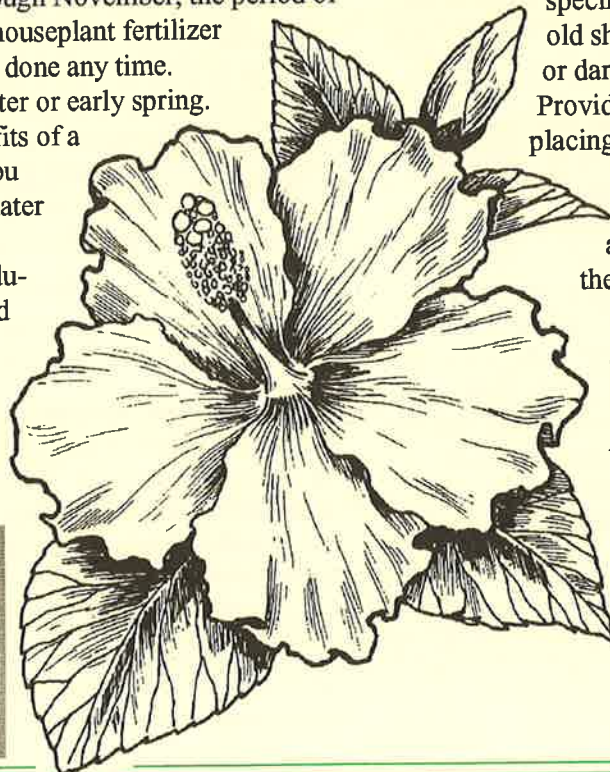
Tropical hibiscus will be on sale January 18th through February 28th, 1996, during our special houseplant promotions. Add some color to your life this winter!

While you're snugly inside during winter's icy blasts, you can rest assured your plants are weathering the season right along with you if you follow these helpful suggestions for winterizing your landscape.

First, provide mulch for your plants, whether they're in containers or in the ground. Mulching helps keep the soil warmer when the temperatures drop, and it also makes it easier for the soil to retain moisture. Check out the many types of mulch available at Behnke Nurseries, or make your own from hardwood bark, pine bark, composted leaves or pine needles.

Second, surround young or tender specimens with burlap, old sheets, old blankets or dark-colored plastic. Provide shelter by placing three or four stakes around each plant and attaching one of these coverings.

Give your garden the added boost it needs to make it through the season, and enjoy the frosty air without worrying about the health of your plants!



Meet:

Sonja Behnke Festerling



Sonja Behnke Festerling, Albert and Rose Behnke's only daughter, grew up along with Behnke Nurseries. She has worked in every imaginable corner of the nursery, including propagation, retail sales, bookkeeping, and advertising. In recent years, Sonja has occupied the offices of Treasurer and Vice President and, in September, 1995, became President of Behnke Nurseries.

Sonja's two children also have the nursery business in their blood. Her son, John Peter Thompson, is Assistant Vice President of Behnke Nurseries and Director of the Perennial Department; her daughter, Stephanie Fleming, owns and operates Hillside Nursery in Mt. Airy, MD.

It was Sonja who convinced her father to expand his merchandise to include peripheral items such as fertilizers, pots, houseplants and small foliage plants. She and her sister-in-law, Eleanor Behnke, created the original Christmas Shop, which first opened in 1966. In the nearly 30 years since, the Christmas Shop has grown from a collection of a few wooden decorations imported from Germany to a local holiday tradition. For many of our customers, the holidays would not be complete without a trip to Behnke's Christmas Shop!

Look for Sonja's article on how Behnke's came to grow and sell African violets in an upcoming issue of GardeNews.

