

from people who say they are newcomers to the state . . . and naturally are looking for information of this nature.

It seems that many of our seed stores and nurseries are not on their toes to this angle. In investigating you will find the average seed store carries a line of packet seeds or bulk seeds from various parts of the country . . . some that will grow here . . . others not suitable. But most of them don't seem to realize that people want seeds . . . shrubs . . . trees or plants of tropical . . . sub-tropical and otherwise . . . that are either native or adaptable to Florida. Of course, some items will be found here and there . . . perhaps among the garden clubs throughout the state . . . but still not enough for the many people who are clamoring for this type of material.

What Is the Future of the Radio Garden Club? At this point I might add that during most of the past year the idea was taking more time than was healthful in the matter of finance. But having Faith in the idea and being spurred on by the nice letters and faith of those who have written me . . . and Faith in the future of our state . . . I have kept the ball rolling. There were

practically no sponsors at first . . . because I wanted to establish the idea was more practical by not having the usual type of Souped-Up material . . . that so many times was not true . . . sent in by a sponsor. Products of real merit have been mentioned from time to time . . . and these were after investigation of their merits and reputation. Many items were turned down . . . for having the confidence of my listeners . . . I didn't want to lose their faith in the program.

Today there are some sponsors . . . which has helped tremendously . . . and is making it possible to give even a greater service in the future. For a while we sent out some free bulletins in mimeograph form . . . and they were popular judging by the number of requests. The costs of material and time, however, made this item prohibitive . . . so after a lot of thought and planning we have now a plan whereby you can help others . . . help yourself . . . and all will benefit.

A quarterly Journal is now being issued by the author called *Uncle Pasco's Journal* . . . and a monthly supplement called the *Source of Supply*.

WE MAKE A MEN'S GARDEN CLUB TICK

BERT LIVINGSTON

Tampa

An atomic age, filled with jet-propelled living, is making it necessary for people to turn more and more to activities that act as a safety-valve for pent-up tension. Hobbies are almost as numerous as the people who "ride" them. But more people have turned to gardening than any of the others because it is an activity in which anybody can take part, anywhere, any time. It also appeals because it requires no special skills or expensive

equipment, and can be enjoyed at whatever cost the individual can afford. Later, the gardener finds that his hobby is a way of life that is very close to all life's fundamentals—and that contact with the earth and living things is an experience that enriches his body, his heart, and is an ever-ready source of "recharging the batteries" of human nervous energy depleted in modern living.

These are the fundamental reasons why some 200 business men of Tampa, Florida, have one of the strongest, most active garden clubs in the nation—and

have gained nationwide attention for their activities. Its success is directly due to the fact that it has had direction of men intelligent enough to know that it had to "be what it is supposed to be"—a garden club! One of the first decisive moves made by the members of the organization was to rule out acceptance of or participation in any sort of activities, civic or otherwise, that would not be concerned with gardening or civic beautification.

A second move established an executive board to eliminate the necessity of taking gardening time during meetings for consideration of "business." This board, made up of officers and chairmen of standing committees, meet at dinner approximately two weeks before each monthly meeting of the club. Acting on all matters of business, the executive board makes recommendations to the membership and greatly facilitate this phase of club activity. Little business interferes with full club sessions devoted to its purposes—gardening and civic beautification.

Tampa Men's Garden Club stands upon three fundamental purposes: Horticultural service, to individuals and to the city; civic beautification and improvement of the city's standing as a beautiful place to live; distinctive activities.

Serving the first of these purposes, the majority of our programs are devoted to some phase of plant establishment and maintenance. Frequent introduction of new varieties and exhibit of varieties produced contrary to accepted Florida limitations keeps interest high. Plant research by members has revealed methods for keeping poinsettias as cut flowers, proper methods of using new horticultural chemicals under Florida conditions, a way to exhibit specimen Hibiscus for several days instead of one, and more general use of successful

methods in plant propagation, maintenance, and development.

