

Bring on the armchair gardening

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Special to The Collierville Herald

The gray gloomy days of winter are some of my favorite for gardening – indoors.

I put all the new seed catalogs that come in over the holidays in a pile, and on a gray drizzly morning, with a cup of hot tea to sip, I spread all of them out on the kitchen table.

Then, the dreaming begins. It is just plain fun to look through all the pictures and read the descriptions. I can spend hours flipping through the pages.

The list of new plants I want to try grows longer and longer before the reality of the cost of all those seed packets, and some plants, hits. So here are some tips for you to make it through the seed catalog frenzy:

Know your zone. Your garden-growing zone is important when selecting plants that will succeed. I am not saying you should not try something new, but if you buy a tropical plant that grows in zone 10, then it will be an annual here and may not perform as described. Keep in mind that we are in cold zone 7 and heat zone 8. Usually the plants are given a range that they will do well in. For best results, you want plants to be in the middle of the range.

Be realistic. I dream, but in the end I know I have limited space and energy. I start to eliminate plants from the list and usually end up with just one or two new ones to try. If you have your landscape or garden on paper you can look at the space requirement of the plant in the description and determine if you have room.

Select the best. Look for plants with disease resistance. You are more likely to succeed with a new plant if it is more disease resistant. Check the height and spacing requirements because crowding plants can cause disease problems, even in disease-resistant plants.

Keep records. You need a garden journal to keep notes on what worked and what did not.

If you are like me, you have a basket of seed catalogs that will provide hours of winter entertainment. Enjoy your armchair gardening experience.



Confessions of a Confused Dad

BY JEFF MARTINDALE

Special to The Collierville Herald

"Dad, if you died I would be really, really sad."

The statement jolted me from mindless breakfast banter.

Only moments earlier, my sons had been identifying musical instruments from a jazz song playing on the radio – baffling how a third grader's mind can so swiftly transition from music to mortality.

"Yeah, if you died, I would cry so much in the funeral home there would be a river," added my elder son, crunching away on Cheerios, milk dripping from his chin.

"Oh, great," I thought, mentally throwing up my arms in desperation. "How am I supposed to respond to this?"

Their comments brought to mind an international business trip several years earlier. It began ominously when my business-class seatmate extended a hand and introduced himself in a distinctive Dutch accent: "Dis is an old plane, no?"

I nearly spewed out the complimentary drink I'd been enjoying. Somehow I stifled the urge, saving not only embarrassment, but also a pricey dry cleaning bill. (It sends shivers up my spine to think what I would've paid to clean wine stains from his designer coat.) Besides, the flight staff was about to serve dinner and, frankly, I didn't want to contemplate – particularly on an empty stomach – the consequences of, say, an engine suddenly falling off over the North Atlantic.

Discussions of mortality aren't my strongest suit. My father's untimely death in 1990 at age 47 affects me still today. It's sometimes hard not to dwell on what he's missed the past 18 years: the weddings of his children, the births of his grandchildren, UT's 1998 National Championship, which I personally could've done without, but I digress.

Intuitively, I know not to brood over the past, but perhaps my worries result from being a concerned dad who just wants to remain on this mortal coil as long as possible. Or maybe I watched too many "Faces of Death" videos as a teenager.

Anyhow, my wife knows the subject of death is touchy for me, and if she'd been there, she would have interjected an appropriate answer. But in her inconvenient absence, I just sat in pensive silence, munching on a bagel, my mind fumbling for the right response.

"Are you worried about me dying?" I finally asked.

"No," they responded almost simultaneously, placating my concerns. I explained that, God willing, I plan to be around for many years, and only God knows exactly when our time will come.

The response seemed to satisfy, and their attention turned to bickering over who would look at the colorful puzzles on one side of the cereal box. Their high-pitched squabbles didn't annoy me like usual because it kept me focused on matters of discipline and away from discussions of life and death.

I know that I'm not well-versed on some subjects like, say, what heaven is like, and if the boys ever pose that question, I hope we're worshiping at church because I'm going to drop to a knee, point out the preacher, and, with a gentle thrust in their back, say, "See that man over there in the long black robe? Go ask him."

Until then, I'll continue to discuss sensitive subjects as best I can, hopefully with skill more closely resembling Ozzie Nelson than Ozzy Osbourne. But it sure would help if my kids didn't throw so many curveballs. I never could hit one.



Jeff Martindale is a Collierville resident, FedEx employee and proud father of two boys. His 'Confessions of a Confused Dad' blog can be found at confessionsofconfuseddad.wordpress.com.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Collierville Herald welcomes letters to the editor on topics of interest to residents of Collierville. This newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Letters of no more than 300 words are suggested. Only one letter per writer per month will be considered for publication.

All letters must include the writer's name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Only the name and city of residence will be published. Anonymous letters will not be published.

Letters may be emailed to editor@colliervilleherald.net; faxed to 853.8507; mailed to The Collierville Herald, 148 N. Main Street, Collierville, TN 38017; or dropped by the office.