Beat the Winter Blues With a Colorful Indoor Garden

Outside, it's cold, wet, gray and dreary, and the once invigorating winter weather now seems drab and monotonous. You long to escape to a warm, sunny island, awash with bright colors and fragrant scents. Banish those wintertime blues today by creating a colorful indoor garden. It's easy and inexpensive. Here's how:

- ♦ **For maximum impact, designate one room, whether a den or study, the kitchen or even your bathroom, as your garden paradise.** Think in terms of grouping plants, tucking them into a warm nook, or placing them at differing heights along one sunny wall. Don't forget to include hanging baskets.
- ♦ **Ask the experts at Behnke Nurseries for plants that will provide the most color and fragrance with the least amount of care.** Some houseplants, such as African violets, bloom almost continually. Others, like Christmas cactus, bloom only at certain times of the year. The staggered blooming times are all part of the fun—you'll see and smell different things in your indoor garden at different times.
- ♦ **When selecting indoor plants, inquire about the light requirements.** It's easy to use artificial plant lights, called grow lights, if your house receives very little sun in winter. Even sun-loving plants need normal cycles of day and night, so turn your grow lights on for a regular period each day and turn them off at night.
- ♦ **Change the focal point of your indoor garden as often as you like.** Take advantage of the special savings at Behnke Nurseries' annual houseplant sale, and choose plants for different colors every month.

News and Notes

Valentine's Day: Wednesday, February 14. Albert Behnke, founder of Behnke Nurseries, insisted that his Florist sell only top quality, California-grown cut roses. We are proud to carry on that tradition. Our roses are guaranteed to stay in bloom for *one full week* after you receive them — and you won't find a better price on top quality roses anywhere. Call **The Behnke Florist** at (301) 937-4032 for your Valentine flowers.

Job Fair: Saturday, February 17, Beltsville location. Calling all garden enthusiasts! We'll have many full and part time positions. Call (301) 937-1100 for more info.*

Camellia Show: Saturday and Sunday, March 23 & 24. The Camellia Society of the Potomac Valley will hold their annual show in our greenhouses. Dr. William Ackerman will speak on cold-hardy cultivars at 3:00PM both days. Society members will be here to show you a wide selection of varieties and help you choose the best camellias for your garden.

* *The Job Fair will be held in our Assembly Room, which is on the second floor of the Florist/Landscape Building. We regret that this room is not yet accessible to handicapped persons. We will, however, make special arrangements for anyone who may be inconvenienced.*



27 Free Seminars

by Behnke Nurseries Winter 1996

1 The Proof is in the Pruning

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 10:00 AM

Mike DuPont, Comprehensive Tree Service

Enhance your landscaping investment with proper pruning techniques. A certified arborist outlines the best pruning methods for maintaining shade trees and flowering shrubs.

2 Tiny Treasures

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1:00 PM

Dr. William Osburn, Potomac Rose Society

All the delightful characteristics of full size roses are manifested in the enormous selection of miniature roses. A serious landscape plant - great for the small space gardener.

3 Spice up the Garden

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 10:00 AM

Jon Traunfeld, Home and Garden Information Center

Move over, humdrum vegetables! A kaleidoscope of exotic and colorful varieties stand next to the flavorful heirloom tomatoes of yesteryear. Be prepared to take notes!

4 Decorating Magic with Indoor Plants

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1:00 PM

Behnke Houseplant Department Staff

Transform simple containers into colorful, decorative mini-gardens in just minutes. Our staff will demonstrate easy and creative ways to use a wide-ranging palette of indoor plants.

5 Small Spaces Big Ideas

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 10:00 AM

Pamela Underhill, Master Plans Inc.,

Kibbe Turner, Assoc. of Professional Landscape Designers

Two designers will provide a variety of approaches for townhouse or small garden design. An open discussion to spark your creativity - bring your vision and lots of questions.

6 Success with Homegrown Fruits

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1:00 PM

Mike McConkey, Edible Landscaping

Help to ensure a bountiful harvest with proper fruit tree culture. Get the most fruit for your efforts by following the advice of a specialist in the field.

7 Flower Gardening From the Ground Up

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 10:00 AM

Brenda Skarphol, Green Springs Park

The soul of a successful flower garden is its soil. Transform Maryland clay into rich, organic soil and watch the flowers grow. Learn the methods that will ensure success.

