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Green Thumbs for a Cause: A Plant Care Manual for Therapeutic Horticulture Volunteers

Note from project originator Alan Eddy:

The concept for this manual came from my work as a therapeutic recreation volunteer (1972-2011) with the elderly in six skilled nursing facilities (two in Michigan and four in Connecticut). Now we will put together a team of experienced people to complete the project. The Manual discusses terrariums, bonsai, and topiary, but only with regard to keeping the plants healthy. It does not provide complete instructions for those specialized activities. This Manual will be expanded to cover other types of facilities and other therapeutic horticulture situations. It can be adapted for use in home care. Although my experience was with large eldercare facilities, current thinking emphasizes the multiple benefits of providing home care whenever feasible. There are new concepts in eldercare that replicate a home-like setting and we should encourage these efforts.

This manual complements the information on “Indoor Gardening” in the book *The Illustrated Practical Guide to Gardening for Seniors: How to maintain a beautiful outside space with ease and safety in later years* by Patty Cassidy HTR (2012).

The sections below are grouped into A Basic Plant Care, B Potting & Propagation, C Selection of specific plants, D Herbs, E Special Projects: Terrariums, Bonsai, and Topiary, F Health & Safety of both Plants and Humans, and Appendix A: A Guide to Finding Information About Plants Poisonous to Humans.

Authors' Preface

Introduction

Initial draft: tips on growing potted plants in an eldercare facility

- A1. Water
- A2. Light
- A3. Temperature
- A4. Air, humidity, & drafts
- A5. Plant food
- A6. Cleaning and pruning plants
- B1. Pots, containers, and the re-potting process
- B2. Potting soil and internal drainage
- B3. Propagation techniques
- B4. Special considerations for growing plants from seed
- C1. Specific types of plants: selected recommendations A-Z
- C2. Recommended plants: indoor trees & shrubs, patio tropicals
- C3. Recommended plants: windowsill plants & novelty plants
- C4. Hanging plants
- D1. Growing herbs indoors: general instructions
- D2. Traditional herbs A-Z
- D3. Unusual herbs A-Z
- E1. Terrariums
- E2. Bonsai
- E3. Topiary
- F1. How to diagnose and treat ailing plants
- F2. Pest control: a brief overview
- F3. Poisonous plants to avoid: basic tips and see also Appendix A
- F4. Safety

Appendix A: Poisonous Plants

Resources available via the World Wide Web

Electronic books (e-books): top recommendations

Print books: top recommendations

Suggestions for further reading and websites & apps for easy reference

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