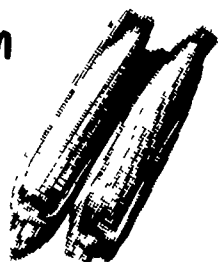




Seeding,
Weeding
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more



For the avid gardener

Use Plastic Bags for Plants

Plastic bags are an essential tool for today's indoor gardeners. They are not only terrific babysitters when you skip off to some glorious winter weekend resort like your cousin Bill's house, they also help when your plant is feeling poorly.

C.R. Bryan, Jr., Delaware County Extension service agent, says you can keep houseplants without water for several weeks in a polyethylene plastic bag. That's the common type most of us use as freezer or storage bags. The day before you leave (or the hour before if you are not well organized) water your plant thoroughly and allow any excess water to drain off. Then, put your plant, pot and all, into a clean, clear bag with no holes and close the top. Do not return your plant to full sunlight. Instead find a temporary location with indirect or artificial light because sunlight hitting the plastic will create high temperatures in the bag and may injure your plant.

The plastic bag works because air goes through the plastic but

water won't. As the water evaporates, it condenses in the plastic, runs down, and is reabsorbed by the plant. What you have is a miniature greenhouse!

It's easy to see how plastic bags can help houseplants suffering from air that is too dry. Humidity is an essential condition for the health of most plants yet today's houses are often too dry for both people and plants. The best remedy is to lower your thermostat and increase your humidity by using a centralized automatic humidifier or a small one placed near your plants. But, sometimes even that isn't enough. Misting during the day helps and placing potted plants on wet gravel in metal or fiberglass trays helps also.

However, if your plant has spindly growth and limp leaves, give it the plastic bag boost. Just cover it with a plastic bag, that has a few small holes in it and close the bag around the post rim with a rubber band. You should notice an improvement in a week or so.

Consider Growing Fruit and Nut Trees

NEWARK, Del. — Many garden catalogs offer fruit and nut trees for sale. This is a good way to buy such plants, but think twice before ordering. "Fruit trees, especially, require a considerable investment in time and money if they're to bear well," says University of Delaware Extension Agent Derby Walker.

"It costs much more to raise tree fruits than small fruits like berries," Walker says, "so the financial benefits are likely to be much less. Don't expect to save money growing them."

Fruit trees require routine spraying to protect them from a number of insects and diseases, he explains. "For this reason, you can usually buy commercially grown fruit much cheaper than you can raise your own. However, if you enjoy gardening, fruit trees can be an interesting challenge to grow and will add beauty to a well planned garden. You can watch them bloom in the spring — there's nothing prettier than their great masses of pink or white blossoms. In the summer you can enjoy luscious peaches and plums. In the fall, you can eat crisp apples and juicy pears you grew yourself. And when it snows in the winter, you have a beautiful outdoor landscape to look at."

Home gardeners who enjoy eating nuts may also get satisfaction from planting a few black walnuts, English walnuts or pecans. These are the kinds most

likely to do well. Plant them where they have lots of room to grow.

"These trees get a little messy at times," Walker warns. "When they become infested with diseases like anthracnose they will drop leaves, twigs and infected nuts all summer. So don't plant them near your house. Also, the sound of nuts falling on your roof or car can be rather startling — or downright annoying. And don't locate black walnuts near flower or vegetable gardens because their roots give off a toxic substance harmful to many plants."

Nut trees are slow to produce, so they must be considered a long term project. However, with the price of nuts, it must be worthwhile

to plant a tree in a back corner of the yard.

Nut trees are fairly simple to grow in the home garden. Generally, all they need is routine pruning and fertilizing, plus watering in dry years. "You usually won't have many disease or insect problems," Walker says, "though there'll be a few years when you'll wish you had sprayed. But by the time you realize that, it's usually too late. And in eight out of 10 years you'll probably be able to grow satisfactory nuts without any spraying at all."

When thumbing through the new nursery catalogs, Walker advises home gardeners to keep these pointers in mind.

'Family Time' Program

(Continued from Page B14)

his imagination. "I went passed it (McDonald's) because I was driving too fast."

The program, according to Lois, is designed for children of different ages. Programs are available that are planned especially for the 2-3 age, the 4-6 age, or the 7-8 age.

Although this quality time is important for children of all ages, according to Lois, it does not just happen. It has to be planned. She said she usually plans to do one of the activities with the children in the evening or when one of them says "Mommy, what can I do?"

According to her, she and her husband are spending more quality time with the children now than they were before the Family Time program.

