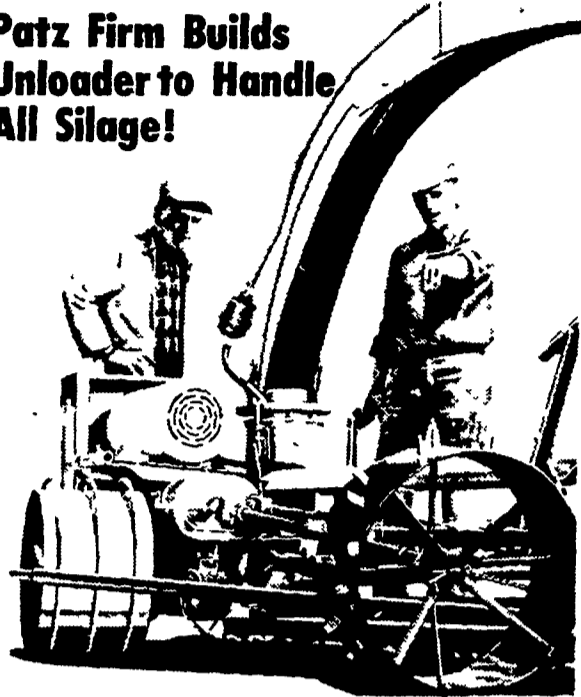


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Treat fence posts to preserve lifetimes

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. - Under most climatic conditions, untreated fence posts of such non-durable species as aspen or pine will last only two to five years, but this service life can be extended considerably by using one of several treating procedures.

Probably the most effective means of treating posts outside of using pressure treating is to treat with a hot and cold bath using an oil based preservative such as creosote, copper naphthenate in oil, or environmentally clean pentachlorophenol (EC Penta) in oil. The procedure is to place the posts, usually the butt area that will be in ground contact, in hot preservative for several hours. Then either allow the preservative to cool with the posts immersed in the preservative or quickly transfer the posts to a tank of cold preservative. Alternately, some degree of protection can be given to wood soaking, dipping or brushing treatments with creosote, copper naphthenate or environmentally clean pentachlorophenol (EC Penta) solutions. For these treatments, posts should be well seasoned prior to treatment. Preservations can penetrate sapwood easier than heartwood so round posts having an intact sapwood band will treat better than sawn posts.

There are several means of treating posts at home with water soluble preservatives. The simplest

procedure is to steep or soak posts in water solutions of chemicals such as copper sulphate (16 per cent solution) or chromated zinc chloride (5 per cent solution). Either green or dry posts can be treated in this way. If green posts are used, complete sapwood penetration can be obtained by setting posts upright in pails of the preservative solution. The chemical will diffuse through the moisture in the wood to the top of the posts. Since the salts used are water soluble, the preservative will be leached or washed out of the posts in time.

A longer lasting treatment can be achieved by the double-diffusion process. Posts are steeped in one solution for several hours and then placed in a second solution. The chemicals react in the wood to form a non-water soluble salt that will not be washed out readily. A typical double-diffusion treatment is to soak wood in a 12 per cent copper sulphate solution for one day followed by one day in a 20 per cent sodium chromate solution. Metal drums should be lined with six to eight mil polyethylene film to prevent corrosion by the copper sulphate. These chemicals are available from industrial and agricultural chemical supply companies. Each of the afore mentioned chemicals will cost approximately \$50 per hundred pounds.

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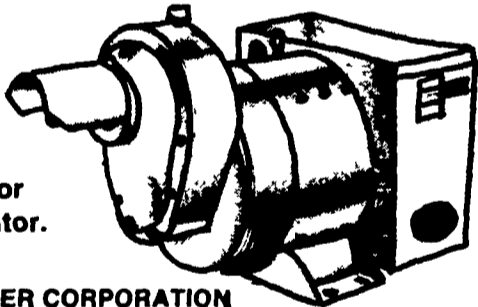
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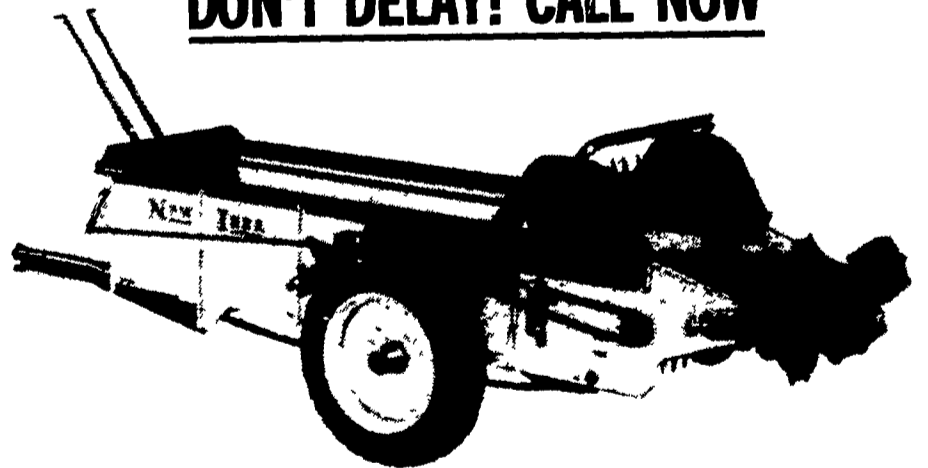
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