

IN THE GARDEN

WITH MR. GREENJEANS

by Randy Arnowitz

Randy – Mr. Greenjeans – resides in a potting shed with 200 orchids and his golden retriever “Peaches.” He enthusiastically welcomes your gardening questions; address them to greenjeansmr@verizon.net.

Poor Man's Orchid



“Eppies” can be found in almost any color

Dear Mr. Greenjeans,

I have a few tubs filled with those tall, reed-like “poor man’s orchid.” They do pretty well for me and they bloom all year. This is my question though. Why is it that my containers are predominantly blooming with the red, yellow and orange ones while my new, beautiful purple ones aren’t putting on much of a show?

Signed,
Violet in Ventura



“Common” orange epidendrum is not so common

To Eat or Enjoy

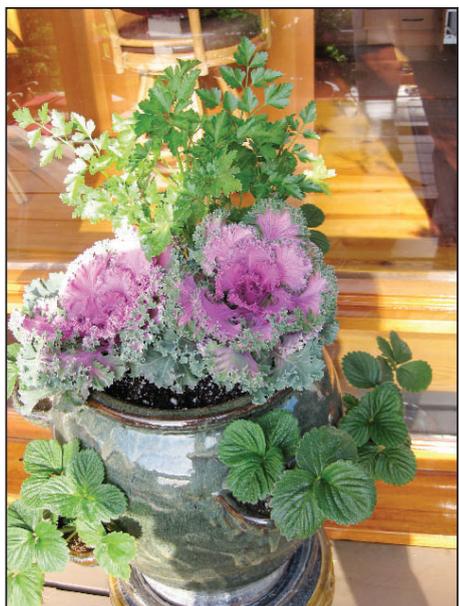
Dear Mr. Greenjeans,

At the nursery the other day I happened upon a plant called ornamental kale. It was a very colorful and showy type of plant that looked a lot like the kale I grow in my vegetable garden. Is this something I would eat or more like a plant to enjoy in my flowerbeds? Thanks for any help you can give me.

Signed,
Hedda Cabbage

Dear Hedda,

The ruffley plant that you describe



Ornamental kale sharing a strawberry pot with Italian parsley and strawberries

is actually a first cousin to the cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower that you grow in your veggie garden, so technically you could steam the thing and eat it. This ornamental variety though, is primarily grown for its frilly and colorful foliage that is available in colors ranging from whites and pinks to purple, and reds. Grown in the fall and winter, the colors become more intense as the temperature drops.

This member of the *Brassica* genus can be grown in flowerbeds and borders along with pansies, violas,

calendulas, snapdragons, stock, Iceland poppies and other winter annuals.

In containers, ornamental kale is reliable and showy and can be again mixed with annual color or winter-growing herbs.

In the spring when the weather warms up, some folks consider it a bonus as the plant bolts and offers up a white or yellow spiky flower stalk. Either way, at that point, it’s usually time to put it in your compost or green bin and get ready for your warm season annuals. *My*

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