

## Avoid non-food uses of microwave oven

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. Microwave ovens have become increasingly versatile in the last four or five years, and over 30 manufacturers now market these appliances. Variable power lets the cook simmer spaghetti sauce or bake a delicate custard in minutes. Depending on the brand and model, cooking can be done by time or temperature or both. Defrost cycles allow large roasts to thaw quickly and without constant attention.

New cookery books and articles on using this versatile appliance appear daily with a myriad of practical and inventive uses. It is in this last area, inventive uses, that the consumer needs to use some restraint, according to home economics specialists at Penn State University. For example, many sources, including a number of manufacturers of microwave ovens, have suggested using the microwave oven to dry flowers. Flowers dried in a

microwave oven dry faster, look fresher and retain their natural colors better than conventionally dried flowers.

Other manufacturers, including the manufacturer which currently commands the lions share of the market, do not recommend using their oven for such non-food activities. Part of their rationale is that one non-food (or craft use can lead to another and experimentation with a sophisticated appliance such

as the microwave oven could lead to difficulties. These manufacturers would not consider the warranty to be in effect if difficulties resulted from craft uses.

Microwave ovens were developed for food uses, and unless a manufacturer has provided explicit instructions on non-food uses, the consumer would be wise to avoid them. When in doubt, the specialists say, contact the manufacturer. Most manufacturers have toll free telephone numbers, and staffs of trained home economists to answer such calls.

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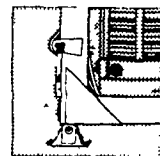
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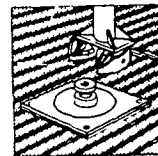
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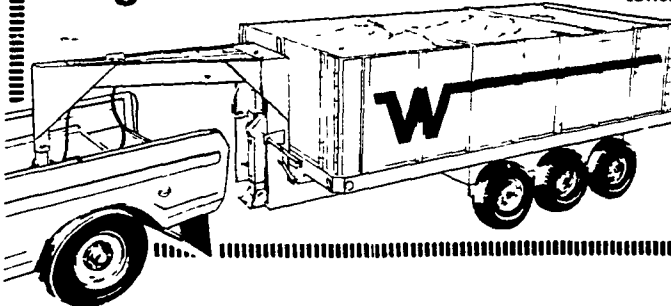
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