

Keep Safety In Mind When Using Portable Kerosene Heaters

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — The high cost of home heating has increased the popularity of portable kerosene heaters. But these heaters can cause problems if not treated with caution, says a housing expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"Improved design has increased the efficiency and safety of most portable kerosene heaters," says Phyllis Adams, associate professor of agricultural and extension education. "Most new kerosene heaters include several safety features, such as a lower center of gravity to prevent tipping and automatic snuffing devices to extinguish the flame if the heater is knocked over. In the newer appliances, fuel is now wick-fed rather than gravity- or pressure-fed, permitting the fuel tank to be located further from the flame.

"But despite improvements, kerosene heaters still can be serious fire and safety hazards," Adams says. "Kerosene heaters should be installed properly according to manufacturer's directions and used only in safe, well-ventilated areas. They should never be used in tightly closed rooms, garages or workshops

where adequate ventilation is questionable or where there might be flammable liquids or combustible dust."

If you are considering purchasing a unit, make sure that state and local laws permit the use of unvented portable heaters in your home. Be sure to keep health and safety features in mind when choosing a specific model.

These features can include an Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or another recognized testing laboratory's label or listing; an automatic flame extinguisher in case the heater tips over; an oxygen depletion sensor; a removable fuel tank; and an accurate, easy-to-read fuel gauge.

Modern heaters are designed to burn more efficiently, reducing carbon monoxide emission from incomplete combustion. "However, ventilation still is essential when using these heaters," Adams warns. "A minimum of one square-inch opening of a window or door for every 1,000 BTU heat rating on the heater is recommended."

With surface temperatures sometimes exceeding 500 degrees Fahrenheit, kerosene heaters also can cause burns and fires if used carelessly. Adams offers some

tips to stay both safe and warm when using these appliances. "Place your heater on level ground, and keep it away from combustible walls, curtains, carpets and furniture," she says. "Also keep the heater away from high-traffic areas of a room to avoid tripping, contact burns and ignition of clothing. Children and pets should be taught to stay away

from the heater.

"When using a kerosene heater, install reliable automatic smoke/fire alarm detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in the vicinity," she says. "It's also a wise precaution to keep a Class B or C fire extinguisher nearby and easily accessible."

Using inappropriate fuel can produce excessive amounts of tox-

ic gases, smoke or flare-ups. "Use only K-1 kerosene fuel," Adams says. "Never refuel the heater while it is still hot, and never fuel the heater indoors. Remove the fuel tank, and fill it outside." Fuel should be stored in a tightly closed safety container that is clearly labeled and kept in a safe, cool and dry place.

Montgomery County Awards 4-H'ers At Fair

CREAMERY (Montgomery Co.) — Results of the Montgomery County 4-H Fair were posted recently.

Grand champion market hog went to Jacob Garges for his 280-pound hog. Jacob, 16, was also named champion showman. He is the son of Paul and Eileen Garges, Telford. Jacob, president of the livestock club, is in the 10th grade at C. Dook High School and is involved in the Green Pastures Sheep Club.

The champion market hog was purchased by Frederick Flowers for \$4.10 a pound. Jacob's fourth place duo swine were purchased by Hatfield Quality Meats for \$1.05 a pound.

The grand champion duo pen was shown by Craig Horvath. The 560-pound pen was purchased by Quakertown Vet for \$1.15 a pound.

Craig, 16, is the son of Gayle and Mike Horvath, Royersford. The 16-year-old attends Springfield High School.

At the steer show, Jacob Garges showed the reserve grand champion market steer, Alex, purchased by Moyer and Son for \$1 a pound. He was also named grand champion showman.

At the steer show, Gavin Bechtel was named grand champion with his 1,125-pound steer. The grand champion fitter and reserve showman, Gavin's parents are Sharon and Gary Bechtel, Sellersville. Gavin, 14, is in the 9th grade at Pennridge South Senior High School. The champion was purchased by Quakertown Vet for

\$1.67 a pound.

Christine Michalik showed the grand champion market goat and was named grand champion showman and reserve fitter. Christine's 60-pound champion was purchased by Alderfer Auction for \$3.75 a pound. Christine's parents are Cindi and Arch Michalik, Sellersville.

Wreath Making Workshop

WESTMINSTER, Md. — The Carroll County Extension Office is offering a workshop on holiday wreath making on December 4 from 6-8 p.m. The class will be held at the Carroll County Extension Office in Westminster. Frederick artist and Master Gardner Rena Damskey will instruct on making holiday wreaths and garlands from natural materials. Participants will complete a wreath, swag or garland. All participants should bring pruners and some type of wreath form (grapevine, straw, wire, etc.) to fit the size of the wreath or garland they would like to make. All other materials including greens and bows will be provided.

There is a \$15 charge for the workshop. Participants must register in advance. Class size will be limited. The closing date for registration is December 1. For questions or to request registration materials, call Lisa on Mondays or Thursdays at the Extension Office (410) 848-4611 or (410) 875-2801.



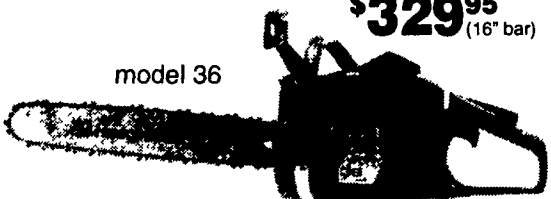
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