

Have You Heard?

By Doris Thomas
Lancaster Extension
Home Economist

Four-H Builds Skills, Confidence

NEWARK, Del. — Traditionally, 4-H was an organization for rural children, but in recent decades it has expanded its focus to include urban and suburban youth in its programming. Its primary goal is to help young people develop into productive members of their communities by building self-esteem and confidence. 4-H also gives youth an

opportunity to succeed through positive experiences, says Ted Palmer, University of Delaware Kent County 4-H agent.

Cooperative Extension, with a grant from the Delaware Housing Authority, is sponsoring two 4-H programs at McLane Gardens in Smyrna.

Weekly meetings are held in the community activity building. Barbara Frazier, Extension program aide, delivers the 4-H curriculum with the help of adult and teen volunteers from McLane Gardens.

"The kids look forward to the meetings," Frazier says. "When they see my car in the parking lot, they all start coming."

Frazier meets with 8- to 12-year-olds to work on activities from "Exploring 4-H." This program allows the children to sample a variety of 4-H projects including foods, sewing and citizenship activities. As children continue

with 4-H they can focus on their favorite projects.

The aide conducts a separate program for 5- to 7-year-olds using the 4-H program "About You and Me." This program is designed to build confidence and develop self-esteem. At a recent meeting, the theme was friendship and sharing. The children sang songs about friendship and discussed favorite playtime activities that involved friends.

To illustrate the benefits of sharing, Frazier distributed bags of various snacks including gummy bears, raisins and cereal O's to each child. The children learned that by combining the varieties of treats in a common bowl and then redistributing a cupful to each child, they all had a taste of every snack.

For information on joining 4-H or becoming an adult volunteer, contact your county Extension office.

Food Safety After School
From front door . . . to refrigerator door, the favorite afternoon pastime of school children remains "snacking." But what if mom or dad is not home to make the snack? What's a hungry kid to do? It's been estimated that roughly seven million American kids either care for themselves after school or are cared for by a sibling. What are the most important food and kitchen safety facts you should teach your children? Read on for a crash course in "Safe Snacking."

While most older youngsters can easily prepare their own snack, it is critically important to educate them about the larger issues of food and kitchen safety. In fact, you should establish basic "Kitchen Rules" and consider putting them in writing. And always keep on hand a ready supply of snacks that you know your child can easily handle alone.

Whether your child chooses a cold snack, a ready-to-eat snack, a do-it-yourself snack or a hot snack, it is never too early to teach children about the importance of clean hands, utensils, and other basic food safety techniques. Here's a basic beginner's course

written so both you and your youngsters can read it.

Kids, For Food Safety

1. Place books or bookbags on the floor, not on eating counters or the kitchen table.

2. Throw away leftover sandwiches or other "refrigerate type" foods you bring home from school.

3. Wash your hands before you make or eat a snack. Hands carry lots of germs.

4. Always use clean spoons, forks and plates.

5. Wash fruits and vegetables with water before you eat them.

6. Do not eat bread, cheese or soft fruits or vegetables that look bad or have even small spots of mold.

7. Do not leave cold items, like milk, lunchmeat, hardcooked eggs or yogurt out on the counter at room temperature. Put these foods back in the refrigerator as soon as you have fixed your snack.

But what if your children want a hot snack? Should you let your child use the microwave? According to a recent Good Housekeeping/International Microwave Power Institute study, children are frequent users of the household microwave. Fifty-two percent of

the respondents said that their children under the age of 12 use the microwave. The average age at which children begin to use the microwave is 7. In general, parents perceive the microwave oven to be a safe cooking appliance. For this reason, they let children use the microwave, but not a gas or an electric range.

However, you should know that severe burns can and do occur from improper microwave useage. Special packaging for kids' favorite foods like popcorn, pizza and french fries can get too hot for kids to handle. Steam from popcorn bags can burn the eyes, face, arms, and hands. Jelly donuts, pastries, hot dogs and other foods can reach scalding temperatures in seconds. The U.S. Product Safety Commission estimated that nearly 1,300 children under the age of 15 suffered microwave-related burns last year. If you give permission for your child to use the microwave, start by holding a Saturday morning training session. It is recommended that only children who can read be allowed to use the microwave.

