

Consuming Thoughts

Fay Strickler

Penn State Extension
Home Economist
For Berks Co.



According to the calendar, spring arrived several weeks ago. Let's just hope Mother Nature has looked at the calendar, too, and isn't going to keep switching the seasons back and forth. Even if the weather doesn't always cooperate, we can add a cheery note to our meals and snacks with fresh spring fruits and vegetables that are available now. One of the most flavorful spring fruits is the pineapple.

Although pineapples are available year round, fully half the crop moves to market from March through June. You've probably noticed pineapples have been in the market place for several weeks because Hawaii ships more pineapples in March than any other month. Puerto Rico ships

more in May. These areas are the main source of pineapples and Mexico is a secondary source.

Pineapples can be used first as a decoration in the home. Set it out for a day or two to give your home a warm Polynesian touch. Be sure to keep the fruit away from heat and sunlight.

A pineapple cannot sweeten or ripen after harvest because it has no starch reserve. It is the starch reserve that improves the texture and taste of bananas and pears after harvest. A pineapple will never be any sweeter than when it was picked but it may be less acid, since some acid can be lost through respiration. Eventually, the shell color will change and the fruit will soften but these are characteristics of deterioration, not

ripening.

Like peaches and tomatoes, pineapples must be harvested before they are fully ripe. This harvesting stage is sometimes called mature-green. The closer pineapple come to ripeness, the less market life it has when picked. On the other hand, the greener it is when picked, the less palatable it will be when the consumer buys it. A lot of compromising must be made.

So how do you choose a pineapple? The best advice is to let your eyes be your guide. Select one that is plump and fresh looking. Fresh, deep-green crown leaves are a good sign. A fruit that is old looking, dry and brown leaves should be avoided. Fragrance is a good sign, too, but usually the fruit is kept too cold to be fragrant. The eyes should be flat to almost hollow. Ease with which leaves can be pulled out is not a sign of good quality. The thump test is of no value and the shell color is not an indication of maturity. The grower can rely on a test of the sugar content using a special instrument.

Many supermarkets have cutters available which remove the skin and the core, while other produce departments have the fruit cleaned and cut in cubes and ready for immediate consumption.

Preparing a fresh pineapple at home takes only minutes. An easy

way is to place it on a cutting board and slice it crosswise into about one-inch slices. Then peel the slices: thick enough to remove the eyes, or thinner and remove the eyes with the thip of a vegetable peeler. Then cut into desired shapes.

For serving in the shell, wash the pineapple. With a large knife, start at the center of the crown and saw gently down through the

spikes, cutting the fruit in half lengthwise. Cut each half into two pieces. With a paring knife, cut about one-quarter inch from the skin, loosening the wedge completely. Cut the fruit into chunks and remove. Leave the shell. The shell may then be used as an attractive container in which to serve the pineapple or as one of the many salads containing pineapple.

Hershey Gardens Offers Free Admission To Moms On Mother's Day

HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) — Looking for something special to give your mother on Mother's Day? Why not take her to Hershey Gardens on Sunday, May 7, from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. where all mother's will be admitted free in honor of their special day.

Hershey Gardens is pleased to continue a tradition of allowing mother's free admission to see the peak bloom of more than 25,000 brightly colored tulips throughout the Gardens. Also blooming for mom will be crabapples, cherries, azaleas, rhododendrons and peonies.

Hershey Gardens is a 23-acre boanical garden featuring major

seasonal flowering displays, spring flowering bulbs and roses, themed garden areas and a collection of specimen trees including giant sequoia, blue atlas cedar, bald cypress, oriental spruce and others.

Hershey Gardens is open daily 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. through mid-October. Admission rates are \$4 for adults (ages 16-61); \$3.50 for senior citizens (ages 62 & over); and \$1.75 for youth (ages 3-15). A special family rate is also available. Further information on blooming schedules or other garden programs can be obtained by calling (717) 532-3492.

YOUR POST FRAME BUILDING HEADQUARTERS

Wickes Lumber is the place to turn for all your packaged building needs. We offer a wide selection of sizes and styles of buildings, perfect for a variety of needs. We also carry a complete assortment of steel for siding and roofing, quality lumber, treated posts, heavy-duty hardware and all the extras. Add delivery and credit plus attentive, knowledgeable

