

Consider Alternatives When Selecting Heating Method

UNIVERSITY PARK — If you are thinking of burning wood or coal this fall, it pays to be well-informed. Not only are there many personal factors to consider, such as economics, convenience, comfort and labor intensity, but many types and sizes of stoves and heating are available.

Since the revival of wood burning in the 1970s, major advances in stove design have caught up with present-day demands for convenience, while at the same time reducing creosote and emission problems and allowing more efficient burning.

The most important of these advances is the catalytic wood stove. Other types include batch-feed coal stoves, hopper-feed coal stoves, controlled combustion wood stoves, fireplace inserts, and combination wood and coal burners.

There is no denying the comfort of a wood or coal burner's

radiating heat on a chilly day. Purchasing any heating system is costly, though, and switching to wood and coal can mean a change in lifestyle. Although wood and coal may always cost less than natural gas, oil or electricity, they are not as convenient, and the heat they provide is less even and controllable.

Consider the other possible drawbacks to burning wood or coal. Both are difficult to burn efficiently in the fall or spring, when the weather is milder. Both require a knowledge of their fuel characteristics and how to burn them most efficiently, and both are somewhat bulky to store.

In spite of these drawbacks, burning wood or coal can provide a sense of independence and security. Furthermore, wood is a renewable energy resource, and coal is our most abundant fossil

fuel. Burning Wood and Coal is a newly updated comprehensive manual developed by agricultural engineers. It can help the seasoned veteran and the complete novice make the right decisions.

The manual has current information on the advantages and disadvantages of each fuel, combustion basics, new developments in stove technology, the latest installation standards, operating techniques and problem solving, as well as information on buying, preparing and storing fuel — including cutting firewood with a chainsaw.

Burning Wood and Coal is available from Agricultural Engineering Extension, 204 Agricultural Engineering Building, University Park, PA 16802. The 90-page manual costs \$4.95.

Plants For Thanksgiving

Many florists now have a huge assortment of chrysanthemums and foliage plants from which you can choose to decorate your home for Thanksgiving.

If you are buying a chrysanthemum, consider this: even though you would like the plant to be colorful on Thanksgiving, try to choose one that has just a few open flowers, but many buds. The plant will stay in bloom a longer time. Choose a plant that is full rather than sparse looking.

When you bring a new plant into your home, it is going from that ideal greenhouse atmosphere into a comparatively harsh environment. It may help to place them in a fairly bright, but not sunny location for a few days before gradually bringing them into the bright sun they might need.

If the plant looks as if it's wilted, it may need a humidity boost. Spritz plants at least once daily.

Feeding a new plant isn't necessary. Most likely it has recently been potted in soil containing all the nutrients needed for good growth. You don't have to feed again for at least four months.

Do not immediately repot a new plant. Let the plant adjust to its new environment first, before fooling with it. The only time a new plant should be repotted immediately is if the pot is obviously too small.

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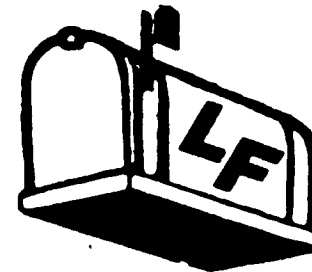
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