

"Over the Back Fence"

Max Smith, County Agricultural Agent

Prune Trees

The time to prune fruit and shade trees has been the subject of several phone calls recently. In the case of the shade trees, we would say they may be pruned and shaped anytime now until early April; after they are completely dormant, they may be transplanted or pruned. Cuts of more than one inch in diameter should be coated with a tree paint in order to prevent them from becoming rotten. Fruit trees may be a bit more tender than most shade trees and some of them should not be pruned until late winter. We suggest that the apple trees be pruned during January and February, while the others (peaches, plums, cherries) be pruned during March. This latter group is more tender and the hardest part of the winter should be over before they are pruned.

Health Hazard

I'm aware of the wild bird problem on many farms and in groups of evergreen trees in the urban and sub-urban areas. Also, we know of the number of stray dogs and cats that are roaming the areas of the county. All of these wild creatures are a hazard to the health of local herds and flocks because of the danger of spreading disease; however, it is very difficult to control them, especially the wild birds. Producers are urged to give this problem some attention in order to prevent disease outbreaks. The use of screens on windows and

doors of farm buildings might be of some help; however, with open feedlots this is not possible and the birds keep coming. If and when we get long periods of snow cover this winter, no doubt the wild bird problem will become more severe. Stray dogs and cats should be eliminated because with the densely populated farm buildings in this area, these animals could be in and out of several barns in one night. To my knowledge at this time, we do not have approved sprays or baits that will control wild birds.

Alfalfa Growers

Some alfalfa growers are already getting started on their 1976 seedlings by plowing the ground this fall and winter. This is a good practice providing the field is rather level and will experience a minimum amount of washing and erosion this winter. Alfalfa ground that is fall or winter plowed can be worked and planted earlier in the spring; this will be to the advantage of getting a good stand of straight seeded alfalfa. If the ground needs lime, it should be plowed down or incorporated into the soil as soon as possible and ahead of seeding the alfalfa. The demand for alfalfa hay, or alfalfa as silage, is very good and local producers are urged to grow as much as possible on their farms; this is especially true with dairymen who can utilize large amounts of top quality alfalfa.

Successful growing of ornamental shrubbery in containers is dependent upon proper selection of plants to be grown and sufficient protection of their roots during winter months. So says Dr. Francis R. Gouin, associate professor of horticulture at the University of Maryland in College Park.

Dr. Gouin presented his findings on winter injury to container-grown plants during a nationwide "Better

Trees for Metropolitan Landscapes" symposium, held early last month at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. The meeting was sponsored by the National Arboretum and the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The University of Maryland research and Extension specialist has been doing experimental work with container-grown shrubbery for 13 years.

Expansion of the con-

tainerized perennial plant industry in Maryland and the entire Northeast could be done if cold-weather root injury is curtailed, Dr. Gouin told the symposium participants.

Maryland nurserymen and landscape contractors are beginning to discover a limited number of plants that are able to grow in a containerized environment, Dr. Gouin reported. Their success usually depends upon using a white, pliable styrofoam-like material called microfoam as a protective covering during winter months.

This practice was developed in 1970 as a result of Gouin's agricultural research efforts. It should help to increase the number of plants that can be grown in containers. Because the need for greenhouse shelter or artificial heat is eliminated, it should help to increase the numbers of plants that can be grown year-round in containers.

Gouin admitted that little is known concerning factors that determine the hardiness of roots on containerized

plants, or how cold temperatures injure them.

Use of plant nutrients or chemical growth regulators has not significantly increased root hardiness, but Gouin has found that older roots are more resistant to cold temperatures than young ones.

Expansion of the containerized plant industry in Maryland would provide several advantages to nurserymen and landscape contractors, Gouin commented.

He noted that nurserymen would benefit because they can grow a greater number of marketable plants per acre in a minimum amount of time without greatly increasing labor needs. Ornamentals in containers can also grow more uniformly than in field cultivation, and they can be transplanted at any time of year.