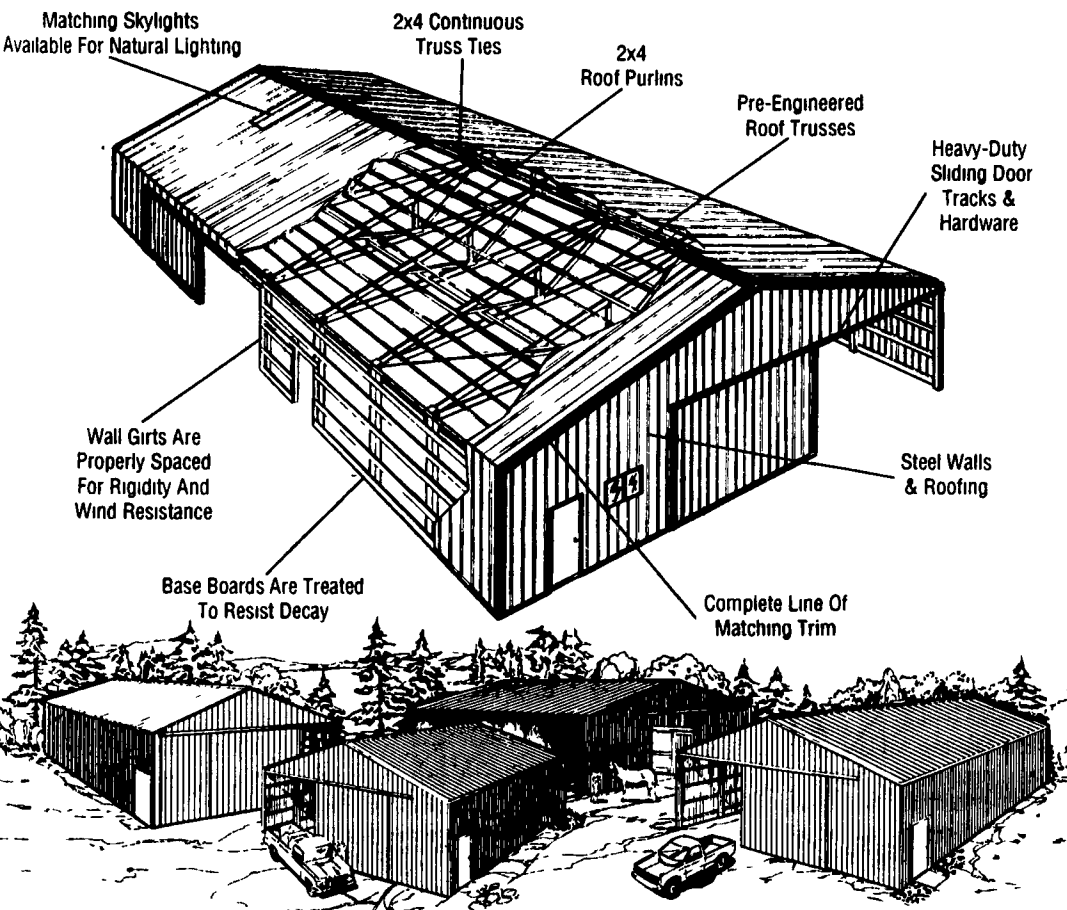
salespeople and you've got it all!

Computer Aided Customizing!

Any of our package designs can be tailored to suit your needs with our Computer Aided Design capabilities. Ask a Wickes Lumber associate for details!



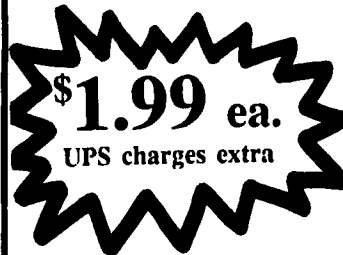
EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED!



Wickes Lumber

- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Allentown, PA
681 State Road
(215)967-3181 | Ephrata, PA
82 Garden Spot Rd.
(717)733-6521 | Exton, PA
145 S. Whitford Rd.
(215)363-9550 | Frederick, MD
5219 Urbana Pike
(301)662-4107 | Greensburg, PA
Route 136
(412)527-3531 |
| Harrisburg, PA
451 Amp-Wick Dr.
(717)564-4453 | Phillipsburg, PA
199 Strykers Rd.
(908)859-3600 | Reading, PA
2591 Centre Ave.
(215)921-0606 | Succasunna, NJ
39 Route 10
(201)584-6630 | Swedesboro, NJ
Rt. 322
(609)467-0846 |

WATER FILTERS



10" Sediment filters for grit, sand, particles, dirt, etc.
Micron Sizes
1, 5, 10, 20, 30, 50, 100

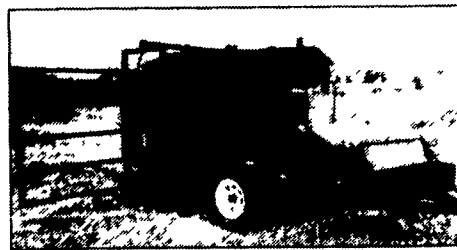
- 128 qty. - \$1.99 ea. case lot
- 80 qty. - \$2.25 ea.
- 40 qty. - \$2.50 ea.



742 E. Lincoln Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067

Call (717) 866-5388

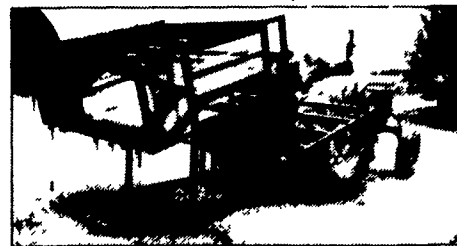
HEAVY DUTY HOOF TRIMMING TABLES



- 12-year building experience in the tables design
- 2"x2" tube frame chute
- chute measures 75"x28"x72" high
- 4" casters for cradle fold-up
- Two hydraulic cylinders for extra stability

- 2 10-inch lift belts
- 3500 lb. axle with or without brakes

- tool box for D.C pump and battery protection
- manure grate to keep work area clean



- fold away side gate
- removeable head board
- 45 min. video from International Hoof Trimming School of Canada

Delivery Available

THREE MODELS TO CHOOSE:

1. PORTABLE
2. STATIONARY
3. 3 POINT HITCH

BERKELMAN'S WELDING
RR 7, AYLMEER, ONTARIO, CANADA N5H 2R6
(519) 765-4230