

Better Living

The Record

Ask Amy deals with a reader who has concerns about rehiring a cleaning woman.

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A 7-year-old Rottweiler mix is waiting at the Bergen shelter for a good home.

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NEW SEEDS FOR SPRING



RAYMOND A. EDEL

FROM THE GROUND UP

Springtime means difficult decision-making time in my household. What camp should we send our daughter to this summer? Where to vacation in August? And the toughest decision of all: What plants to put in our garden this year? The number of new seed offerings doesn't help the situation. Between the catalogues, websites and local nurseries, there are dozens upon dozens to choose from. Whether you are looking for innovative color combinations, new vegetable varieties, combination seeds or heirlooms, there are offerings for everyone's garden space, even mine (if we can make a decision). Here is a partial list of the new seeds available this year, so you can make your own decisions.



■ **Echinacea, "Warm Summer":** These lush, warm-colored (orange, yellow, scarlet red, rose, purple and cream) coneflowers will create a garden spectacle from June through August. The plant's stems can reach 26 to 30 inches tall, ideal for a vase (fresh or dried). Six plants cost \$19.95 and one packet of 10 seeds is \$4.95. 800-888-1447 or burpee.com.

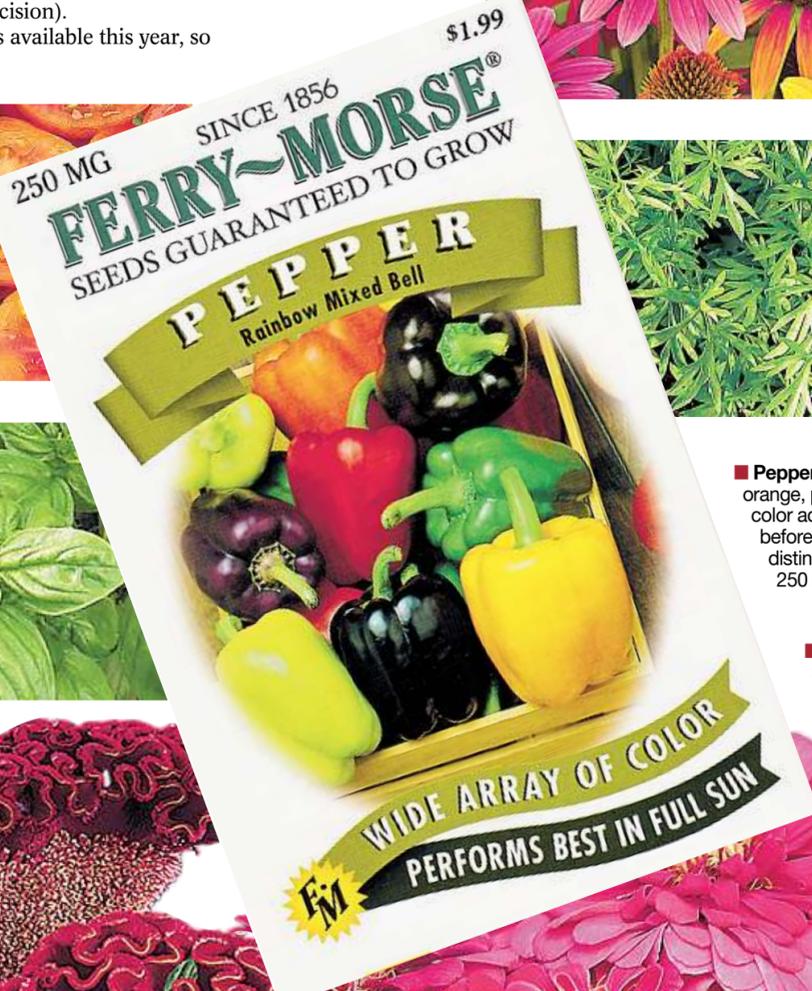
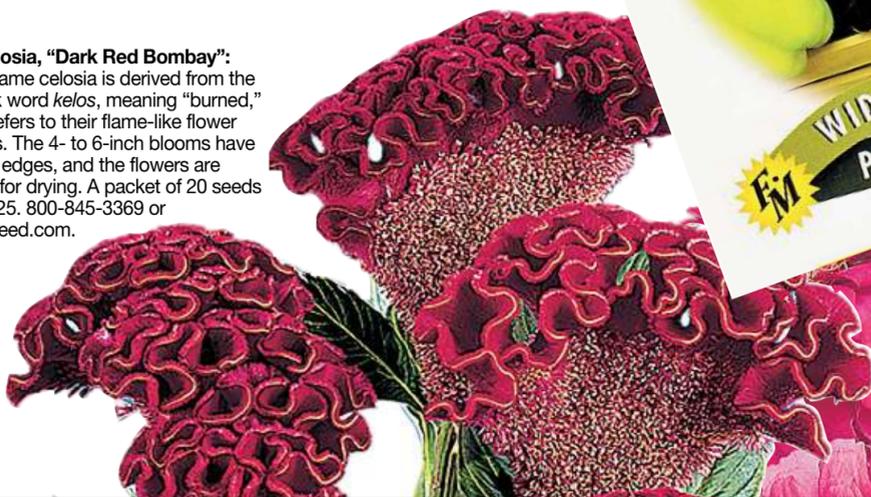
■ **Cherry tomato, "Isis Candy" heirloom:** Bi-color rose-red fruits with yellow-gold marbling have a rich and fruity flavor. Consistent top-cherry winner at heirloom tomato tastings. \$2.79 for a 40-seed packet. 888-880-7228 or reneesgarden.com



■ **Basil, "Caesar":** This variety, perfect for recipes, grows into a very sweet-smelling, large leaf with 2.5- to 3-inch leaves that cup downward at the edges. The 12- to 18-inch-tall plants are slower to bolt (go to seed) than other varieties. \$2.75 for a packet of 200 seeds. 800-544-7938 or harrisseed.com.