Tree Management

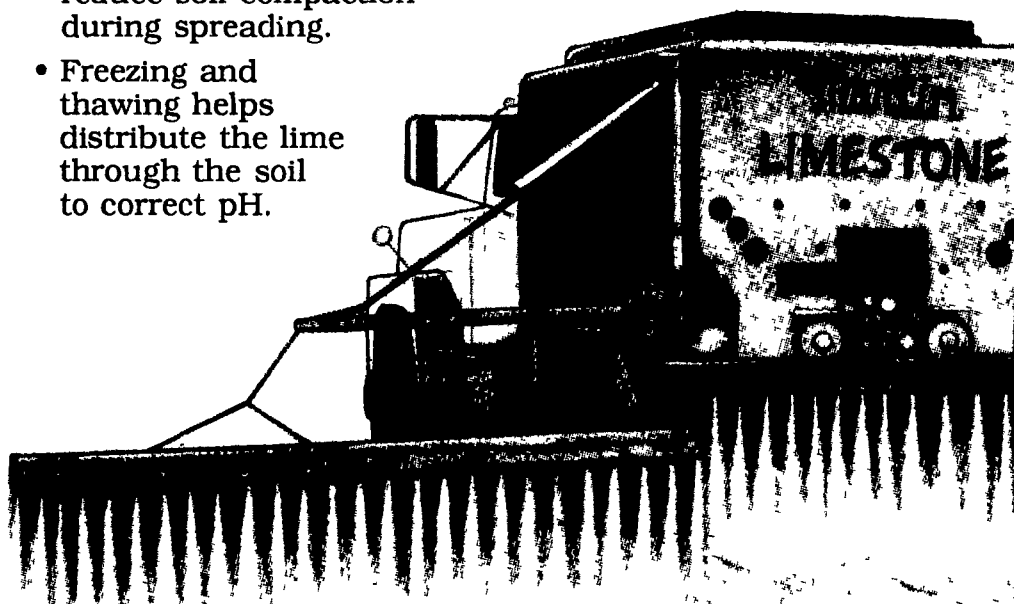
CREAMERY (Montgomery Co.) — "Managing Community Trees: Keeping the Old and Nurturing the New" is the second workshop of the Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Program in the southeastern region. It will be held at the Montgomery County 4-H Center in Creamery, on Thursday, March 11. Highlights of the workshop include: basics of tree physiology, mature tree care, hazard tree evaluation, a hands on tree pruning

demonstration, liability of community trees, and utility pruning.

Early registration must be received by March 1. Cost, including lunch and all workshop materials, is \$22. After March 1, the registration cost is \$25. For more information concerning the workshop, contact the Montgomery County Cooperative Extension Office, 1015 Route 113, P.O. Box 20, Creamery, PA 19430; phone (215) 489-4315.

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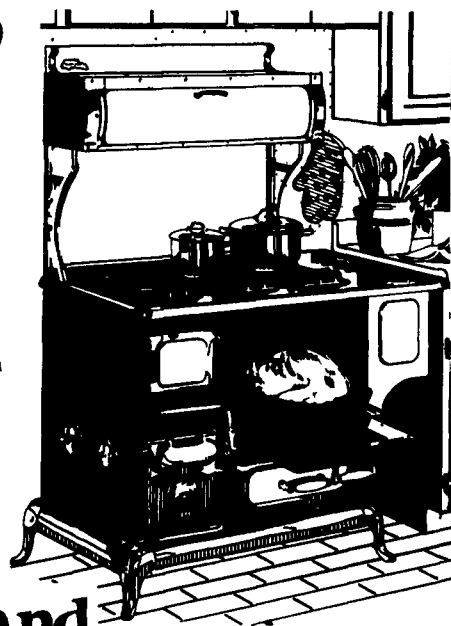
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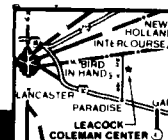
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