

Jerry Baker's Key to Success . . .

Talk To Your Plants And Beat Your Trees

Jerry Baker, America's master gardener and this country's most famous plant expert Luther Burbank, talked to a near-capacity crowd Tuesday night in the Manheim Township High School. Baker's visit here was sponsored by Stauffer's of Kissel Hill, Lititz.

"The biggest problem in home gardening is that people want the end result without the work," Baker told the group. They want their beans and tomatoes and corn to sprout overnight and bear pre-packaged vegetables ready for the freezer. To be a successful home gardener, you need pride, patience and persistence."

In his hour-long presentation on plant care and

propagation, Baker rattled off helpful hints and interesting sidelights much too quickly for this reporter, at least, to write down. He believes in talking to plants, (didn't Moses talk to a burning bush? he asks), and beating fruit trees to stimulate their growth. He uses a length of rubber hose, an "Oklahoma persuader", to increase the size of his apples.

Baker uses onions, mint extract, coffee, tea and tobacco juice in his gardening program, and he uses old panty hose for everything from soaking seeds in tea to staking tomatoes.

Prior to his performance at Manheim Township, Baker met with representatives of local newspapers

in Stauffer's conference room. He had just arrived from Pittsburgh, where he did three TV shows. Constantly on the move, Baker travels some 5000 miles a week, and is home in Troy, Michigan, only on weekends, when, one must assume, he tends his own garden.

A life-long insomniac, Baker sleeps only three hours a night. He has written 16 books on plants and talked to millions of people about growing them. He appears every week on the NBC-TV show "Dinah's Place", and has just completed taping 72 segments of his own TV series which will go into syndication in the near future. Jerry Baker is a walking encyclopedia of plant lore blessed, as he



Jerry Baker, America's Master Gardener

says, "...with total recall about agriculture, but I can't remember my own telephone number."

In addition to being a plant wizard, Baker is a business

dynamo who has amassed a fortune since the day, when at the age of 12, he first became interested in plants.

"I was walking near my home," he said, "when my

eye was caught by the glitter of many panes of glass. It was a greenhouse, and I couldn't resist putting rocks through it. Well, the man who owned the greenhouse could have done a lot of things to me, but he did something wonderful. He made me work in his greenhouse, at 10-cents an hour, picking glass out of flats until I had paid for the glass I had broken. I grew to love plants in that greenhouse."

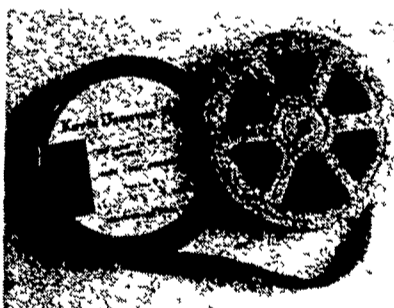
On the strengths of his consuming passion for plants and his business acumen, Jerry Baker has gone from a Detroit policeman and part-time seed salesman to become a man of wealth, an author, and a man who's turned down scores of honorary degrees. How does it feel to be famous? What does he think of being a star? "Well," he says, "on my way to the airport for this last trip, I still had to take the garbage out."

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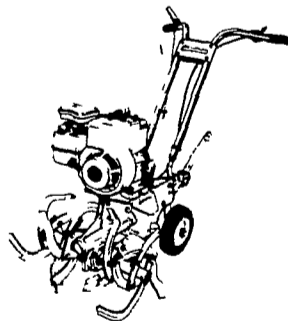
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