

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Every once in awhile, the marvelous art of marketing and merchandising comes out with some innovative product that makes us wonder how in the world we ever got by before without it.

A couple items, just off the top of my head: transparent tape... all-weather radials... credit cards... "sticky" notes... telephone answering machines.

And, to the delight of us farmers, occasionally from among the "new, improved" products of technology come innovative uses of farm commodities. From corn, for instance, are alternative fuels (gasahol), biodegradable plastics of cornstarch, and a snow-melt

material that, unlike many de-ice products, doesn't kill grass or the underside of your pickup.

In the wake of the most recent stretch of damp, misty days, it has begun bugging me that perhaps we're missing a niche market for one of agriculture's most common, basic commodities. Dirt. Or more specifically, mud. After all, who knows more about mud than farm wives?

With the "country" look continuing in decorating popularity, pre-packaged mud can offer the final touch of authenticity and realism. Plus, think of the fun it would offer to millions of little kids who have never had the

opportunity to splash through a genuine mud-puddle and leave neat tracks on their mother's newly-cleaned kitchen floor. You know, the kind of present you could send your relative's little kids for their birthday that they would always remember.

"Look, Mommy, Auntie sent me a package of mud! Can I play with it in the tub?"

Here on the farm, we've perfected a superior, all-natural, organic strain of mud with the extraordinary qualities of durability and longevity. This time-tested product, SuperMud, comes in a variety of types geared to diverse consumer needs.

All-Purpose Heavy-Duty SuperMud is the backbone of this product line, carefully cultivated in an assortment of hillside and meadow locations. It has been trial-tested on an endless array of pairs of jeans, coveralls, sweat-shirts and boots, never failing to adhere to all exposed surfaces.

All-Purpose Heavy-Duty SuperMud, Chunky-Style is gathered from low spots in the pavement around buildings and along the edge of the roadway. Small bits of gravel add the crunchy texture, and provide long-lasting residue in automobile carpeting and porch rugs.

SuperMud Extra-Smooth is of

velvety, liquid texture, originating in an isolated, poorly-drained corner of the meadow where the youngest mud-bogs with the motorcycle if he gets half a chance. Xtra-Smooth dries in a uniform coating -- like paint -- over any fabric texture and offers potential in law-enforcement as a medium for high-accuracy fingerprinting.

Instant-Mud is harvested in powder form from the floors of garage, barns and machine shed. Available in bulk or handy, single-use-sized packages. Just add water and stir.

High-Nutrient SuperMud originates in the dairy barn, heifer sheds and around the feed bunk. Major ingredient is more commonly known as pure, all-natural cow-sourced "fertilizer."

Packaged as a novelty item is Alphabet SuperMud. Forming of these creative little letter-like shapes is through repeated pressing of the soles of assorted sneakers and heavy-duty footwear into All-Purpose or High-Nutrient SuperMud. Once dried, the alphabet shapes automatically release from the footwear soles and can be gathered for packaging.

Just this morning, I discovered

on the kitchen floor a perfect "J" shaped Alphabet SuperMud. I stashed it away for safekeeping in the nearest houseplant.

And, in keeping with current consumer trends, our latest addition is SuperMud-Lite (from sandy soils). Guaranteed cholesterol and calorie-free.

Be the first in your neighborhood to add this new, improved straight-from-the-farm product to your lifestyle. Just in time for spring housecleaning, too.

Easy Care Posies

(Continued from Page B2)

school class visit the greenhouse and they just loved these. The plants are soft and they all had a chance to feel them," Mary said.

Missy and Mary agreed that the strawberry field plant could be the answer that farm wives can hang beside the farm sign in the summer. "I bet a lot of people will be putting on the brakes wondering what kind of plants those are," Mary said.

According to Mary the strawberry fields bloom year round inside or out. "It's a relative of the chenille plant and it's not at all touchy."

The furry new comer costs about the same as a cut flower arrangement. "You would normally spend at least \$15 for an arrangement. You can buy a small geranium for a couple of dollars. Live plants are really your best buy," Missy said.

With live plants so inexpensive and many varieties so easy to care for there is only one problem with buying an Easter on Mother's Day gift — It's tough to choose between so many showy alternatives.

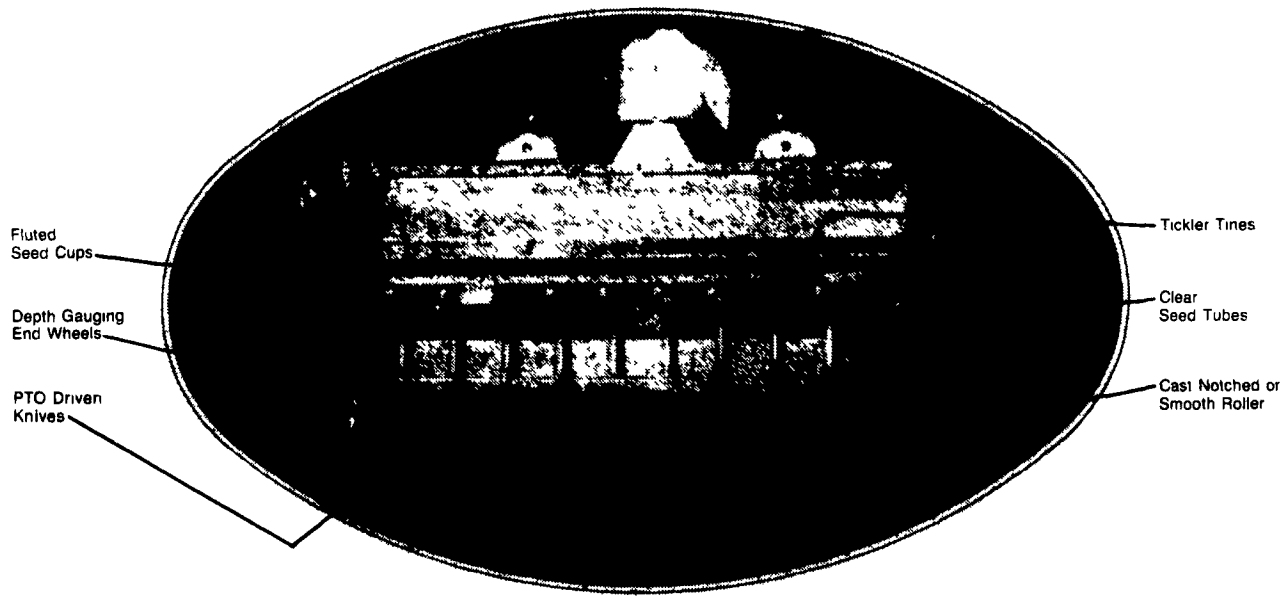
Know what makes an egg yolk yellow? It depends on the hen's diet. If she eats plenty of yellow-orange plant pigments, the color will be transferred to the yolk. Hens fed mashes containing yellow corn and alfalfa meal lay eggs with medium-yellow yolks, while those eating wheat or barley produce lighter-colored yolks. A colorless diet, such as white cornmeal, produces almost colorless yolks.

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