Assault, Domestic Violence (1.1): 1 (South Rowlett Street: Officers investigating a disturbance call found the suspect to be unsteady on his feet with a smell of an intoxicant on his breath. The victim reported the suspect had been calling her and wanted to come to her house. She told him since they had been broken up more than a month and a half, she did not want him to come, but he called again saying he was on his way. The victim reported the suspect came into the house without permission and that her daughter pushed him out of the house and locked the door. She reported he then punched the door's window out. The suspect, of Byhalia, Miss., was transported to CPD. Charges also included Domestic Vandalism and Public Intoxication.)

Manufacture/Delivery/Selling Controlled Substance (12.30): 1 (Byhalia Road: Officers noticed the driver of a vehicle traveling south on Byhalia Road not wearing a seatbelt. When the suspect, a Memphis resident, was asked for proof of insurance, the suspect declined to open the glove compartment. After being cited for not wearing a seatbelt and no proof of insurance, the suspect gave officers verbal consent to search the vehicle. They found one small marijuana nugget and one partially burned marijuana cigarette in the ashtray. The officers then searched the trunk and found a baggie containing 12 smaller baggies of marijuana.)

Driving Under the Influence (12.27): 1 (Peterson Lake/Poplar: Officers arrived on a complaint call and spoke with the caller, who reported her husband was in violation of an order of protection by being at her home. The officers told her they would go to the home to see if the husband was there. The woman, following one officer's car, was followed by another officer. When the officer in the lead turned right onto Peterson Lake Road, the woman followed and struck the curb with her rear right tire. The officer following her then observed her drive onto the curb, drive off of it and hit it again before coming to a stop. When she got out of the car to look at the tire, she was unsteady and leaned on the car for support. After the suspect got back into her car, the officer approached and could smell a strong odor of intoxicants coming from inside the vehicle. The suspect performed poorly on field sobriety tests. The suspect initially consented to a blood sample, but later recanted. The officers searched the car and found a small plastic baggie containing a green leafy substance. After being transported to the jail, the suspect became belligerent, threw a bracelet at an officer and attempted to throw other items, but was subdued. Following the arrest, officers continued to the home to follow up on the complaint, but no contact was made with her

husband. Charges also included Reckless Driving-State, Refusal to Submit, Assault on a Police Officer and Possession of a Controlled Substance.)

Simple Possession of Marijuana (1.2): 1 (Highway 385/Houston Levee: An officer stopped a vehicle on Highway 385 for speeding and after identifying the passenger, could smell an odor of marijuana coming from inside. The officer asked the suspect, a Collierville resident, if she had any marijuana on her and she handed over marijuana blunt. During a search of the vehicle, marijuana particles were found in the suspect's purse.)

Theft of Property Under \$500 (12.31): 1 (Dillard's: An officer arrived and was told a black female had fled the store toward Ross Dress for Less and had entered the store. Accompanied by a Dillard's security worker, the officer took the suspect, of Somerville, into custody and an additional suspect was located. The officer reviewed security video and it was clear the first suspect attempted to leave the store with a belt and shirt before dropping the items and fleeing to Ross Dress for Less. She admitted to trying to steal the items, but the second suspect said she was not aware the other was stealing. The second suspect was given a trespass warning and released. The total cost of the items was \$193. Charges also included Complaint and Assist Other Department.)

Public Intoxication (12.30): 1 (South/Mills: Officers were dispatched to assist a lieutenant at South/Mills. When they arrived, they observed the suspect, of Collierville, standing outside the lieutenant's car, unsteady on his feet, with a strong odor of alcohol and with bloodshot, watery eyes. The suspect was belligerent and loud. The lieutenant stated that prior to the officers' arrival, the suspect said "There would be a killing," in reference to his brother.)

Driving While License Cancelled/Suspended/Revoked (12.31-1.2): 3 (Byhalia/Shelby: Officers observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed eastbound on Chickasaw Land Way. The officers stopped the vehicle on Byhalia and the driver, of Memphis, only presented a Tennessee identification card. A check showed the license was revoked. Charges also included Violation of Insurance Law. **Frank/Byhalia:** An officer observed a vehicle traveling north on Byhalia with a passenger rear window missing and a trash bag over it. A registration check showed the license to be expired as of October 2007, but the displayed tag had a 2009 sticker on it. The officer stopped the vehicle and the only identification the driver could provide was an international driver's license he said he bought in Memphis for \$70. The suspect could not provide any registration papers and provided expired insurance. A check on the suspect showed his license to be suspended. Charges also included Violation of Registration – Expired Tag, Violation of Insurance Law and No Driver's License. **Highway 385/Byhalia:** An officer was conducting a traffic stop on Highway 385 when a vehicle passed and did not merge to the left or decrease speed. The officer stopped the vehicle and verified the license of the driver, of Mt. Pleasant, Miss., was suspended. Charges also included Failure to Yield to Emerging Vehicles.)