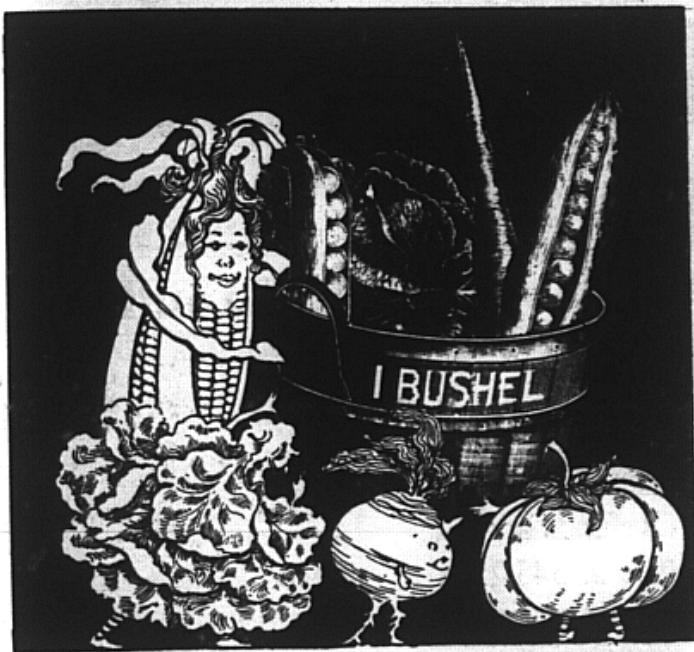


HARBINGER OF SPRING

Pat reviews some of her favorite seed catalogs with the hope that spring is just around the corner.



By Pat Leuchtman
leisure Columnist

Along with Christmas cards the December mail was filled with seed catalogs, harbingers of the new year, new plans and new hopes. I'm giving you an abbreviated and idiosyncratic listing of some of my favorite catalogs in the hope that you may find some you have not seen before.

Burpee Seeds, Warminster, Pa. 18991, puts out one of the most attractive and comprehensive seed catalogs that includes vegetables, flowers, herbs and equipment for the garden and harvest kitchen. This catalog is printed on slick stock and is filled with realistic color photographs that entice one into trying new plants like a large-headed broccoli, Green Goliath, that ripen over a three week period (maybe this time

I'll be able to keep up with the freezing) and the gynoecious (all female) Streamliner hybrid cucumber that promises an extra heavy yield on a compact vine that takes up one-third less space than standard types, as well as old favorites like Kentucky Wonder beans and Burpeana Early hybrid tomatoes. I'm also going to be giving Burpee Red

Velvet Celosia a try. It should be welcome in the fall when I am making dried flower arrangements because it has large crimson and velvety flower heads.

There is something for every gardener in the Burpee catalog.

Stokes Seeds, Inc., 737 Main St., Box 548, Buffalo, N.Y. 14240, is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and the catalog opens with a beautiful spread of color pictures of cherry tomatoes, Spirit pumpkins, Speculator bush beans, Sugar Snap Peas, White Summer cauliflower and Canada Gem muskmelons. Most of the photographs in the body of the catalog are not so clear or enticing, but I like Stokes because they give you specific directions on culture and harvest. They also offer a lot of variety within each type of vegetable sold. For instance, they offer 13 kinds of bush beans and 31 kinds of carrot. You are sure to find something that will suit your taste and your garden soil and climate.

Stokes does not only sell vegetable seeds; the catalog has a bright double centerfold filled with photographs of zinnias, impatiens, pansies, dianthus, sweet peas and other flower seeds that they carry.

Johnny's Selected Seeds, Albion, Maine, 04910, specializes in seeds for short season locations and that



The following information is provided by the Franklin County Extension Service:

Now is the time to:

- order fruit trees early to get the varieties you want.
- place house plants in the shower to wash off the winter dust.
- keep poinsettias away from drafts or they will drop their bottom leaves.
- see how your stored summer bulbs are keeping.
- fertilize houseplants.

Note:

- If you start feeding birds, they depend on you all winter.
- Ice is bad, but snow is a good mulch. □

definitely includes Heath. The catalog is black and white with few photographs, but it has complete directions for planting, harvesting and storing vegetables as well as for curtailing various pests and diseases. In addition to all your favorite vegetables, Johnny's selected Seeds also carries seeds and tubers for such specialties as Jerusalem artichoke, strawberry tomato, and alpine strawberry, a perennial bush which bears deep red berries that are twice as large as wild berries. The dense little bushes do not have to be renewed yearly and they make good borders in the flower garden.

Rayner Brothers, Inc. P.O. Box 1617, Salisbury, Md., 21801, offers its 1981 Berry Book so you can start to give some thought to dessert. They start with an offering of 23 types of strawberry that ripen early, mid-season and late, along with suggestions about which are better for freezing or preserving or which are known for high yields or disease resistance. They offer a selection of blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries including the thornless. They

also carry a few fruit and nut trees, grapes and evergreen seedlings, but Rayners is particularly famous for the quality and dependability of their berries.

It may take a year or two for your berries to start bearing and this is all the more reason to start a patch now. Berries are really an expensive luxury item in the supermarket because they are so fragile and difficult to ship, but that is no reason to deprive yourself of their goodness.

I am also sending for two catalogs that I have not ever seen before. I'm looking forward to inspecting the Epicure Seeds catalog, Box 69, Avon, N.Y. 14414, because it promises seeds that are of interest to the adventurous cook. I'm sending for a catalog from the Vermont Bean Seed Catalog (25 cents), 6 Garden Lane, Bomoseen, Vt., 05732 which advertises the largest bean and pea seed selection in the world. I am very enthusiastic about beans.

Man does not live by bread alone, or even vegetable and berry alone, so next week I'll be discussing some flower catalogs. □

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