### AT HOME

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At Home Editor: Harriet Howard Heithaus

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Janene Mickel of Beach Lake, Pa., says her purple oxalis, with its black overtones, literally stops traffic when guests arrive. She's always giving away cuttings. Associated Press

## GARDEN NOIR

Black and near-black blooms, plants add spice to sophisticated landscapes

By DEAN FOSDICK Associated Press

NEW MARKET, Va. — When you want to be belle of the ball, what do you wear? Chances are, you wrap yourself in a stunning something done in basic black. Designers generally agree black is the best choice for knockout simple, center-of-attention fashion.

Now move that eye-catching concept from ballroom to flower garden. Dark or black-appearing plants are making fashion statements of their own in residential properties across the nation.

"Black is being used in nature by your more sophisticated gardeners," said Debbie Knitz, sales manager for Terra Nova Nurseries Inc., Tigard, Ore. "It brings more drama and more excitement to the garden."

Black-appearing blooms are not, as you might imagine, drab and uninteresting. No wallflowers, these.

Some are real lookers. Dark foliage plants are great choices for accenting borders, adding punch to containers, defining water and rock gardens. They make sensuous centerpieces, too.

See BLACK PLANTS, Page 20G

# **Black plants:** Dark foliage offers an offbeat way to landscape

Continued from 17G

companion-planted." Knitz said. "A lot of that depends number of different emotions," pon what you have them arker the better - can evoke a iset. They need to be anted with. They need to be "Dark foliage plants - the

nost popular cut flowers. and is said to be one of Europe's mport is called Edge of Night ts current catalog. The German istinctive black calls varietal in Terra Nova is promoting a

ong enjoyment." be moved indoors for winterregions, Edge of Night can also provide the perfect backdrop to reen, silver-flecked leaves and Black edges outline the glossy of plants," the Terra Nova hree-inch flowers resemble norticulturists say in the catalog imension to this popular group ack velvet and add a new The dramatic richly colored

Night bloom comes close, Knitz but the funnel-shaped Edge of No flower is truly wholly black

sun the better for bringing out the black." in the right color light. The more Many of these plants look black industry calls 'black'," she said. or rich chocolate for what the deep purple, dark red, burgundy "You're probably looking at

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hybridized to bloom in red, white, but some have been water-loving arum lily family. actually is a member of the part of a plant group commonly called "calla lilles," although it yellow, pink or black. Most callas flower in a creamy The Edge of Night varietal is

balanced liquid fertilizer every watering and feeding with a much sun. It needs frequent A calla likes sun, but not too



climates, they do well as tender perennials, grown outside in couple of months. In colder summer and over-wintered

moist but well-drained soil before repotting them in rich and (50 degrees) for a month or so rest the rhizomes in a cool area For more consistent flowering

> deep purple developed by www.terranova-Oregon, has a Terra Nova nursenes.com edges. Courtesy flower with black the Calla Lily Nurseries in

consider some of these other If callas don't interest you, then

which produce deep purple leaves (Ione Hecker). Beware your choices, however. A few dark-foliage plants: 'shamrock plant," some of Oxalis: The so-called

Spring is Here! It's A Great Time for Painting!

"Edge of Night,"

lantings.

Reiter is a semi-dwarf varieta Cranesbill. The Midnight vith deep purple foliage and ark lilac flowers.

so deeply red that they appear Beauty, Black Baccara, All are most black.

arrot, Queen of Night. Their Tulips: Black Diamond, Black

pansies (Bowles Black), dahlias plants to consider include iris Starling, Black Jack), among Black Barlow), and daylilles Arabian Night), columbine Dark Vader, Superstition), Some other dark, nearly black

# aggressive oxalis varieties are considered invasive.

contrasting foliage in border plant; one that can provide white flowers. A good accent oliage that develops fragrant aybrid. Lacy, purple-tinted Actaea: Black Negligee

Geraniums: Also called

Roses: Black Magic, Black

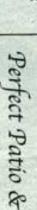
names speak for themselves.

# On the Net:

of Night, see the Terra Nova Nurseries Web site: For more about the calla Edge

about growing calla or arum site for more generic information www.terranovanurseries.com factsheets/cut/callali.html departments/envirohort/ illes: www.ext.vt.edu Or visit the Virginia Tech Web





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