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*For the avid gardener*

## Penn State grad wins Scott horticultural award

NEWARK, Del. — Richard Lighty, developer and coordinator of the University of Delaware's Longwood graduate program in ornamental horticulture, has received one of the highest honors awarded nationally in this field. The Arthur Hoyt Scott Garden and Horticulture Award, given annually by the Scott foundation of



**Richard Lighty**

Swarthmore College, was presented by Lighty earlier this month by the college's president, Theodore Friend.

An avid gardener and noted plantsman, Lighty is a recognized authority on woody ornamentals and herbaceous plants. He currently serves on both the council and executive committee of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. He is a former president of both the North American Lily Society and the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, and has served on numerous committees relating to horticulture, horticultural education and regional beautification. He has also been a consultant to international institutes, municipalities, public gardens and landscape architects.

In the spring of 1976 he was awarded the Silver Medal of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. In 1979 he received the North American Lily Society's E. H. Wilson Award.

Lighty has led student study trips to Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica and has traveled in Europe and Africa. In 1976 he took part in a four-month expedition to Korea in search of ornamental

plants. In 1977 he received the American Horticultural Society's teaching citation in recognition of his work with the Longwood graduate program, now in its 15th year.

Lighty holds the rank of associate professor in the department of plant science at the University of Delaware. He earned his B.S. degree from Penn State and his M.S. and Ph.D. from Cornell.

In addition to his current teaching and administrative duties, he is presently writing a book on the organization and management of American botanical gardens and arboreta.

The Arthur Hoyt Scott Garden and Horticulture Award was established in 1929 to honor individuals who have had a broad and significant impact on American horticulture. Given in memory of a Swarthmore graduate of the class of 1885, the award consists of a gold medal and \$1,000.

Previous winners from the northeastern U.S. include Liberty Hyde Bailey, plant taxonomist, prolific author, and former dean of the agricultural college at Cornell; John Wister, authority on herbaceous and woody plants, landscape architect, and former director of the Scott Horticultural Foundation and the Tyler Arboretum; C. Stuart Gager, first director of the Brooklyn Botanical Garden and a fertile thinker in developing the philosophy of the public garden; and Russell Siebert, former director of Longwood Gardens.

### Using wood ashes

Like lime and fertilizer, wood and coal ashes can be used on your garden, but they must be used properly to be effective.

Wood ashes contain alkaline elements such as calcium, magnesium and potassium — all valuable plant nutrients. Because of their high alkalinity, wood ashes are also effective in neutralizing acid soil, according to Extension soil specialist Leo Cotnoir.

But there are some problems related to using ashes also.

For one thing, wood and coal ashes are different. Coal ashes have little fertilizer value and may even leave undesirable residue such as selenium, which could accumulate in plants. So use coal ashes in your muddy driveway, or put a little in your clay soil to help improve its physical properties.

Wood ashes are strongly alkaline (pH 11-13) as compared to ground limestone (pH 8-8.5). Also they're water soluble as compared to ground limestone, which is water insoluble and can be used even on foliage without harm. For this reason, wood ashes must always be used on soil because they will

injure plant leaves, as chemical fertilizer does.

Just as you can use too much lime — especially on sandy garden soils — so you can get into trouble with wood ashes. Their acid neutralizing capability ranges from nearly equal to ground limestone when fresh and dry, to only 50 percent as effective when damp or stored exposed to air. But keep in mind the difference in speed of action. Wood ashes behave like chemical fertilizer, while limestone takes effect over a year or more. Incidentally, says Cotnoir, never use ashes around acid-loving plants like azaleas or rhododendrons.

Ashes vary greatly in composition, depending on the kind of wood burned, the type of stove, and how they're stored. Hardwoods such as maple, hickory, apple and even birch have more nutrients per cord of wood. Airtight stoves burning at higher temperatures eliminate more of the carbon that otherwise ends up as a diluent in the ash. Stored ashes pick up both carbon dioxide and water vapor from the air if left exposed. So it's

best to keep them in a metal can with a tight-fitting lid.

The general rules for using wood ashes call for applying either 20 pounds of fresh dry ash or 50 pounds of open-stored ash per 1,000 square feet of garden. (Twenty pounds of dry ash is approximately five quarts.)

Don't use ashes on your plot unless a soil test indicates a need for liming, cautions Cotnoir. Apply them so they can be mixed with the soil during seedbed preparation. This will dilute them for greater safety.

Ashes can also be used around cabbage plants, as you would sidedress fertilizer, to help ward off clubroot disease. The same practice may help keep cutworms and slugs away from stems of tomatoes, peppers, and other transplants.

Ashes are versatile and valuable, says Cotnoir. In early days they were worth 10 to 15 cents per bushel and were sometimes used in lieu of scarce cash. They were refined into potash and pearl ash for export to Europe for making soap. Ashes were also used for glass making, bleaching and probably for insect control. —DK

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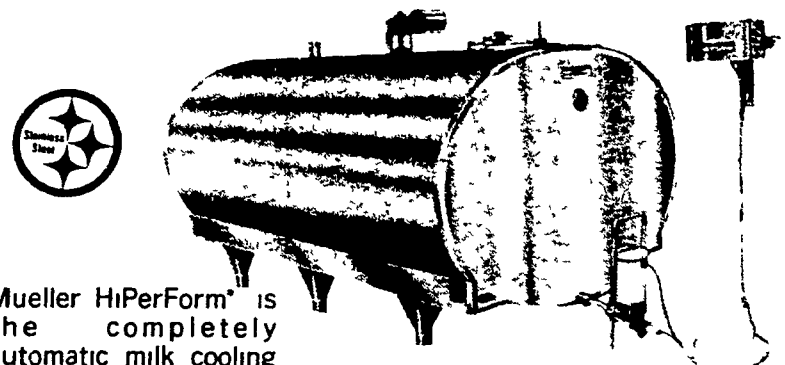
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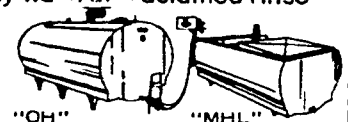
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