PLANT LIFE COLUMN

EGGS

As I looked out the window, I caught a glimpse of two marsh rabbits feeding on the edge of the blackberry patch. Surely, they are friends of the Easter Bunny and were checking out secret places to hide the eggs! Some years, it seems the Big Guy is trying to make things easy. He "hides" the colorful eggs in the most obvious places. I've found them in the bird bath, on top of the car, and on the barbecue grill and garbage can. I have a feeling this year though, he's up to some mischief and they will be more difficult to locate.

If you're new to the area, you may also be wondering where he will hide the eggs. Green eggs will be the most difficult to find as they blend in so well with the foliage of a variety of low shrubs and ground covers. As an experienced egg hunter, I'll give you some hints on where to look.

If you have a shady yard, look under the leaves of the cast iron plant. The colored eggs will be easy to spot between foot long leaves which are about four inches across. It is a tough plant and can tolerate neglect but not trampling, so walk carefully among the plants as you search.

Holly ferns grow to be about two feet tall yielding lots of hiding places. The fronds have wide holly-like leaflets, though not too spiky. Ivys are favorite hiding places since the vines will make a dense ground cover in the shade.

Red, pink and white colored eggs blend in with the colorful heart shaped leaves of caladiums growing in the shade. Lily turf and dwarf lily turf are grass-like plants with narrow leaf blades. Sometimes purple eggs are disguised among the purple flower spikes which are also hidden by the foliage. Purple eggs may also be hiding among the trailing purple foliage of wandering jew and purple heart.

When looking in partial shade, watch for yellow eggs nestled under the shiny green leaves and daisy type flowers of wedelia. This vining ground cover produces more of the yellow flowers in full sun, where you will have to look harder for the yellow eggs.

Impatiens provide favorite hiding places for pink, red, orange, purple and white decorated eggs. The plants thrive in moist soil and the bright light of partial shade.

If you find Easter eggs among the thorny stems of the asparagus fern, be sure to file a complaint with the Big Bunny. Some of his helpers are deviant weasels and may need to spend some time doing community service. Maybe they'll have to make egg salad.

In sunny spots, eggs may be hidden among the foliage of daylilies. Look for ones in yellow and orange tones, but don't be surprised to find a maroon or lime green egg here and there. Daylily breeders have been developing a variety of colors from pale green to almost black.

The tiny lavender or white flowers of false heather are the perfect disguise for purple and orchid color eggs. This low growing plant has fine texture and makes a dense flower bed. Step carefully as you go on your search.

The Easter Bunny has a hard time finding places to hide the blue eggs, but blue daze will be the place to search. The gray green foliage and blue flowers form natural mounds of color in the landscape. Search carefully. You don't want to leave any eggs for the wildlife to search for later. As you look around your landscape, notice the variety of colors which set the stage for the hide and seek game of the year. Enjoy a beautiful weekend and have a happy Easter!
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