

## Woodpeckers Drum Up Damage

The drumroll of a woodpecker is a pleasant sound so long as it remains in the forest. The early morning staccato of this bird's attack on your window sill is not only irritating, the effects of the drilling can be damaging.

The reason why woodpeckers attack houses remains open to debate, but one thing is clear. The incidence of house damage caused by woodpeckers has increased with the rising use of natural sidings such as oak and cedar. Although the establishment of territory can be the cause of drumming, homeowners should not rule out the presence of insects.

Some insects overwinter in the nooks of sidings; others bore into the wood. If a woodpecker discovers insects in the wood of a house, the bird will begin to drill. In cases of infestation, your county agent can recommend treatment. However, insects are rarely the cause of woodpecker drilling on homes. One thing cannot be over-

emphasized; if a bird begins to drum on a house, the problem must be controlled immediately. Do not wait until the pattern has become established, cautions C. R. Bryan, Jr., Delaware Co. Extension service director.

Because resonated is a primary requirement for a drumming site, deadening sound will discourage the birds. Placing insulation behind the siding at the place where the bird drums can dull the sound. If necessary, remove a plank or two to insert the material.

Visual repellents also have shown some success in chasing away woodpeckers. The most common method is the use of aluminum foil strips. Cut several strips two or three inches wide and about three feet long. Attach a six-inch string to one end of each strip. Partially hammer in small brads or nails about two feet above the drumming site; space six to 10 feet apart. Attach each string to a nail

so that strips will hang freely and will move with the breeze. Attaching hand-held windmills with reflective vanes or aluminum pie plates hung from a string also proves effective.

In order to drum, the bird must be able to grip the structure. Removing toeholds like ledges, cracks and crevices is always a good first step. A very successful method is to spread plastic storm window materials over the affected siding. To be effective, the plastic sheet must not touch the wall's surface. Stretching the plastic's top border over a piece of molding or the rain gutter prevents the bird from grasping the wall.

After problem birds have left, be certain to repair damage to wooden structures. If this isn't done, the holes or chipped areas will attract other woodpeckers. Be sure that repairs blend into the rest of the structure; otherwise, the repairs also may attract these birds.

## Vegetables should receive attention

Vegetables aren't often thought of as "favorite foods," but this doesn't mean they don't have a lot going for them. On the contrary, vegetables belong to the four food groups and they should receive their due attention.

Dark green, leafy or orange vegetables and fruit are also recommended four times daily. Far from being nutrient-poor, they contain vitamin A (in the form of carotene), C, K, and folic acid, and trace minerals.

Carotene is converted to vitamin A in the body; this is important in formation and maintenance of skin and mucous membrane, which leads to increased resistance to infections. It aids eyesight and promotes bone and teeth development.

Deficiency symptoms include loss of taste and smell, night blindness, diarrhea, intestinal infections, and impaired growth.

Some food sources are leafy green vegetables, carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, winter squash, apricots, and cantaloupe.

Vitamin C is water-soluble and forms a cementing substance, such as collagen, that holds body cells together, thus strengthening blood vessels, and hastening wound and bone healing. It also aids in resisting infection.

Some deficiency symptoms are easy skin bruising and bleeding gums. Food sources include strawberries, tomatoes, potatoes, green peppers, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and kale.

Vitamin K is fat-soluble and vital to blood clotting. Signs of deficiency include prolonged blood coagulating time, and increased incidence of hemorrhage.

Food sources are leafy green

vegetables, such as turnip greens, spinach, broccoli, green cabbage, and cauliflower.

Folic acid is water-soluble and aids in the production of red blood cells. It also aids in the development of nerve cells, and in maintaining the nervous system, intestinal tract, and white blood cells.

Deficiency signs are certain anemias. Food sources are leafy green vegetables, asparagus, and oranges.

It is important to know that fat-soluble vitamins — A, D, E, and K — are stored in the body. Vitamins A, D, and E are potentially dangerous in large amounts.

Water-soluble vitamins are rapidly absorbed, circulated through the body, and excreted. Water-soluble vitamins must be consumed daily.

To conserve vitamin content of vegetables during cooking, prepare them close to serving time. Wash but do not soak, and keep chopping and peeling to a minimum. Cook vegetables tightly covered in a small amount of water until just tender. Save cooking liquids for sauce and soups; meat drippings can also flavor vegetables.

So the next time the vegetable bowl comes your way at mealtime, remember how important it is to your health. Vegetables have an additional attraction — they're low in calories unless, of course, you spoon on generous helpings of a sauce or dressing.

## Make good nutrition a lifelong habit

Food and Fitness Year is here. The message of Food and Fitness Year is that eating right and caring for your body must become lifelong concerns.

