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Weeding
and mulch
more**

For the avid gardener

Cold Frames Extend Garden Activity

Some gardens have 'em, some don't. But if you are interested in extending your garden activities and the seasons of your plants, you'll join those who do, and build yourself a coldframe, says Paul N. Reber, county agent.

A coldframe is a bottomless box, commonly made of wood with a transparent top. The top is often made from old storm windows in the winter and of wooden laths in the summer. It covers and protects plants from adverse weather and provides them with favorable growing conditions in their tender stages of growth. A coldframe is much more than a way to get an early jump on spring. In fact, this easily constructed box can be useful all year around.

In the fall, coldframes can protect late season salad vegetables from early frost and are an ideal seed bed for perennials, hardy annuals, and wildflowers that benefit from a season of cold before germination. They are great for storing potted spring bulbs to be brought in for forcing in midwinter. If well protected themselves, cold frames can also protect root vegetables for winter

use.

In the spring, coldframes are used to harden off seedlings started indoors, to raise an early crop of spring vegetables, and to allow you to start your spring sowing program early. Coldframes give shelter and shade to houseplants and light-sensitive perennials during the heat and bright sun of summer and make a good propagation area for ground covers, shrubs, and perennials.

Locate your coldframe where it will be well protected from the wind, near a good supply of water, and in an open area so you can take full advantage of sunlight during the day. Ideally it should be placed on slightly sloping ground for good drainage and positioned with the lower end facing south or southeast and the high back end toward the north. Up against a house or garage is often a good choice.

Wherever you place your coldframe, the back should be 6 inches higher than the front for maximum sun and good drainage across the top — 6 inches at the front and 12 inches at the back is standard. Make the length and width to suit your site and building

materials.

Wooden frames are the most common, least expensive, and can be quite durable if made of cedar or wood treated with a preservative. **DO NOT** treat with pentachlorophenol or creosote. A preservative with copper in it is generally satisfactory. Read the label before applying treatment. Exterior grade plywood and assorted "extra" lumber you may have on hand are also good to use.

Cinder block is also a good building material for coldframes. These are more durable than those made of wood, but cannot be moved if you need a temporary shelter for plants in place of your garden.

Once you have the wooden sides ready, assemble with removable pin door hinges for portability, angle irons, or even 2" or 2' wooden cleats for corner support.

Once you've built your coldframe, you'll need to manage its ventilation, watering, drainage and temperature. The main danger, no matter what you grow, is excessive moisture especially in the early part of the year. Over-watering and too little ventilation will often lead to disease problems. All containers and rooting or growing media used in the frame should be well drained.

If you're growing seeds, water after sowing and keep the sash closed or nearly closed until after

germination. From then on whenever you water, do it in the morning so foliage has time to dry during the day. If moisture accumulates on the inside of the sash, ventilate by raising sash several inches until moisture is removed.

During cool weather, you may need to close the sash in late afternoon to trap additional heat from the sun to help maintain uniform temperatures during the night.

On very bright days, new seedlings and cuttings need protective shading. In most cases the best type of shade is something

that can be removed at night, in dull weather, and when more light is needed. Wooden laths, or split bamboo fixed to light frameworks make excellent shades that are easy to handle. If weighted down, open-weaver burlap also works well.

White latex paint (water based) also works well for shading but is difficult to remove. Clay and water can be used as a temporary paint and washes off easily when not needed.

During our coldest weather, protect the contents of your coldframe with straw, hay, old blankets or leaves.

Christmas Program Announced

NORRISTOWN — The Montgomery County Extension Service has announced plans for the Annual Homemakers Christmas Program on Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 9:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. at the Lansdale 4-H Center, Snyder Road off Rt. 363.

The program is open to the public and will include music by the North Penn Choral Group and the Suzuki String Students of North Penn School District. Officers Myers, Newman, and Morrison of the Towamencin and Montgomery Township Police will give tips on avoiding crimes and break-ins during the holiday season.