Grow ornamentals successfully

Farm union charters

The Lancaster County Farmers Union met here recently and decided to charter their local with the National Farmers Union. The following officers were elected for 1976:

President, Albert Mellinger, Strasburg; Vice-President, James Spahr, Lititz; Sec.-Treasurer, Mrs. James Spahr, Lititz.

A slide-presentation "Parity and Abundance," outlining Farmer's Union National Food Plan was shown. The Lancaster County Farmers Union voted to approve the principles set forth in this film. Farmers Union feels that the "boom and bust" agricultural policy which we have now is hur-

ling the family farmer as well as the consumer.

At this recent meeting the members developed policy to be presented to the state convention of Pennsylvania Farmers Union which will be held January 26 and 27 at the Sheraton Inn, Harrisburg. At this meeting the Lancaster County Farmers Union drafted the following policy: To favor farm truck license at one-half price, as is the policy in most neighboring states.

The members were brought up to date on the Farmers Union Blue Cross-Blue Shield Group Plan, and were informed that the premium rates will be reduced for the second consecutive year.

HEADS UP!



Birth defects are forever. Unless you help.

March of Dimes

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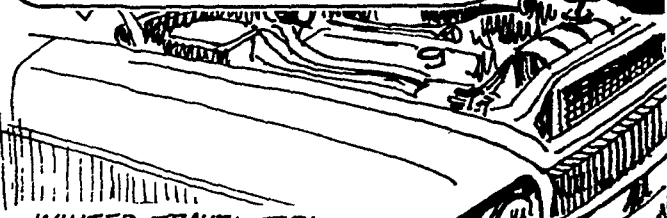
WINTER STORM SAFETY RULES

- ✓ CHECK BATTERY POWERED EQUIPMENT BEFORE THE STORM ARRIVES.
- ✓ CHECK YOUR SUPPLY OF HEATING FUEL.
- ✓ CHECK FOOD AND STOCK AN EXTRA SUPPLY
- ✓ STAY INDOORS DURING STORMS, WHENEVER POSSIBLE.
- ✓ DON'T KILL YOURSELF SHOVELING SNOW.
- ✓ DRESS FOR THE SEASON.
- ✓ TO MELT ICE AND SNOW ON SIDEWALKS AND DRIVEWAYS, SPRINKLE ON CALCIUM CHLORIDE. THIS IS HOW MANY MUNICIPALITIES KEEP ROADS CLEAR.

DURING WINTER STORMS, YOUR CAR CAN BE YOUR BEST FRIEND — OR WORST ENEMY. GET YOUR CAR WINTERIZED BEFORE THE STORM SEASON BEGINS. HERE IS AN AUTO CHECKLIST.

- IGNITION SYSTEM — HEATER
- BATTERY — BRAKES PERFECTLY ADJUSTED
- LIGHTS — WIPER BLADES
- TIRE TREAD — DEFROSTER
- FUEL SYSTEM — SNOW TIRES INSTALLED
- COOLING SYSTEM — CHAINS TIGHT
- LUBRICATION — WINTER-GRADE OIL
- EXHAUST SYSTEM — ANTIFREEZE

KEEP WATER OUT OF YOUR FUEL BY MAINTAINING A FULL TANK OF GASOLINE



WINTER TRAVEL TIPS:

- PLAN YOUR TRAVEL AND SELECT PRIMARY AND ALTERNATE ROUTES.
- CHECK WEATHER INFORMATION ON YOUR RADIO.
- TRY NOT TO TRAVEL ALONE.
- TRAVEL IN CONVOY WITH ANOTHER VEHICLE IF POSSIBLE.
- ALWAYS FILL GASOLINE TANK BEFORE ENTERING OPEN COUNTRY — EVEN FOR SHORT DISTANCES.
- DRIVE DEFENSIVELY AND CAREFULLY.

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