



# Winter 2006

## From the Ground Up ↑

### GETTING TO KNOW US

### MONICA: EMPLOYEE OF THE (FLORIST) SEASON

With the gardens in hibernation for the winter, everyone looks to the flower shops to provide what we can not grow. At Unique Florists, we have Monica. Monica's bubbly voice, upbeat energy and genuine love of flowers spills out on everyone she meets. Her creative style and attention to detail shows in every design. Give her a challenge to create something out of the ordinary and she is in her glory. Just before Christmas every year, groups of customers come to the store after hours to be part of a "design your own arrangement" class that Monica teaches. Oh the stories we hear of how much fun they have!

So the next time you want flowers, stop in at Unique Florists, 467 Broad St. N and say "Hi" to Monica.

**Congratulations Monica on being our Employee of the Season.**

## Winter Fitness

What a wonderful winter we have had so far and the predictions are for an overall warmer than normal winter. Gotta like that! So what do you do for winter fitness? We all know the standard activities such as skiing, skating, snowmobiling etc. (don't forget snow shoveling). Then there are the indoor activities, such as tennis, badminton, swimming, weight rooms and such. And for those of you who do one of these at least 3 times a week, you are the envy of the rest of us. For those that don't, we have all heard the excuses – too expensive, too cold, don't know how, too old, etc. etc. But it is important to stay reasonably fit through the winter for many reasons and I know you have heard them all. But what can you do? First identify what part of the day you can most easily dedicate to some exercise. Secondly, what is the main excuse you use for failing – then make sure you have a stop measure in place. Thirdly, use the buddy system. If you have someone that is counting on you to show up, then you will not make the "later" excuse. Lastly, keep a calendar and reward yourself – be it once a week or month. Don't be deceived here – we want you in great shape for spring gardening. April will be here in no time and we don't want you laid up from a pulled muscle or worse.

**DON'T WASTE THE MOMENT OF RIGHT NOW!**

## \$25.00 Gift Certificate

Send me your gardening question and I will enter your name in the draw for a \$25.00 gift certificate.

The winners name and question and answer will be published in the spring newsletter. Entries must include name, address and phone number to be valid and received by April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006, either by mail or fax (see next page for address) or email us at [info@uniquegardencentre.com](mailto:info@uniquegardencentre.com)

So bring it on. All questions will be answered, but only the winner's will be printed.

I bought an ant farm. I don't know where I am going to get a tractor that small!

- Steven Wright

## March - April To Do List

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- Prune your ornamental and shade trees while they are still dormant except for Birch, Willow and Maple.
- Plan your annual flower beds and calculate how many plants you need.
- Finish your spring housecleaning, you don't want anything to interfere with gardening!
- See the "Winter Fitness Article and make sure you are ready for spring gardening.

# STARTING PLANTS INDOORS

Spring still seems so far off as you pour over the seed catalogue that just arrived. After all, how hard can it be to start your own plants? Just think about the jump on spring and the fun that you will have. So roll up your sleeves and follow this advice that I got from the experts.

## Things you need to know before deciding what seeds to buy.

1. The average frost free (FF) growing season in Saskatchewan is 90 days. That's the average. We have had years where we have had 110 FF days and then there have been years that as gardeners – we don't want to talk about.
2. Note the days to maturity on the seed packet, but remember that is a best case scenario. A cooler summer may mean longer maturity dates (important to know if you are starting vegetables.)


## Stuff you will need.

1. A very good artificial light source. Poor light will result in tall, spindly and pale plants. Plants from seed grown by a window become impossibly sad specimens, even in the sunniest spot in your house. The sun's rays are simply too weak and the days too short for young plants to receive their gigantic daily requirement of energy.
2. Containers - must have good drainage, square or rectangular shape and about 3 inches deep to prevent soil and seedlings from drying out. Deeper containers are just a waste of soil.
3. Drip tray so that you can water from the bottom. Remember to check after 20 minutes and drain any water not absorbed.
4. Soil. Use any mix that lists peat moss (retains moisture), vermiculite and/or perlite (lightens the soil, retains air and moisture) and loam (dirt, for volume). But be sure it's a high-quality, sterile medium.
5. Fertilizer – Use a soluble fertilizer such as 20-20-20.
6. Small fan.

## What to do.

1. If this is your first time – start small. The basement usually provides better growing temperature for plants. A 4 x 4 foot area with height adjustable florescent lights is ideal for the beginner.
2. Fill your plant cells with moistened planting medium. It is important to moisten the soil before using. Test for proper moisture by taking a handful and squeezing hard. You should be able to squeeze a little out but not much. Tamp down to remove air pockets.
3. Plant two seeds per cell as per instructions on the package, mist the soil surface and cover (if a cover not provided use popsicle sticks and plastic wrap.)
4. Lower the florescent lights to about ½ an inch above the cover over the newly planted cells. Using a timer, the lights should remain on for 16 hours a day.
5. Check daily, removing the cover for 5 seconds every other day for air exchange. Light condensation on the lid is normal.
6. Remove cover no more than 3 days after the first sign of germination and raise the light to about 4" above the top of the seedling. Increase the lights to 18 hours a day and add the small fan to gently circulate the air to reduce the risk of the fungal disease “damping off” and encourage sturdy seedlings.
7. Keep the soil evenly moist – BUT NOT SOGGY. After the first 2 true leaves appear, add water soluble fertilizer to the water at the same rate as for house plants. Note: The first leaves you see are the cotyledons, the next leaves are the first true leaves.
8. After a week or two, remove the weaker of the two plants in each cell, cutting at the soil line with small scissors.
9. When you finally have some nice warm days happening and the danger of frost will soon be past, it is time to start hardening off your plants. Take them outside for the afternoon in a shady spot for a day or two, then for all day with morning sun, then as long as frost is not a worry, you are ready to plant outside.

Well, I am ready to go buy the supplies I need to start my own plants so that I too can be gardening in March.

 <p><b>Unique Florists</b></p> <p>We have your flowers for any occasion!!</p>  <p>467 Broad St. N. Regina, SK. S4R 2X8 Fax: (306) 545-4345</p> <p>Sherwood Co-op (Rochdale) 777-0183</p> <p>Marketplace Co-op (Quance St.) 777-0182</p> <p><a href="http://www.uniqueflorist.ca">www.uniqueflorist.ca</a></p>	 <p><b>Unique Garden Centre</b></p> <p>132 Broad St. N.</p> <p>*Open for the new season, April 23, 2006 – weather permitting!</p>  <p><a href="http://www.uniquegardencentre.com">www.uniquegardencentre.com</a></p>
	 <p><b>Unique Landscapes</b></p>  <p>467 Broad St. N. 777-0186 Fax: (306) 545-4345 Email: <a href="mailto:uniquegroup@sasktel.net">uniquegroup@sasktel.net</a></p> <p>*We offer both commercial and residential landscaping services</p>