

GET GROWING

The kindest cut

Cuttings from this year's garden will save you money and give you a head start on next year

By LEE GUGLIADA

When Anita Wadas, of the Staten Island Garden Club, purchased three Coleus plants from a catalog at a total cost of \$12, she balked at the price, but ordered them anyway, as a plant-lover frequently does.

"Garnet Robe" was advertised by Wayside Gardens as "a cascading Coleus with heart-shaped leaves the color of a fine old Bordeaux with a chartreuse edging encircling each leaf." The cascading seemed unusual to Anita and worth the extra money. She enjoyed this annual all summer long, and true to its promise, it certainly cascaded, to the point that she was unable to even see the container.

As summer came to a close, Anita just couldn't resist taking some cuttings and bringing them indoors, where they would be safe from the cold weather.

She kept the plants indoors over the winter in a sunny window. The following spring her cuttings went back outside for another summer of enjoyment, and her investment no longer seemed extravagant. Anita



Bonnie Rogers trims an Aloe plant in her greenhouse.

has taken many cuttings of this plant over the years. Other outdoor plants she propagates are Sempervivum tectorum, (Hen and Chicks) and Aucuba.

"silver falls" and, of course, Coleus. Several overly large 24-inch diameter containers and antique garden urns are used to showcase her "green thumb."

CUTTING OPTIONS

Cuttings are made from various houseplants also. Some of her favorites are Rhoeo, (Moses in a Cradle); pothos; Chlorophytum, (Spider plant); Philodendron; Schlumbergera, (Christmas cactus); Sanseveria, (Snake plant), Plectranthus; Nephthytis; Prayer plant; peppermia; rosemary; hoyo; aloe; cactus and any other cuttings that become available to her.

Anita's colorful deck stretches from her house to the garage and is overflowing with an abundance of planters filled with impatiens and Lysimachia nummularia, (creeping Jenny), Dichondra,



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Potting up the cuttings takes place in Bonnie's garage and the plants spend the next several months in her "greenhouse." Although small, this structure, complete with shelves, gives just enough shelter to protect the tender plants until the November sale. Bonnie carefully regulates the temperature in the greenhouse by opening or closing the sliding doors. As cooler weather approaches the greenhouse doors gradually are closed more and more.

The use of a greenhouse, even without heat, extends the growing season a few weeks in the fall and another several weeks in the spring. Bonnie moves her greenhouse closer to the foundation of the house in early fall and plugs in an electric light to keep the plants warmer during cooler nights. In the event of a really cold spell,



Above, Anita Wadas takes cuttings from the coleus "Garnet Robe." She'll bring them indoors where they'll thrive until they're able to be planted out again in spring. She always puts two stems in the pot for a healthy result.

the members get together to cover the plants with blankets, or temporarily move them to the garage.

MANY PROJECTS

The club, which was founded in 1914 by Alice Austen, has many projects, one of which is the Preservation of Historical Club Documents, a record of the club's activities, and reflects a Staten Island lifestyle from the early part of the 20th century.