


Family Living Focus
by
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Dealing With Mold In Your Home

As we approach spring, the outside air temperature may vary from highs of 60 degrees to lows in the 20s. This temperature variation, along with moisture inside, makes our homes and buildings ripe for the onset of molds and potential rotting problems.

While mold and rot may not be the most pleasant topic to publicly discuss, it is a problem that is found in many homes, apartments, and business and public buildings.

Molds are biological pollutants, also called bioaerosols, which come from plant and animal materials. Molds growing in the home release spores into the air where they float as particulates. The larger particles settle onto surfaces, but smaller particles stay suspended in the air indefinitely.

Molds can grow slowly and do not require light to grow. High humidity, high moisture levels, and standing water are associated with mold growth. Molds give off a musty smell. Areas like bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, basements, crawl spaces, and entryways are places that may experience high moisture or humidity from water, steam, or snow accumulation. If you have indoor pets, the area near their water dish is an area to be on the lookout for mold growth.

Refrigerator drip pans, air conditioning coils, even dehumidifiers and humidifiers that have standing water, can be places for mold to grow. In the winter, other places to look for mold growth are on cold walls in unventilated attics and closets. Damp carpeting, water condensation on windows and walls, and wood rot are other conditions for mold growth.

The main reason to control mold growth is for health-related concerns. Mold spores cause allergic reactions in some people including watery eyes, sneezing, nasal congestion, itching, coughing, wheezing, difficulty breathing, headache and fatigue. The most severe reaction is an asthma attack.

The second reason for mold control is that your property value may decrease in cases where structural rot damage is caused by excessive mold growth.

What can you do to control mold? Keeping surfaces clean and dry is the most effective method of preventing and removing mold. Make sure everyone in the household knows how important it is to wipe up spills and keep wet items off floors. Use exhaust fans in kitchens, bathroom, and laundry area. Vent your clothes dryer to the outside and check that the vent is clear.

Throw out any damp carpeting or paneling. Check and fix any faucet and plumbing leaks. Raise the temperature of cold surfaces with insulation and storm windows.

Increase air circulation by opening closet doors and moving furniture away from the walls.

Always read and follow the directions for any commercial cleaning product you are going to use. Clean and disinfect humidifiers, dehumidifiers, refrigerator drip pans, and air conditioning coils. Chlorine bleach is recommended. Bleach can also be used on hard surfaces.

Use one cup of chlorine bleach to one gallon of water and dry quickly after cleaning. Always use caution when cleaning with chlorine bleach by wearing rubber gloves to protect your skin.

Do not mix bleach and ammonia or any other cleansers that contain ammonia. This can produce fumes that are extremely hazardous.

When the air is drier outside than air inside the house, increase the ventilation by opening doors and windows. Use a dehumidifier, but check the room size and the water removal method. Air conditioners can also lower humidity.

Other methods that may require a professional contractor to help to control moisture in your home include: correct drainage problems around downspouts and foundations, waterproof basement walls and insulate, control crawl space moisture, and replace carpet with hard-surface floors in basements or lower levels.

Mold growth is not something that you want to have to take care of this spring. Deal with the problem before it begins so you and your family can live without it!

Ups And Downs Of Outdoor Play

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — The Ups and Downs of Outdoor Play” is the title of the workshop being presented by Penn State Cooperative Extension. All child care providers and interested parents can participate in the workshop at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 11, at Berks County Agricultural Center, Leesport.

Sue Giachero, Penn State Cooperative Extension family living agent in Berks County, says “Outdoor play is very important for children but it often brings with it dangers. Each year it is estimated that over 205,000 chil-

dren are injured in playground accidents. Safety and proper supervision are critical when young children are playing outside.”

According to Giachero “the participants will learn how to identify playground hazards and how to provide proper supervision. Tips for maintaining play equipment and proper surfacing will also be discussed.”

The workshop is part of a statewide Better Kid Care child care provider training program presented by Penn State Cooperative Extension and partially funded by the Pennsylvania De-

partment of Public Welfare, and the Pennsylvania Child Care/Early Childhood Development Training System.

Child care providers can receive two DPW training credits for participating in the workshop. Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) are also available.

For more information on the program, support materials and other services from “Better Kid Care,” call Sue Giachero at (610) 378-1327. Visit the Better Kid Care Website at www.betterkid-care.psu.edu.