■ **Celosia, "Dark Red Bombay":** The name celosia is derived from the Greek word *kelos*, meaning "burned," and refers to their flame-like flower heads. The 4- to 6-inch blooms have curly edges, and the flowers are great for drying. A packet of 20 seeds is \$4.25. 800-845-3369 or parkseed.com.



■ **Cilantro, "Confetti Habit":** This annual variety may remind you of carrot tops, with soft, ferny leaves on long, thick stems. Give this plant full sunshine to very light shade and any moist, well-drained garden soil (the richer the better). It has a mild, sweet flavor. Packet of 100 seeds is \$1.50. 800-845-3369 or parkseed.com.

■ **Pepper, "Rainbow Mixed Bell":** The assortment of yellow, orange, purple, green and red peppers will make an outstanding color addition to the table. Start seeds indoors eight weeks before planting outdoors. Plant hot and sweet peppers in distinct areas to circumvent cross-pollination. \$1.99 for 250 milligram packet. 800-626-3392 or ferry-morse.com.

■ **Zinnia, "Raspberry Sorbet":** Butterflies are crazy about these. Free-flowering and superb for both borders and bouquets. Striking raspberry-tinted fully double blossoms borne on branching plants. A packet of about 90 seeds is \$2.99. 888-880-7228 or reneesgarden.com.

MORE SEEDS, PAGE F-3

For growing cult of single-cuppers, promise of fresh joe trumps all

By KARA YORIO
STAFF WRITER

For a generation that has always put on a pot of coffee, the single-serve sensation makes little sense. It's expensive. It's wasteful. It only makes one cup at a time. But one cup at a time is just fine for many people and not at all expensive when compared with buying that cup somewhere else. These people don't want that hours-old dredge at the bot-

tom of the pot. They don't want to scoop and measure and wait for a full pot. They are not sitting down for a cup or two with guests each day. "Households are getting smaller and the amount of time for the American coffee ritual has shrunk," says Miles Small, editor-in-chief of CoffeeTalk Magazine. The positives outweigh the negatives for single-serve proponents. "It's kind of decadent and the packaging is somewhat wasteful, but when

I realized I could have a hot, fresh cup of coffee ... I thought that was an indulgence that I deserved," says Saddle Brook's Teresa McAleavy, who owns a Keurig machine. "I wasn't going to be wasting. I would wind up throwing a half a pot out every day. If you love coffee, why deal with burnt leftovers that you nuke and [that] taste awful?" This kind of talk is what these single-cup machines generate. They make regular people sound like late-night infomercial hosts. McAleavy was one of

the early Keurig converts, buying her first machine about five years ago. She has spread the word, bought the coffee makers as gifts and done her part to keep the cult growing. Single-serve coffee is not new and not overwhelming the market - according to Small, it still makes up only 7 percent of total in-home coffee sales - but if it seems like the Keurig machines are suddenly everywhere, there is good reason. While the impact on total coffee

sales may be minimal, when it comes to coffeemakers purchased, single-serve has its hold on the market. In the 12 months ending in November 2011, nearly 46 percent of the money spent on coffee or espresso makers went to single-serve machines, according to NPD Group, a market research firm. Keurig Inc. sold 4.2 million machines in the last quarter of 2011. Nespresso is the king of espresso single-serve coffeemakers at the mo- See COFFEE Page F-4



LESLIE BARBARO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Foster families bring love, time to dog rescues

By KARA YORIO
STAFF WRITER

Little Luigi crouches in fear and looks anxiously at visitors before skittering out the open back door. The apricot poodle is pristinely groomed and surrounded by a beautiful yard on a sun-filled, spring-like March day. But he can't yet shake his past, one that is mostly a mystery but obviously left him emotionally scared and scared of people. Luigi was one of eight dogs Pet ResQ Inc. airlifted from shelters in tornado-stricken Kentucky and Ohio last week, landing in North Jersey with a chance at a new life.

"I carried him off the plane like a baby," Lucia Cecchetti says of the shaggy, flea-ridden dog she named Luigi and brought to a groomer the next day. Cecchetti is Luigi's foster mother. Foster homes like hers are vital to Pet ResQ and other dog rescue operations, which are always looking for committed foster families. "The more fosters I have, the more dogs we can rescue from a kill shelter," says Paramus resident Bonnie Dickinson, who runs Bonnie's Animal Rescue Kingdom (BARK). When kill shelters run out of space, they euthanize dogs to make room for the new ones. Rescue organizations pull these dogs off death

row and search for permanent homes. The transition in a foster home allows a rescue group to assess the dog's personality and needs, and teaches a frightened dog to trust people again. Luigi is slowly coming around. Cecchetti sleeps in the guest room so Luigi's crying doesn't wake her husband or bother their dog, Coco. The Cresskill resident, who estimates she has taken in 10 dogs in the last year, volunteers and fosters dogs for Pet ResQ Inc., which operates out of Tenafly. "She's a gift to me and the dog," says Robyn Urman, who runs Pet ResQ Inc., which saved See FOSTER Page F-4



Foster mother Lucia Cecchetti holds Luigi, an apricot poodle rescued from tornado-torn Kentucky.

CARMINE GALASSO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER