

Keep Household Water Safe, Plentiful

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — If you are like most people, you probably don't give much thought to your water. Turn on the tap and out it comes, ready for drinking, bathing or household chores.

But don't take your water for granted, said an expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences. "Although your water may be clean and plentiful, you should take steps to keep it that way," said Dr. William Sharpe, professor of forest hydrology.

Sharpe and other Penn State specialists will be on hand to discuss water issues at the Pennsylvania State Farm Show, January 8-13 in Harrisburg. The Penn State exhibit will include separate displays on groundwater, water testing and conservation, and the effect of farm nutrient management legislation on water quality.

Visitors to the exhibit can learn about the cost and effectiveness of water-saving household devices. "The average family of four uses more than 250 gallons of water each day," said Sharpe. "Almost all of that water goes down the drain in toilets, tubs and sinks. By changing habits and installing water-saving toilets, showerheads and faucets, you can reduce water use by up to 40 percent."

"Sharpe says conserving water benefits communities, as well as individual consumers. "Saving water may reduce the need for costly water storage and treatment facilities. And reducing wastewater can help keep sewage treatment plants from overloading."

Testing your water for contaminants is also important, especially if you rely on a private well. "If you have your own well or spring, you're responsible for its quality," Sharpe said. "Unlike

public water supplies, no governmental agency requires monitoring of private, individual water systems for contamination."

Some of the most common water problems are coliform bacteria, nitrates, giardia, lead and radon. Sharpe says bacteria tests should be done annually. Testing for other potential contaminants should be done if local geology or

land use indicates they are likely to be present.

Contaminants such as lead, radon and giardia also can be problems for those served by public water systems.

Penn State faculty and staff will be available at Farm Show to give water testing advice and distribute information about state-certified testing firms.

Penn State's groundwater display will include a map showing Pennsylvania's well fields and aquifers. Visitors can learn more about the state's groundwater resources, which supply 4.5 million Pennsylvanians with drinking water. In all, three-quarters of a billion gallons of groundwater are used daily in the state, more than

half of which help to meet the water needs of industry, mining and agriculture.

The Farm Show opens to the public in January 8 and closes on January 13. Hours are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday; 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday; and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday. Parking is \$2 and admission is free.

Timely Tips

- Refrigerators are great places to display children's artwork. Use kitchen magnets instead of tape to fasten the picture to the sides and door.

- A rainy day kitchen sandbox can be made with several inches of dry rice in a dishpan. To make a more colorful sandbox, add unpopped popcorn kernels or col-

orful dried beans to the rice. Bring out some plastic cups, bowls, and large spoons for pouring and stirring.

- Baby food jars make great containers for mixing tempera paint. Set the jars in a muffin tin for young artists to use without fear of spilling. When art time is over, cap the jars to save leftover

paint for the next art session.

- Place non-skid bathtub strips or designs on the seat of baby's high chair to keep him/her from sliding down in the seat.

- Children love to play with plastic food storage containers. Find a bottom drawer or cupboard in the kitchen where they can be kept, so children can play in the kitchen while you are preparing meals and snacks.

- Do you care for a toddler who is learning to hold his/her own cup? Slide a rubber band around the cup so it won't easily slip through little hands.

- If young children do not want to wear bibs, colorful bandana scarves will serve as bibs for

young "cowboys" or "cowgirls."

- Children like to do things themselves. Children as young as two can be taught how to put on their own coats. Have the child lay his/her coat on the floor, spreading it to show the lining. Show the child how to kneel behind the hood and slip each hand into an armhole. Have the child lift his/her arms to flip the jacket over the head and push his/her arms through the sleeves. Presto! Even the hood falls in place on the head!

- Keep an 8-inch square of waxed paper inside the back of a child's boot so the heel of the shoe can slide into the boot easily. The same piece of waxed paper can be used over and over again.

Couples Roundtable

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Are you engaged? Dating? Celebrating your 25th wedding anniversary? Remarried? or in a long-term relationship? Are you interested in strengthening that relationship? Then the "Couples Roundtable" is for you!

Penn State Cooperative Extension and Bethany Counseling Ministry are sponsoring a series of workshops for couples who are interested in enhancing their relationship. The program runs for five weeks on Mondays starting March 14 through April 11, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m., at Penn State Eastgate Center, 7th and Herr Streets, Harrisburg. Topics to be covered include: "Life Goes On," "Effective Communication," "Managing Your Finances Through Life's Transitions," "The

Juggling Act," and "Myers-Briggs Type Indicator."

The cost of the five-week session is \$30 per couple. For more information, and to register, call the Penn State Cooperative Extension-Dauphin County Office at (717) 921-8803. The registration deadline is Monday, March 7.



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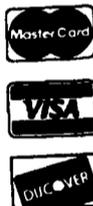
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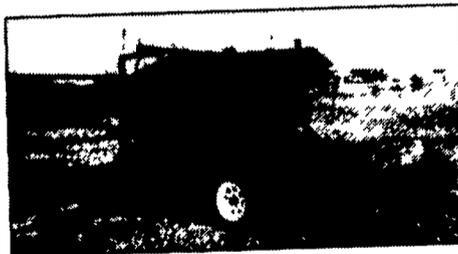
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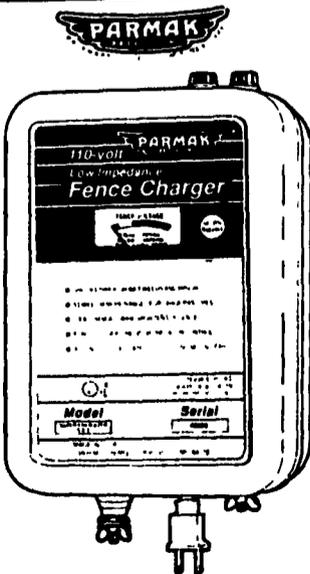
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