BY
RANDALL DE TRINIS

There is hardly a plant enthusiast today who is not aware of the beauty and versatility of the common geranium. Though these plants are frequently an integral part of many house plant collections, what is not usually known is that the common geranium is not a true geranium at all. It is correctly a Pelargonium.

The Pelargoniums are a genus within the Geranium family. True geraniums are rarely grown today. The Pelargonium genus contains approximately three hundred species and at least six thousand cultivars (hubrids).

The most common geraniums (correctly, Pelargoniums) are usually referred to as the Zonale geraniums. Scientifically, they are known as Pelargonium x hortorum or more simply the Hortorums.

Within this large group of plants are the geraniums which are commonly grown outdoors as bedding plants and winter potted plants. Since they are well known to every gardener, there is little need to describe them here though mention of one class is indicated because of its superior characteristics. This is the new Carefree geranium.

These plants, developed recently, are the most safisfactory outdoor-indoor geranium yet created. The plants, in an ever growing variety of colors, are more robust than other common geraniums, come true to type from seed, flower profusely, and are self-branching.

Try some of these this summer. You'll not go wrong. And, of course, make cuttings for indoor winter bloom.

Within the Hortorum group is another class of geranium which is not widely known or grown. This is the fancy-leaved type. These superb plants may be grown indoors or outdoors and are most satisfactory in either environment. They deserve a more prominent place in every indoor-outdoor garden.

The fancy-leaved geraniums are grown primarily for their leaves though they flower as readily as the common geranium and the flowers are as showy. Perhaps the most beautiful of the fancy-leaved are the tricolors.

The leaves of this type have clearly defined zoned makings usually of green, yellow, and brown, bronze, red, or rust. The best of these are 'Skies of Italy,' 'Mrs. Pollock,' and 'Mrs. Cox.'

A third type within the Hortorum group can only be classified as 'unusual.' In this class are the rosebud, cactus flowered, and sweet william types. These unusuals must be seen to be appreciated though their names do indicate the types of flowers produced by each.

The indoor culture of the Hortorum class is readily undertaken by any indoor green thumb. The primary prerequisite is sunlight. Without sun geraniums will fail to bloom and will grow leggy. It is best to choose a sunny window in a cool room optimum temperature 50-70 F.).

Do not crowd geraniums on the windowsill since they appreciate good air movement. Most of the Hortorium types grow and bloom throughout the year and water should be applied when the soil has dried out somewhat. Avoid wetting the foliage when watering and never let the plants go through the night with wet leaves.

Do not feed indoor geraniums unless they have stopped growing and the leaves look pale. If you do have to feed, use any good fertilizer in small quanities. Geraniums are not heavy feeders.

Plants which you have enjoyed indoors during the winter may be placed outside for the summer, Rather than bringing them back in the next winter, it is always better to make cuttings of your original plants each summer for winter bloom indoors.

This is easily accomplished by taking a three to five inch cutting from a strong branch. Strip the lower leaves (leaving at least three), dip the cut end in a rooting hormone (not absolutely necessary), insert into a light potting soil, coarse sand, or perlite, and keep moderately moist and shaded for about three weeks.

By then the cuttings will have rooted, can be potted, and moved into sunlight. It is best to keep geraniums in the smallest pots possible since they bloom better when pot bound. Start your newly-rooted cuttings in three inch pots and gradually move them up to five inch.

Once you have a geranium you particularly like, you can usually enjoy it indefinitely by following the procedure just mentioned.

NEXT WEEK: Lady Washington, scented, and ivy geraniums.

The Coal is There

Some 200 billion tons of coal are presently recoverable, according to Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton. He estimates that this is enough to last 350 years at the present rate of consumption. Moreover, he says, another trillion tons of coal are potentially recoverable after that.

U. S. Senator Robert Morgan

There is a great deal of talk and argument in Washington these days about a tax cut to help spur the economy and help bring the nation out of its current economic troubles.

The President is calling for a reduction in income taxes. Some members of Congress want a larger cut in taxes than the President has asked for.

That's a good indication of how things can change here in Washington, because at Christmas time the President didn't want a tax cut. What he was asking for then was a tax increase.

From the way things look now, the Congress and the President are going to have not only a tax cut but also a rebate of some sort on the taxes now due for 1974.

I simply can't support the President and his financial advisors for the tax cut they have proposed. Under their plan, only 17 per cent of the people would get any benefits from 43 per cent of the reduction and people who now make $40,000 a year would have their taxes cut.

The tax program which is evolving in the Congress seems more equitable and fair. Under the plans that have been discussed, the benefits would not go to people with large incomes, but rather would aid those in the lower brackets and give some relief to the middle income families who now bear far too much of the tax burden.

The Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Simon, feels that affluent families would be more likely to spend their extra money for such things as appliances, cars and even housing. But I imagine the lower income taxpayers won't exactly hoard the money, because it is taking every nickel most of them can get their hands on just for day to day living.

But I am seriously troubled by all this.

If the government runs up a deficit of $50 billion next year — and many financial experts say that is a conservative figure — then the government is going to be forced into the money markets to borrow as never before. And this competition for money will cause interest rates to rise again and we'll again be in a position where people won't be able to buy houses or borrow money at decent rates and will be back on the treadmill of inflation.

Before we rush to cut taxes or give rebates, I want to know how we can adjust our tax program to keep from being inundated with red ink.

I want to see some loopholes closed — loopholes that allow wealthy persons and big corporations to avoid paying their fair share of government.

Furthermore, I want to explore ways to cut spending and eliminate waste that everyone knows exists which has grown entirely too big and too expensive.

If a tax cut to stimulate the economy can be coupled with a program to adjust taxes more fairly, reduce spending and eliminate waste, then it will serve a highly useful purpose and I could gladly support such a program.

