

Ladies Have You Heard?

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Lancaster
Home Economist



'CLEAN' CLOTHES CAN SPREAD BACTERIA

It's Winter and most of the family is sniffing and coughing and aching with a cold or the flu. Some consumers unknowingly contribute to the misery caused by these illnesses through improper laundering procedures.

Bacteria can be spread through an entire load of clothing or linen during laundering. They can also remain active on the inner surface of the washing machine and be transferred from one load of clothes to another.

Researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture have found that "neither water temperatures nor detergents alone can be relied on to reduce the number of bacteria in fabrics to a safe level."

The USDA studies have determined that both time and temperature are important in killing bacteria. For example, it takes three to five minutes in water at 212 degrees F to kill staphylococci, or 20 minutes in water at 140 degrees F. Often, the "hot" water used in home laundering is less than 140 degrees and wash cycles are seldom 20 minutes

long. Research found that approximately 30 bacteria could survive ordinary home laundry procedures.

You can improve the sanitation of home laundering by using a suitable disinfectant. A disinfectant for use in home laundering must kill many kinds of bacteria, be compatible to detergent, be readily available and be reasonable in cost. It should not damage or discolor fabrics nor leave a residue on clothes that is harmful to humans.

One that fills the bill is liquid chlorine disinfectant, better known as liquid chlorine bleach, which is effective in hot, warm or cold water. For use in hot or warm water, pine oil disinfectants are also effective.

When there is sickness in the family or when laundry facilities are shared, such as in an apartment complex, USDA researchers recommend using a disinfectant in each load of laundry. Be sure to read the disinfectant label and measure carefully. Add it as recommended to wash or rinse cycles.

Other precautions you can take to protect the family laundry include:

Occasionally pour a disinfectant into the empty machine and complete a 15-minute cycle using hot water.

Clean the exterior of the machine and the shelves, walls and floor around the laundry area with disinfectant. Also clean the storage area for soiled clothes with disinfectant frequently.

Cover laundry carts or baskets with clean paper or plastic before loading them with clean laundry.

Have home dryer vented to the outside so bacteria not destroyed in washing will not be dispersed into the laundry area.

The precautions are especially important to follow if laundry facilities are shared. If you use a public coin-operated laundry, a disinfectant can be used to wipe off the machine's exterior and interior before clothes are washed. Use a disinfectant in each wash load. Also, be sure to cover public laundry carts and folding areas with clean plastic or paper in order to prevent transfer of bacteria.

HOUSEPLANTS NEED HUMID CONDITIONS

Most houseplants grow best in moist, humid areas, not hot, dry rooms. It is understandable why many plants turn brown along leaf edges or tips during the home heating season due to the low level of humidity.

J. Robert Nuss, Extension specialist in ornamental horticulture, The Pennsylvania State University, says that plants showing such symptoms should be moved to a more humid area or placed on a tray of gravel with water in the tray.

Terrariums are best for plants requiring continuous high humidity. A hot, dry house causes the plant's soil

Decorating course offered

UNIVERSITY PARK - The correspondence course office at Penn State has several courses that you can study at home to help you make decisions about your home decorating problems.

One course emphasizes ways to make your home attractive so that it reflects the tastes of all family members. At the same time, it teaches design principles, arrangement of furnishings,

to dry out rapidly, thus more frequent watering is required. But don't over-water plants. Overwatering is the most common cause of root rot and subsequent dying of houseplants.

Test the soil by poking your finger into it. If the soil is dry one-half inch down and if the tapped pot sounds hollow, assume the plants needs water. If the soil is moist a half inch down, don't water the plant.

Salt accumulation in pots can also cause browning along leaf edges. Avoid this by using distilled water. Provide drainage at the bottom of the pot so that excess salts can be flushed to the saucer each time the plant is watered.

By observing these few simple tips about houseplant care, you may have fewer problems with plants.

and how to accessorize a room. The course is titled Home Furnishings and sells for \$4.00.

Another course, giving practical ideas for making homes more livable and homegrounds more attractive, is titled Improving House And Grounds, and sells for \$3.50.

A third course is designed to help you develop creative window treatments that will fit your home furnishings plan. Kinds of window treatments and suggestions for basic and problem windows are discussed. This course is titled Ways With Windows and sells for \$4.50.

You may order the courses

individually by addressing an envelope to the course title, such as Home Furnishings, and mail to Box 5000, University Park, Pa. 16802. Include the price of each course plus 25 cents per course for postage. Or, you may order all three courses by sending \$11, plus 75 cents postage to Decorating, at the above address. Make check payable to Penn State.

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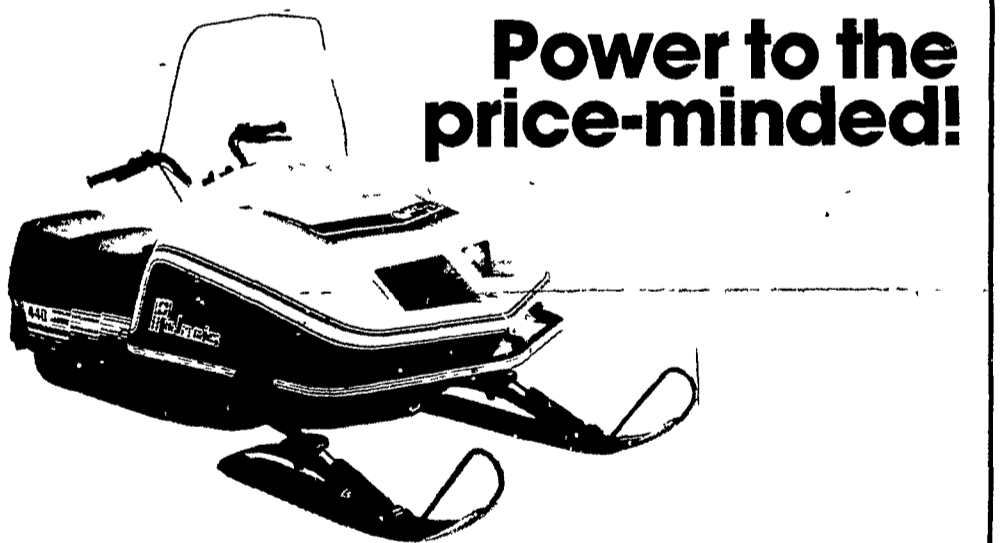
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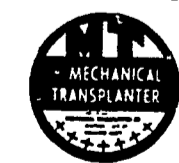
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