To help Americans acquire good long-term eating habits, the USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have developed seven dietary guidelines for healthy adults. The guidelines are simple to understand and remember:

**Variety** - No single food has every nutrient your body needs. For good health, eat a variety of foods from the basic four food groups: milk and dairy products, meat and protein, breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables. Use the basic four in meal planning to eat right every day.

**Ideal weight** - Overweight people are more likely to develop certain chronic disorders such as high blood pressure. Good eating habits and regular exercise will help you stay trim and fit.

**Fat** - A diet high in fat, particularly saturated fat and cholesterol, increases the risk of heart problems. To decrease the fat in your diet, choose lean meats, fish or poultry, and trim extra fat and skin from meats. Reduce your use of butter, margarine, and oil. Broil, bake, boil or steam foods instead of frying.

**Starch and fiber** - The typical American diet is low in starch and fiber. Starch (complex carbohydrates), and fiber (food the body can't break down), are important components of the diet. A

high starch, high fiber diet will decrease your chances of contracting diverticulosis, chronic constipation, and possibly cancer of the colon. Replace some of the fat and sugar in your diet with high fiber, complex carbohydrate foods like whole grain breads and cereals, fruits, vegetables, beans, peas, and nuts.

**Sugar** - Very sweet foods may contribute to tooth decay. They are also often eaten in place of more nutritious foods containing complex carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. Since sugar offers little value, learn to use less, including white, brown, honey, and syrups. Read food labels, and select fruits packed in light syrup, natural juice or water instead of heavy syrup.

**Salt** - Most Americans consume three times as much sodium as their bodies need. Sodium is implicated in high blood pressure. To cut down on sodium intake, flavor foods with herbs, spices, lemon or vinegar in place of table salt. Taste food before salting it. Better yet, remove the salt shaker from the table.

**Alcohol** - Alcohol provides calories but few nutrients. Excessive alcohol consumption distorts perception, interferes with coordination, and can be addictive. If you drink alcohol, limit your intake to one to two drinks daily.

Remember that good nutrition should be a lifelong habit. The seven dietary guidelines are the key to a healthy, balanced diet.

## Program to help strengthen families

Today's family faces more stress than ever. Although services offer help to families with severe problems, little attention is given to the flip side of stress — strength.

Making strong families stronger is the goal of "Family Time," a new family activity program from Penn State's 4-H and family living extension and the Chester County Cooperative Extension Service. "Family Time," designed for families with children two through eight years old, will offer three areas of family-strengthening activities, says Martha Plass Sheehe, County Home Economist/Nutritionist.

Learning kits will be given to all

participating families for home use. The kits include "Let's Explore ... Our Family," "... Our Community," "... The Foods We Eat," "... The World of Crafts," and "... Other Fun Things." Kits focus on the seasons of the year and are geared to ages 2-3, 4-6, and 7-8.

In addition, a read aloud program featuring selected books and accompanied by activity sheets with "some things to think about," "some things to talk about," and "some things to do," is available. The books can be borrowed from the county extension office.

Boxes filled with family learning activities — including sandpaper alphabet, number and shape cards, puppets, counting games, dress-up clothes, and a lacing boot — will also be available on loan from the county office.

All children who participate in "Family Time," will be designed associate 4-H members, and their parents will receive 4-H leader status. There is no charge for the program.

To get involved in "Family Time," write or call the Chester County Penn State Extension Office, 235 W. Market Street, West Chester, PA 19380 or 696-3500.

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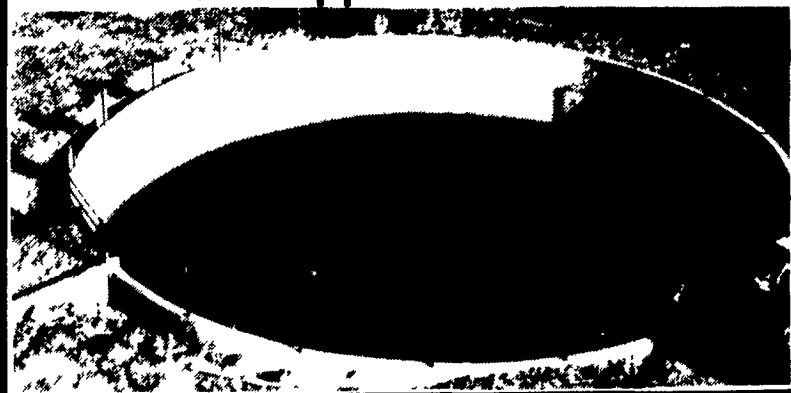
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