

## Consuming Thoughts

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*Editor's Note: Fay Strickler is a Penn State Home Economist for Penn State Cooperative Extension in Berks County. Her column replaces "Have You Heard," written by Doris Thomas, who retired recently. Fay will write about similar issues regarding foods, nutrition, health, and consumers' questions. If you have a question, Fay may be contacted at (215) 378-1327.*

During February—Heart Month, I generally receive more calls concerning foods that are either high in cholesterol or high in fat.

Consumers see all the publicity and tend to think about eating heart healthy foods. But really, eating low-cholesterol, low-fat (especially saturated fat) foods should be planned as part of your everyday diet, not just in February.

Eating foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol will increase blood cholesterol in most people. However, there are wide varia-

tions among people — related to heredity and the way each person's body uses cholesterol.

Some people can consume diets high in saturated fats and cholesterol and still keep normal blood cholesterol levels. Other people, unfortunately, have high blood cholesterol levels even if they eat low-fat, low-cholesterol diets.

On the average, Americans eat a diet in which about 36 percent of the calories come from fat. The Dietary Guidelines suggest a goal of 30 percent or less of total calories from fat. They also suggest limiting saturated fatty acids to less than 10 percent of calories. If you're not sure of your daily calorie intake, here's a rough guide: 1,600 calories a day is about right for many sedentary women (not physically active), many young children, and some older adults; 2,200 is about right for most children, teenage girls, active women, women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, and many sedentary men; 2,800 is about right for

teenage boys, many active men, and some very active women. The right level for you depends on your age, sex, body size, and how active you are.

Because children have a special dietary needs during early growing years, a goal of 30 percent or less of total calories from fat is not recommended for children under 2 years old. As young children begin to eat meals prepared for the family, usually at about 2 years of age or older, they should be encouraged to eat foods that are low in fat and saturated fatty acids but which also provide the calories and nutrients they need for normal growth.

Consumers are often confused about which foods have cholesterol and how much is recommended. Cholesterol is present in all animal products we eat — meat, poultry, fish, milk and milk products, and egg yolks. Both the lean parts (muscle) and fat of meat and the meat and skin of poultry contain cholesterol. Cholesterol is not found in foods of plant origin such as fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, and dry beans and peas. Quick breads and other baked products may contain some cholesterol if they are made with ingredients such as egg yolk, cheese, milk, butter, or lard.

Cholesterol in the foods you eat (dietary cholesterol) has less effect on blood cholesterol levels than do the saturated fatty acids in the foods you eat. Health authorities suggest that limiting dietary cholesterol intake to an average of less than 300 milligrams a day is best for most people.

These recommendations are not meant to prohibit the use of any specific food item or to prevent you from eating a variety of foods. For example, eggs and organ meats (such as liver) contain cholesterol, but they also contain essential vitamins and minerals, as well as protein. Such items can be eaten in moderation, as long as your over-all cholesterol intake is not excessive.

To avoid too much fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol:

- Choose lean meat, fish, poultry, dry beans and peas as your

RUTGERS, N.J. — "Black thumb" is not a permanent condition. "My mother-in-law was sure she was a hopeless case, killing every house plant that came her way, but, with "easy" plants and a minimum of coaching, she became an indoor gardener," said Martha Maletta, horticultural consultant for Hunterdon County Extension.

Healthy green plants add something special to the feeling of a room. Miserable looking specimens are depressing. To change a "black thumb" to "green" try one of the "easy" plants - there are several.

These plants earn their reputation for being "indestructible" because they will tolerate a wide range of conditions. That does not mean they will survive any and all abuse, however. So there are a couple of essentials that need mentioning:

More house plants are probably killed by kindness than neglect. Even the "indestructibles" can't stand overwatering. So make sure the plant container has good drainage holes. When watering, don't be stingy. Give the plant plenty of water until it runs out the bottom, and discard any excess still in the saucer after a few minutes. Then do not water again until the top of the soil feels dry. That may be a day or two or a week or two depending on condition - light and temperature, especially. Better to underwater than overdo it. The plants listed below will tolerate low light, but, to ensure success, place them in a north, east, or west

window or near a south window.

Now for the plants. Mother-in-law plant (Sansevieria) is available as several varieties, large and small, with variously patterned and colored leaves Cast-iron plant (Aspidistra) and Chinese evergreen (Aglaonema) are also available as several species and varieties. There are 20 species of Arrowhead plant (Syngonium, Nephthytis), vines that can be allowed to trail or climb.

Photos, (Scindapsus), also a vine looks rather like heartleaf philodendron but is available in variegated cultivars. I can attest to this plant's indestructibility. The three specimens now in my home, survived two years in a college dorm. They arrived home last June completely dead, apparently. But, I noticed that the roots looked okay, and, after being cut back completely and summered outdoors in the shade, they have all been resurrected.

Peace lily, (Spathiphyllum) will flower in moderate light and is available in large (24") and small (10") varieties. Parlor palm, (Chamaedorea elegans), stays relatively small (3 ft. - 6 ft); the dwarf C. bella stays about two feet tall. Bamboo palm (Chamaedorea erumpens), can grow very large. They are both attractive as well as "tough".

This short list of plants will do for starters. With experience and success and a developing green thumb they will be only an introduction to the pleasure of indoor gardening.



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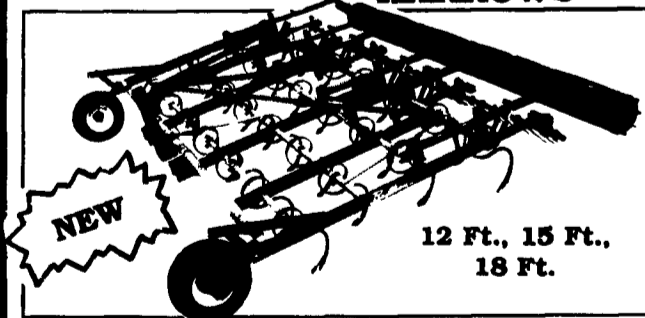
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## 3 PT. BASKET HARROWS



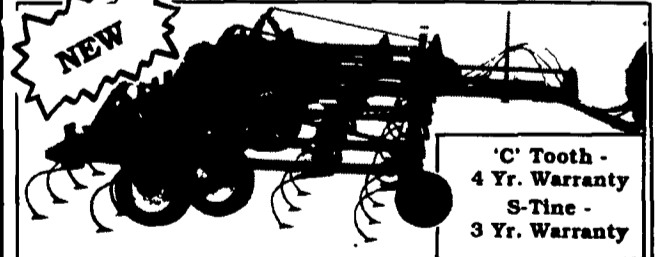
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