Women And Heart Disease Workshop

BEAVER (Beaver Co.) — When asked what they fear most of dying from, the majority of women say breast cancer. But in reality, they have a much greater chance of dying from heart disease.

Heart disease is the number one cause of death among American women and will take the lives of 500,000 women this year, with half having had no symptoms of the disease. It is also the leading cause of disability among women.

To respond to this emerging

issue, Penn State Cooperative Extension of Beaver County is sponsoring a Women and Heart Disease Workshop. This workshop will concentrate on the various risk factors that women can change to reduce their risk of heart disease. Women will be active participants by assessing their various risk factors so that they can set short-term, realistic goals to change some of their lifestyle habits.

The risk factors that will be highlighted include: smoking tobacco, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, overweight, diabetes,

physical activity level, and stress. In addition, information regarding the differences in heart disease between men and women, particularly the symptoms, will be discussed. Cooking demonstrations will also be conducted.

The four-week series is open to all women and will be conducted on consecutive Wednesdays beginning on March 20 and ending on April 10. The classes will be conducted at the Penn State Cooperative Extension Office at 1000 Third Street in Beaver. Cost is \$5 for the series. To register, call (724) 774-3003.

Teen Veterinary Science Course Offered


COLLEGEVILLE (Montgomery Co.) — Penn State Cooperative Extension of Montgomery County invites all teens to attend a 4-H teen veterinary science course being offered in the Trappe area. The course is open to all youth ages 14-18, who are interested in learning more about veterinary medicine.

According to County 4-H Coordinator Nancy Kadwill, “The program is geared to teens who are interested in veterinary medicine as a potential career. We hope to address how to prepare for a career, look at schooling needs, and help participants experience some of the daily duties of a veterinarian or vet technician. Also covered will be basic animal first aid, determining animal health, animal handling and safety, and lab work such as learning about X-rays and parasite control.

The course will start on Thursday, April 4 and continue for four consecutive Thursday nights up to and including May 2. Classes will be conducted from 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m. at the Animal Medical Center, which is located on Route 113 (25 West Third Avenue) near Ridge Pike in Trappe.

Parents are invited to the final session for refreshments and presentation of certificates to those who complete the course. The

4-H program is requesting a \$12 donation per person to help cover the cost of materials and other needs. Enrollees need to send a check, payable to “4-H Development Fund” c/o Nancy Kadwill, 1015 Bridge Road, Suite H, Collegeville, PA 19426 prior to the course. Be sure to earmark the check “Vet. Sci. Course.” Youth do not need to be in 4-H prior to the course but by enrolling in the program they will be listed as a member for the year.



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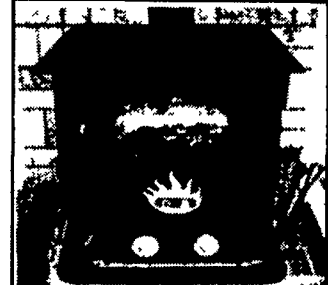
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Dairy Princess Court Candidate Search is On

The committee is seeking young women between the ages of 16 and 24 to serve as the York County Dairy Princess for the 2002-2003 year. All applicants may either live or work on a dairy farm, own 2 dairy animals, or be related to someone in the dairy industry and must have a sincere interest in promoting the dairy industry. Anyone who is of dairy princess age but feels that they cannot be the dairy princess may serve as a Dairy Ambassador on the court

- Girls between the ages of 13-15 may serve on the court as dairy maids
- Dairy Miss and Little Dairy Miss contestants must be between the ages of 5 and 12
- Dairy Princess and Dairy Ambassador contestants are required to give a speech and present a skit at the coronation
- Dairy Maids are required to prepare and present an informational poster.
- Dairy Miss & Little Dairy Miss contestants must prepare and present an original poem
- Being on the York County Dairy Princess Court provides an opportunity for tremendous personal growth and a chance to meet many new people
- All contestants must be present at the coronation to be held on June 8 to receive a sash and crown. An informational tea will be held on April 14 at the home of the current dairy princess, Michelle Walker, for anyone interested in being on the court

For more information and details contact
Lori Baumgardner 717-432-3169
Heather Crowl 717-862-3955