8 Parking Lot to Parterre

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1:00 PM

Lucy Coggin, William Paca Garden

Discover a colonial garden jewel on two acres in the middle of historic Annapolis.

9 Evolution of an American Garden

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1:00 PM

David Culp, Hardy Plant Society

A colonial four-square plan provides the centerpiece for a plantsman's creativity and ever-changing collection. Mr. Culp's garden was recently featured in *Fine Gardening*.

10 Color with Conifers

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 10:00 AM

Susan Martin, U.S. National Arboretum

Green is just the beginning. Colorful evergreens can be a year-round garden in their own right or a wonderful foil for your changing landscape.

11 The New and Unusual from Around the World

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1:00 PM

Joe Gray, Hines Nurseries

The search for garden-worthy plants continues. Join us for a look at the bright stars of the future.

12 A New Look at Granny's Bloomers

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 10:00 AM

Audrea Burrell, SugarLoaf Mountain Violet Society

The new diversity in flower and foliage of the African violet, an old-fashioned favorite, will delight the enthusiast and novice alike. A specialty at Behnke's since the 1940's.

13 Limited Space—Bountiful Harvest

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1:00 PM

Dr. Michael Campbell, Baltimore City Urban Gardening Coordinator


Even the smallest garden can yield a wealth of fresh vegetables. An expert lends his guidance to your small garden plan.

14 Celebrating Herbs

SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 10:00 AM

Nancy Walz, Surreybrooke Farm

The rewards of herb gardening last long after the garden is asleep for winter. Dried fragrant herbs grace home and hearth as floral arrangements, potpourri, wreaths, and more.

more 

27 Free Seminars

Continued

15 The Well Planted Shade Garden

SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 1:00 PM

Alice Sills, Master Gardeners Association

Tree lined streets and shady neighborhoods provide endless opportunities for enjoying a wonderful variety of shade loving plants. An experienced gardener shares her knowledge.

16 From Nursery Stock to Miniature Landscape

SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 1:00 PM

Daniel Chiplis, U.S. National Arboretum

Get a jump start on a bonsai masterpiece. A specialist demonstrates a quick and easy technique for a nearly instant bonsai creation using small, inexpensive evergreens.

17 Up and Over—Vines and Groundcovers

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 1:00 PM

Diane Lewis, Brookside Gardens

Introducing plants that creep crawl, and climb. Whether as a finishing touch, backdrop or colorful accent, vines and ground covers can add depth, dimension and interest to the garden.

18 The Wonderful World of Daylilies

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1:00 PM

André Viette, André Viette Farm and Nursery

A plantsman shares his lifelong enthusiasm for this old garden favorite. Much to the delight of collectors and gardeners, each year brings hundreds of exciting new cultivars.

19 Great Gardens of the World

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 3:00 PM

André Viette, André Viette Farm and Nursery

Join André on his travels to the four corners of the earth to visit some of the world's most celebrated gardens. A feast for the eyes and fuel for the imagination.

20 The All American Garden

SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 10:00 AM

Lynette Scafidi, Brookside Nature Center

Gardening with native plants can create beautiful, diverse and habitable spaces for people and wildlife alike. A surprising number of familiar garden plants are native species.

21 New Perspectives in Foundation Planting

SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 1:00 PM

Brian Katen, Landscape Architect

Expand foundation beds by adding more interesting and sometimes surprising plants. A fresh look at historical designs breathes new life into a humdrum area of the landscape.

22 KinderGardening

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 1:00 PM

Holly Shimizu, U.S. Botanic Gardens

For parents. Instill in your children a sense of pride and accomplishment by growing a special garden of "kid fun" plants.

23 The Fragrant Garden

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 10:00 AM

Janet Walker, U.S. National Arboretum

Design a beautiful garden that makes lots of scents. A plan using fragrant flowers and foliage adds a powerful new sensory dimension to a visual experience.

24 Waterwise Gardening

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 10:00 AM

Marie Rohas, Master Gardener's Society

Gardening with less water is easy with good plant choices and some logical garden planning. You can have a garden that will survive the hot, dry season and still look great.