In beautifying the city, club members' first project was planting of petunias, since Tampa is the "Petunia City," around the postoffice in unsightly basins around palm trees. Planting of 100 trees in a city park during an annual meeting of the club was another step. Specimen trees honoring past presidents and founders have been put in the same park. Full landscaping of the chamber of commerce property and a formerly very ugly triangle at the entrance to Tampa, its Union railway station, are among other projects of this nature. Both include automatic sprinkler systems and plants that prove to visitors that "Florida is the Land of Flowers." The club owns a large assortment of banners, electric lights, and other decorative materials that are used both for its own purposes and loaned civic organizations.

Distinctive activity, we feel, is major factor in the club's success. It has kept the organization constantly before the public, and steadily growing, through doing all that it does in a manner that provides good newspaper and radio copy and pictures. The first simple idea of selling plants to provide income for the club became the world's first Flower and Plant Circus. It is now an annual affair that averages 10,000 persons attendance each January. At this time the club renders community service bringing to a central location for three days the best and newest in plant materials and maintenance equipment and supplies. It is coupled always with a unique entertainment theme. These themes have included Tampa's first wonderland of tropical fruits, flowers, and plants seldom seen in this country, a cactus ranch display of this varied plant material, and a Honolulu Holiday hibiscus show that brought a corner of the islands to Tampa and resulted in two later shows that con-

tributed to formation of an American Hibiscus society.

The club held the world's first garden club meeting in the coach of a railway streamliner. It decorated the largest community Christmas tree ever erected in downtown Tampa. A *hot-dog* stand with "firemen," chefs, and various other attention-attracting attendants was operated to benefit Tampa Boys' Club at their annual carnival. A field trip by chartered buses was made to Col. Wm. R. Grove's tropical arboretum, and the Jungle Gardens at Sarasota.

Largest club enterprise is operation of parking lots during football and state fair seasons that have earned the club as high as \$8500 in one year. Treasury funds of nearly \$8,000 are being held principally for development of a club

site to be surrounded with a test garden for tropical varieties suitable for home planting in the Tampa Bay area.

For one year the club circulated a monthly bulletin of "garden chores" suitable for the area it serves. It now has a monthly radio program known as "Gardening Cracker Style."

Annual club outing and election of officers includes wives and other guests of members. It features planting ceremonies and barbecue, steak-fry, or similar outdoor picnic served from a circus cook-tent by genial "Big" John Dolcater, Tampan famous throughout the South for his hobby of "feeding people."

We make a Men's Garden Club Tick—through keeping gardening foremost and presenting it in new and unusual ways.

FRUIT GIFT PACKAGES

EDWARD A. ASH

Homestead

Colonel Grove asked me if I could be with you to present a paper on "Fruit Gift Packages." I am sorry that it is impossible for me to appear personally to do this as it is a subject of great interest to me. However, Colonel Grove has offered to have this paper read and I want you all to know how much I appreciate the opportunity of being able to express my opinion.

I have a 320 acre grove at Homestead, Florida, of which 210 acres are planted to avocados and limes. These plantings are young, having been made for the most part in 1945 and 1946. As the grove has progressed and the trees have grown I have become more and more concerned with the poor prices which the Florida growers are obtaining for limes and avocados. I have always felt that proper sales promotion and proper mer-

chandising coupled with more cooperation between the growers themselves could make for far better prices.

With this in mind I decided at about this time last year to start a small direct-by-mail business in an effort to build up a mailing list so that at a later date when my grove comes into full production I will be able to get top retail prices by direct selling. Also I wanted to find out what the people would really pay for quality limes and avocados. My idea was not to try to make a big business of this but to do it in a small way and let it grow over a period of years.

Avocados and limes, although known to the northern market, are, as you know, not in general use as they are in this state. Therefore I felt it necessary to get up some assortments which would include more popular fruits and also some of the more exotic fruits not generally known to the nation as a whole. It was my idea that by selling all of these