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Plant a love note to your valentine

By Holly Hayes
 Mercury News

Cut flowers, yummy chocolates and goopy cards are pretty much standard gift-giving fare for Valentine's Day.

There's nothing wrong with any of these traditional options. But if you're looking for something a little out of the ordinary, you might want to check out what's being called the ``Amazing Message Plant."''

It's sort of like a message in a bottle, except this little sprouter comes in a pop-top can full of a planting medium that looks like tan vermiculite. Add water, set it in a sunny spot indoors and in seven to 10 days a tiny seedling emerges.

When the leaves unfurl, the ``amazing" message reveals itself.

Ta-da! The words ``I Love You" appear on the leaflets.

It's a laser process that etches the ``magic" onto a jack bean, also known as a sword bean. Its proper Latin name is *Canavalia ensiformis*, but as a gift-giver -- or receiver -- you will mostly care that it's a plant that seemingly knows how to spell out its lovey-dovey greeting.

With proper care, and an upgrade to a larger container, the plant will continue its vining habit and will need staking to keep from flopping over. If you're lucky, magenta blossoms will form, and you might even get some longish pods bearing beans.

Alas, they will not have the ``amazing" message.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

The ``Amazing Message Plant" is sold by Miracle Products LLC, based in Spokane, Wash. Each can costs \$9.95 plus shipping. The company plans to offer additional messages in the



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