"We feel that families that spend time together, stay together," Lois explained.

Summing up her feelings on spending time with her family, Lois borrowed from the Bible by adding to the thought that you will reap what you sow.

"I see Family Time as one of those good seeds I can be sowing in my children's lives."

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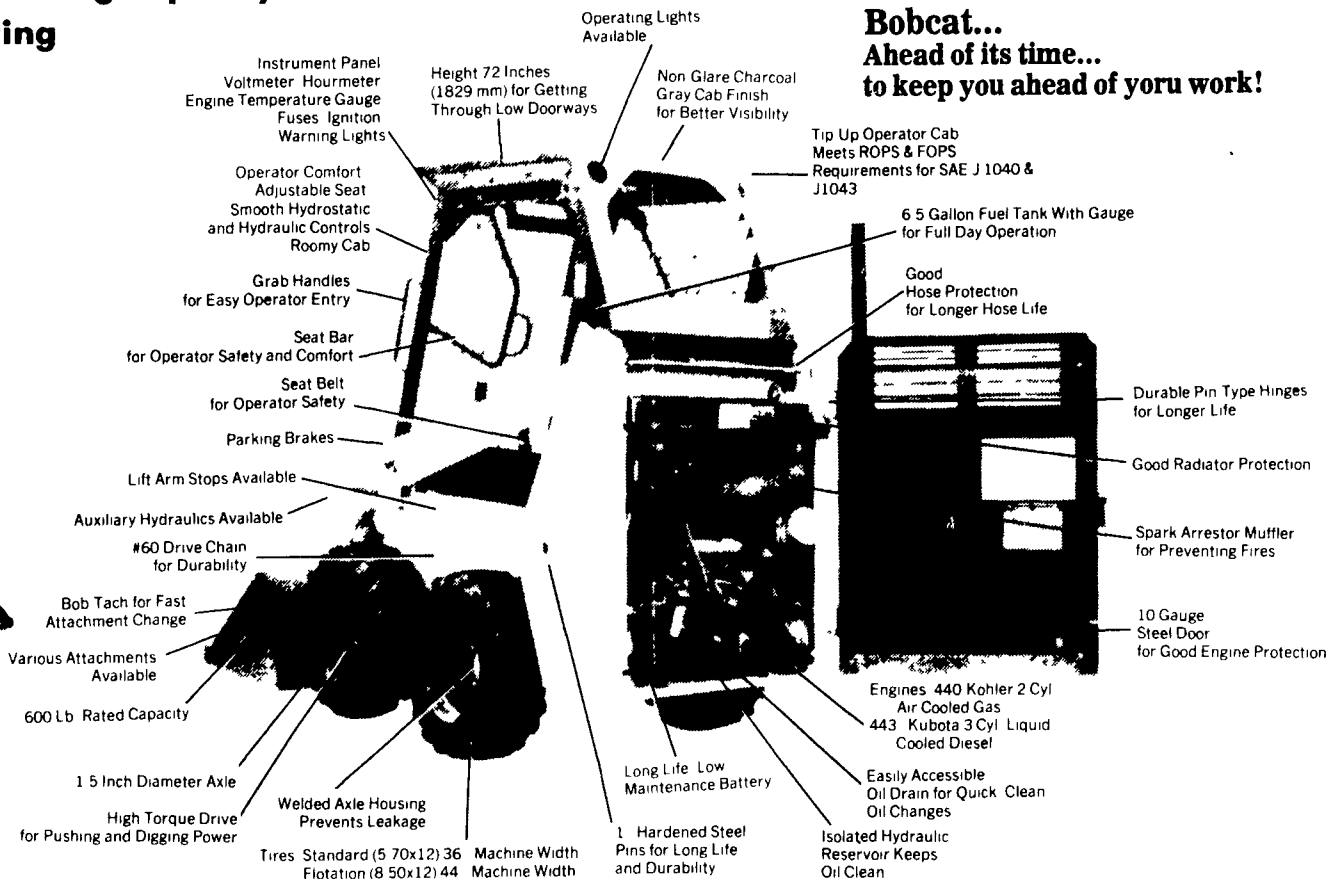
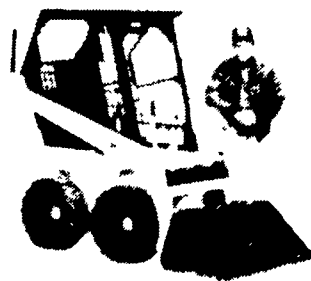
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