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more**

For the avid gardener

Does rainwater from up-slope drain onto your garden? Is your garden on a steep slope where you want to plant?

If so — and especially since you haven't started your garden yet for this summer — you should think seriously of planting on the contour or perhaps building a terrace.

According to Burrell Whitworth of USDA Soil Conservation Service, a contoured or terraced garden does reduce erosion. Because water is channeled across the slope instead of down the slope, soil absorbs more rainwater and is less susceptible to drought.

Whitworth said, "Contouring not only controls erosion but distributes water evenly. This pays off in better yields and higher quality vegetables and flowers."

Although most of you are farmers and are most adept at han-

dling the soil, often times the garden can get overlooked, as one tends to forget to put into practice in the garden the same practices you use in your fields.

But if you're not an old hand at gardening on the contour, you can find the contour line by mounting a carpenter's level to a 2x4. To determine a level line, begin about the center of the slope. Lay the 2x4 along the slope and move one end up or down until the bubble on the level is centered. Mark the spot with a stake and repeat this process across the slope to establish the contour line.

As you cultivate the garden, leave small channels between the rows to collect and hold the moisture so that it soaks into the soil.

If excess water drains onto your garden a terrace can divert the

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania State Grange leaders heard a grim report on the status of the Social Security Fund while on tour in Washington, D.C. recently.

As part of their annual legislative tour, state officers and members of State Grange committees met with James Jeffers, associate commissioner for governmental affairs with the Social Security Administration, to look at proposed cuts in Social Security programs. What they found out was not encouraging.

Jeffers said the Social Security Old Age and Survivors Fund is in danger of being depleted by the end of 1982. At the present time, \$12,400 per minute in benefits is being paid out of the fund more than is being put into the fund from payroll taxes.

The reasons? "High inflation plus real-term growth have caused rapid benefit increases over the

flow of water effectively. A terrace is simply a ridge with a shallow channel on the upper side. Give the terrace a slight grade so that water does not stand in the channel but flows off gently. Make the terrace wide enough so that it blends in with the natural slope.

Grangers hear grim reports during Washington tour

years," Jeffers said. "At the same time, job layoffs and an overall sluggish economy have decreased taxes paid into the fund." According to John Svahn, Commissioner of Social Security, for every one percent rise in the U.S. unemployment rate (1.1 million persons), Social Security loses \$2 billion per year in lost payroll tax revenues.

The president has appointed a 15-member nonpartisan commission to suggest changes to the Social Security System by Dec. 31, 1982. Proposals are on both sides of the spectrum and include: gradually lowering the level of real benefits, increasing the retirement age from 65 to 68, and foregoing additional cost of living adjustments. Grangers suggested that Social Security benefits be taxed if income is over a designated amount to increase revenues into the fund, and that veteran and other military pensions should be deducted from Social Security pensions.

At a breakfast with Pennsylvania congressmen, the Grange pushed for the release of Rural Abandoned Mine Program funds to Pennsylvania. These funds were collected through an assessment on coal companies of 35 cents per

ton of coal produced. As of March 1982, the funds totaled more than \$800 million.

Congress has authorized RAMP to receive 20 percent of these monies, however just five percent has been allocated per year since the program's start. The remaining 15 percent is bottled up in the Interior Department and collecting interest. The interest alone could be enough to reclaim many acres of abandoned mine sites, reported the Grange.

The Pennsylvania State Grange supported the drafting of a bill to be introduced in Congress to bypass the Secretary of the Interior and have the RAMP funds released directly to the Secretary of Agriculture.

The Grange got the assurance of Congressman Allen Ertel (D-17th) that he will draft a letter to the Secretary of the Interior signed by the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation requesting that these funds be released to Pennsylvania immediately. About 27 percent, or 240,000 acres of abandoned coal mine lands in Pennsylvania are currently unreclaimed or inadequately reclaimed.

In a meeting with U.S. Senator Arlen Specter, Grangers pushed for increased appropriations for highway and bridge funding and conservation programs in Pennsylvania. Specter serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee and its subcommittee on agriculture.

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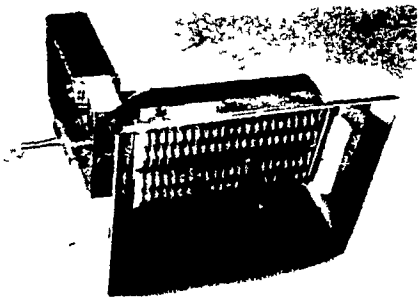
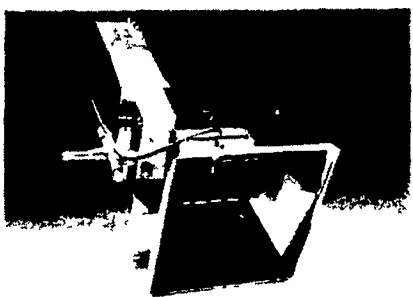
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