25 Bright Jewels of the Garden

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1:00 PM

William C Miller III, Azalea Society of America

An azalea enthusiast outlines the basics of growing these colorful shade-loving shrubs. Rediscover old favorites and meet the newest cultivars to look forward to in spring.

26 Culinary Herbs and Edible Flowers

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 10:00 AM

Susan Belsinger, Food Writer

Delight the palate and please the eye with savory herbs and colorful flowers. A noted food writer and cook shares a wealth of culinary and gardening knowledge. A special treat, too!

27 Beautiful Flowers for Special Occasions

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 1:00 PM

Anne Brooks, Floral Designer

Learn creative and beautiful ways to use fresh flowers to decorate the special events of your life. An expert shares her designs and techniques to inspire and instruct you.

Please phone us to reserve your seat(s):

(301) 937-1100

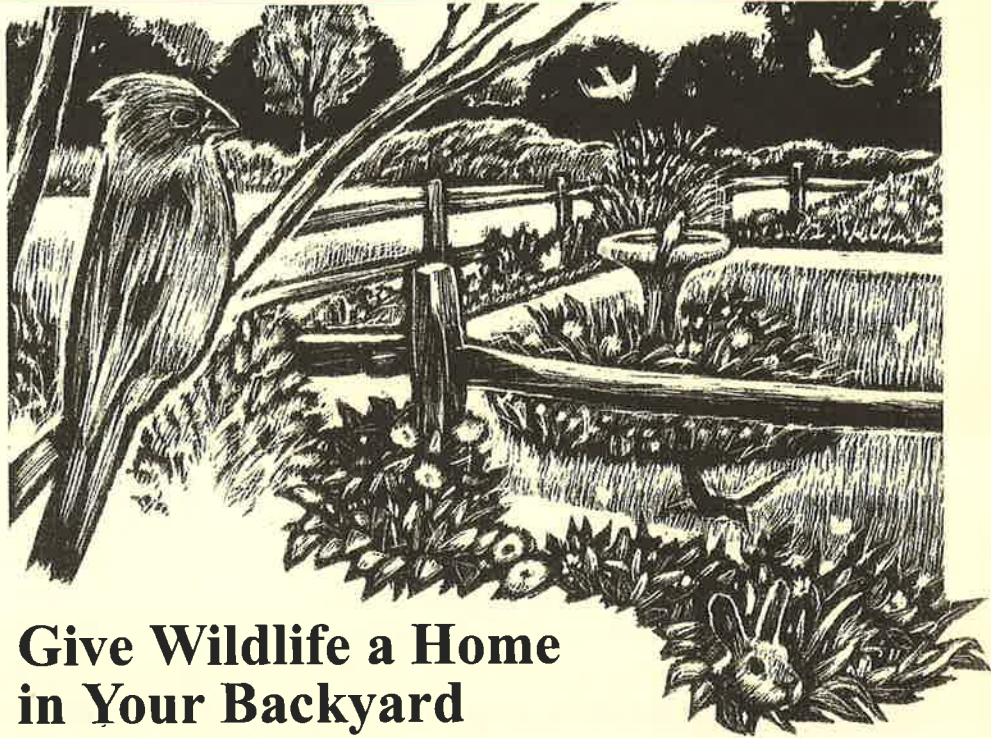
Seminars are held at our Beltsville Location: 11300 Baltimore Ave. (U.S. 1), 2 miles North of Exit 25, Capital Beltway

Seminars will be held in our Assembly Room, which is on the second floor of the Florist/Landscape Building. We regret that this room is not yet accessible to handicapped persons. We will, however, make special arrangements for anyone who may be inconvenienced.

Did you know...