But I never have been one who likes the look of red ink.

Vegetable Origins Traced

Irish Potato Isn't Irish; It's From South America

BY GLORIA T. JONES

The "Irish" potato is not Irish at all, but a native of South America, and while apple pie is an American favorite, apples first grew in the area between the Black and Caspian Seas.

Only a few of the vegetables and fruits that Americans enjoy today are native to the Americas, say horticultural scientists at North Carolina State University.

Dr. Conrad H. Miller, professor of horticulture, says that corn, tomatoes, snap beans, lima beans, peppers, potatoes, squash and pumpkin are vegetables which originated in the Americas — most in the Andes Mountains regions of South American and in Central America.

Dr. Gene Galletta of the Department of Horticulture notes that native American fruits include some berries and grapes — the most widely grown fruit in the world. Pineapples and cashew nuts came from Brazil and Paraquay, the papaya from Peru and Mexico fathered the guava.

PEACH FROM CHINA

The peach, which has been so successfully developed in North Carolina, originated in China where three wild species are still found. Afghanistan was the original home of the pear and the walnut.

The apricot, orange and mulberry first came from China. Persia gave the world the cherry, plum, almond, fig, date, persimmon, pomegranate and pistachio nuts.

Scientists determine the probable origin of fruits and vegetables by observing where the largest numbers of plant forms occur in the world state, Miller says.

The only plant commonly used as food that is of undetermined origin is maize, or corn. Scientists surmise that either its wild parent has vanished, or it is isolated in South American lowlands where man has never been.

How did the vegetables and fruits which Americans and most of the world's peoples now enjoy come into cultivation so far from their native homes? Dr. Miller says man took his plants and seeds to new places on prehistoric migrations. By the time the oldest records were either carved or written, many plants were known over large areas of the earth, particularly in Eurasia and Africa.

The lands at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and Asia Minor are believed to be the original home of the most of the vegetables now grown in America. From these regions come asparagus, beets, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, endive, kale, lettuce, parsley and parships.

TURNIP VERY OLD

The turnip is older than history and was consumed in western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean lands. Kale and cabbage originated in this region and were harvested as foods long before the Romans cultivated them as crops.

The Romans also ate beets and Swiss chard. They used parsley as a food to ward off drunkenness. Celery was consumed for medicinal purposes by the ancient Greeks.

China provided more "cultivated" plants of all kinds than any other place in the world. Mid and eastern India, which gave the world blackeyed peas, eggplant and cucumber, was also a large center for cultivated plants.

Persian kings ate lettuce in the 6th Century B.C. Carrots, which originated in Afghanistan and nearby areas, were grown by ancients in the near East. Onion, a member of the lily family, came from mid-Asia and China.

Onions were eaten by the ancient Egyptians, and biblical references were made to the fact that during their wanderings the Israelites longed for the onions of Egypt.

Okra, related to cotton, is native to the Abyssian Plateau. Africa also gave the world the watermelon.

Dr. Miller notes that asparagus was introduced into the U.S. during early Colonial times. Rhubarb, a native of Asia, was brought to Europe in the early 1600's and to America in the late 1700's. Spinach was eaten in China in ancient times and was introduced to Europe in the mid 1300's.

Ancient man noticed that some wild plants were better suited to his use than others. He chose to grow these century after century, developing a primitive form of plant selection, Dr. Miller says. After thousands of years of propagating the most desirable types, cultivated plants were developed.

Today, horticulturists, crop and soil scientists, plant pathologists, geneticists and statiscians at Land-Grant universities work under Agricultural Experiment Station funding to develop strong, resistant and high-yielding varieties of vegetables and fruits for the world's people. The results of Land-Grant research are taken to the farmer through the Agricultural Extension Service.

42 NEW VARIETIES

North Carolina Agriculture Experiment Station scientists have been responsible for developing 42 different new and improved varieties of fruits and vegetables.

Dr. James W. Strobel, head of the Department of Horticultural Science, points to the outstanding contributions of Franklin E. Correll, NCSU professor of horticultural science for 20 years until his death on February 20.

Dr. Strobel says that as a scientist with the N. C. Agricultural Experiment Station, Prof. Correll worked with Dr. Carlyle Clayton of the Department of Plant Pathology to develop nine new varieties of peaches, plus several new varieties of blueberries, strawberries and apples.

"Correll's and Clayton's work in peaches provided the backbone for North Carolina's peach industry," Strobel says.

NCSU horticultural scientist Richard Lower is leader of N.C. agricultural Experiment Station research that has contributed better pickling varieties of cucumbers. Dr. Daniel Pope, recognized as the nation's outstanding sweet potato breeder, has led the project which developed the popular Jewel variety of sweet potato.

Strawberry and blueberry development is led by Dr. Galletta; improved tomato watermelon varieties were contributed under the leadership of Dr. Warren H. Henderson.

Dr. D. Mason Pharr has worked with cucumbers and tomatoes; Dr. Frank Haynes has led in development of three improved Irish potato varieties, and in cooperation with Peruvian scientists is evaluating and searching for new types of potatoes to increase production of this valuable food source worldwide.

Studies on apples are conducted by Dr. Larry Hammett and Dr. C. Richard Unrath. Dr. William B. Nesbitt works with grapes and Dr. Watler E. Ballinger works on post harvest physiology of blueberries.

While developing new and improved varieties, NCSU scientists working together as interdisciplinary teams must go further, Dr. Strobel says. They are also concerned with physiology and biochemistry of the crops, nutritional requirements, and the important genetic resistance to pests.

"These efforts," Strobel concludes, "result in maximum production of palatable and nutritious food for the ultimate beneficiary, the consumer."