Margot Carney will present a program, Christmas Wonderland, on simple and imaginative holiday decorations and gift wrappings. Participants will then take part in a hands-on craft workshop.


Other highlights include a display of toys made or purchased by homemakers to contribute to Toys For Tots, and a Boutique Table selling homemade items to benefit the 4-H Program.

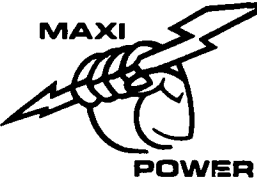
Reservations are not required. Cost for the day is \$1.25. There will also be an evening program from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the same location. For more information, contact the Extension Office at 277-0574.

Jake, how come whenever I see you lately, you're sitting on your rocker?

Luke, I've made up my mind to sit tight until the December 10th issue of Lancaster Farming comes. I can't wait to catch all them bargains on **BINKLEY & HURST BROS. Special Flyer for their **CASH & CARRY DAYS SALE, starting Dec. 12th thru Dec. 29th!****

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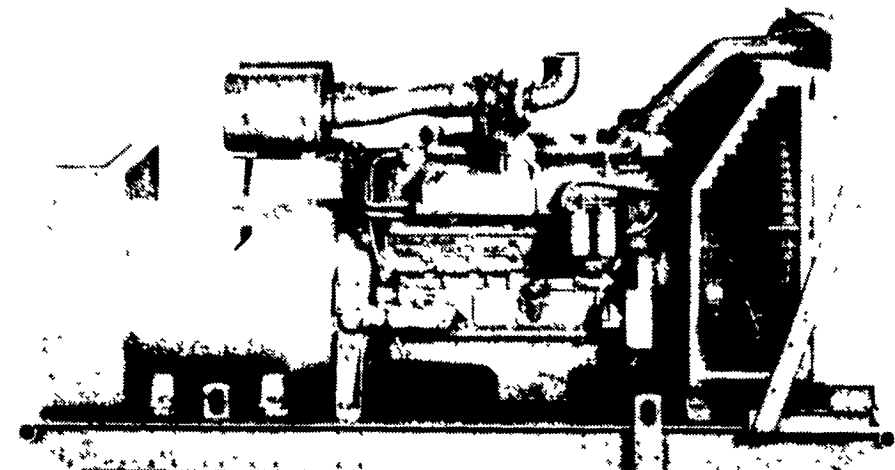




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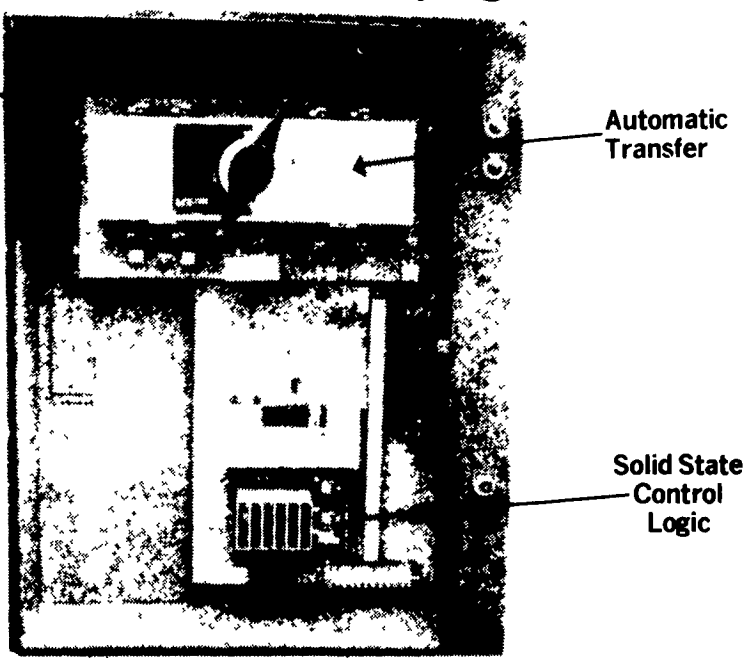
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