- ... that there's nothing like fresh herbs to liven up your winter meals? Pick up a pot of parsley, thyme, dill, chives and oregano in our Houseplant Department. Keep the plants on a sunny windowsill, water when the soil is dry to the touch, and snip off only what you need for cooking each day. Herbs add a taste of freshness to winter stews and soups; they add taste *and* color to omelets, breads, salads and pasta.
- ... that cyclamen can add wonderful color and a touch of elegance to your indoor garden? We have these nodding beauties, laden with blooms, in white, pale and bright pink, and fuchsia. To brighten your home for weeks, put two or three pots in a decorative wicker basket, cover the tops of the pots with Spanish moss, and put the basket in a spot where it gets bright, filtered sunlight and very cool temperatures. Enjoy!
- ... that our *free Spring Seminar Series* will provide you with lots of ideas for indoor and outdoor gardening? You'll find the complete list of seminars in this newsletter.
- ... that you can grow just about any type of garden from seed? At Behnke's, you'll find seeds for a tremendous variety of uses, including:
 - vegetables especially suited to small space gardening;
 - flowers for drying, cutting, and fragrance;
 - vegetables selected especially for children's gardens;
 - plants to attract birds, butterflies and hummingbirds...

The list goes on and on. You'll also find seed starter sets, grow lights, soil pH testers — all you need to start your gardening adventure off right this year.



Give Wildlife a Home in Your Backyard

In our increasingly urban world, birds and other wildlife are hard-pressed to find adequate sources of food, water, and shelter. Your landscape can play a significant role in providing for these wild animals—simply follow these easy steps to create a rich and sustaining wildlife habitat.

Provide Food: Plant a wide variety of trees, flowers, shrubs, and grasses so birds and other animals can feast on nuts, acorns, seeds and berries. Use fertilizers and pesticides with care—they can be harmful to birds and animals.

Provide Water: All creatures need a source of clean water for drinking, and some, such as toads, frogs, and dragonflies, live in water in the early stages of their lives. Provide water with birdbaths or a small trickling fountain that recycles the water it uses.

Provide Shelter: Plant flowers, grasses, trees and shrubs in varying heights and densities to provide a safe place for wildlife to hide from predators. Choose plants that grow well in your local climate, and consider how much sun, wind and rain your lawn or garden receives. Remember, the experts here at Behnke's will be happy to help you with your plant selection.

Pruning Promotion at Behnke's Landscape Department



The next two months are the ideal time to prune your trees and shrubs to remove dead wood and direct growth. Help your valuable trees maintain a healthy and attractive shape. Call the Behnke Landscape Department at (301) 937-4035 for details on our January and February pruning promotions.

Garden Tips

January

Tree branches, torn by snow or wind but still hanging from trees, should be cut as soon as possible to prevent further damage. Contact a professional for limbs larger than 6 inches in diameter.

Seeds for spring '96 are available at Behnke's now. If you're a beginner, we'd be happy to recommend some flowers and vegetables that are sure to please!

February

Don't fret if some of your spring-flowering bulbs start peeking above the ground during unseasonably warm spells. This upheaval is normal and usually causes no harm to the flowers.

Some birds go shopping for a nesting spot early. Hang your clean birdhouse out now for eager house-hunters.

Cut branches from flowering trees and shrubs. Bring them indoors and place in a vase of water. They'll bloom weeks ahead of schedule and brighten the dreary winter days. Try forsythia, spirea, Japanese quince, flowering almond, apple, plum, peach and pussy willow.

March

Before arranging daffodils with other flowers, soak the stems for 8 hours in their own container. This will prevent the daffodil sap from clogging the stems of other flowers in the arrangement.

You can begin to add organic material into garden beds now. Soil is ready to be worked when it holds together in your palm, yet crumbles easily. Avoid working muddy soil.

April

Start tomato seeds indoors in a sunny window with the soil barely moist. In two weeks, or when seedlings are almost 2 inches tall, transplant them to individual pots.

Easter lilies can be planted in the garden after the danger of frost has passed (early May). Until then, place lilies in indirect light and keep the soil evenly moist. Pinch off the yellow stamens inside the flowers for a neater appearance and longer lasting blooms.

Newly hatched Gypsy moths can be controlled with a biological substance, Bt (available as Dipel or Thuricide). Aim the spray high in the trees for best results.

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