

Energy Issues

How much does it cost to operate an electric blanket?

The typical electric blanket is rated at 150 watts, but runs only about 50 percent of the time when switched on. If you use the blanket 240 hours during a cold month, or eight hours a day, it could consume 18 kilowatt hours. This costs about \$1.44 at a rate of 8 cents per kilowatt hour.

I close heat registers in unused rooms to save energy. Do I have to watch how many registers I close?

Yes. Closing too many registers may cause your furnace to overheat. Furnaces need the cooling action of room air flowing through them to cool the unit. Closing off too many registers will restrict airflow and reduce that cooling action.

Furnaces are usually equipped with a safety device that shuts off the main gas valve to prevent furnace overheating. But it is not a good idea to use the safety switch as a controller. No more than two out of 10 registers should be closed at one time. After you have closed them, watch the furnace go through a long heating period. Turn your thermostat up to 80 degrees and check for anything unusual, such as the gas valve cycling off and on. If things don't seem right, open the registers.

Why don't the fluorescent lights in my garage operate well when the temperature drops?

The light output of a standard fluorescent lamp depends on the temperature surrounding the lamp and ballast. The optimum temperature of the wall of the fluorescent tube is 100 degrees. When the wall temperature of the tube varies on either side of this optimum point, the light output of the tube will drop.

Will setting back my thermostat at night save money?

A night setback of 10 degrees for eight hours will save from 7 to 12 percent on annual heating cost.

Landscape, Turf Conference

ALTOONA (Blair Co.)—The Altoona-Area Regional Land-

scape and Turf Conference will be conducted Friday, March 7, at the Ramada Inn in Altoona, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

There is a registration fee of \$35 per person for this year's conference and pre-registration is required. Two core and two credits in categories 6, 7, 18, and 23 will be awarded to licensed pesticide applicators at the completion of the day's program.

For additional information or to register contact the Blair County extension office at (814) 940-5989.

Teen Veterinary Science Course Offered

LANCASTER (Lancaster 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 15-18, who are seriously interested in learning more about veterinary medicine as a career.

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 du-

ties of a veterinarian or vet technician. We are very pleased to have the staff of the Animal Medical Center in Trappe volunteering to be our instructors."

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 Wednesday, March 26, and continue for four more consecutive Wednesday nights up to and including April 23. Classes will be held from 6:15 p.m.-8:00 p.m. at the Animal Medical Center in Trappe, located on Route 113 (25 West Third Avenue) near Ridge Pike. 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 \$15 donation per person to help cover the cost of materials and other needs. Enrollees need to send a check, payable to "Montgomery County Ext. Special Acct" to 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. Also include your name, address, age and birthdate, phone number, and reason for wanting to be in the course along with the check.

Pre-registration is required. Enrollment is very limited so you must call if you are interested in reserving a place in the program. Call (610) 489-4315 and leave your name, age, phone number, and address with the secretary during office hours or on the message machine after 4:30 p.m.

The Animal Medical Center deals primarily with companion animals and exotics. If you need further directions to the Animal Medical Center, contact (610) 489-8982.

Online Grafting Course Starts Soon

ITHACA, N.Y. — If you'd like to learn grafting but never have time to attend a scheduled course or don't live near Cornell, you can now learn this advanced gardening technique on your own time, from any place you like.

With access to a properly equipped computer and the Internet, you can take The How, When, and Why of Grafting for Gardeners, a noncredit distance-learning course that includes web-based lectures and quizzes, video demonstrations, hands-on grafting with live plants, and interactive discussions.

The 10-week course requires

about four to eight hours of work per week and will be offered March 17-May 23. Registered students will receive a password to access the course Website, from which they can read weekly lectures, view still images and video clips of grafting procedures, engage in online discussions with fellow students and the instructors, and take multiple-choice quizzes. With live hibiscus plants and a grafting knife supplied by Cornell, students will practice hands-on grafting in the comfort of their own homes. Plants will be shipped about three weeks before class begins so they have a chance to acclimate. Last day for registration is March 10.

Distance learning is no longer a lonely, isolating experience. The How, When, and Why of Grafting for Gardeners encourages interaction among students and-between the instructors and students. Through a web-based discussion board, students can pose questions, share an experience, or even post images. The instructors take an active, daily part in the discussions and respond via the discussion board or e-mail.

To register for the course, or for more information go to <http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/hort494/mgevents/registration.html>.

Learn To Speak Pennsylvania German

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)—The Historical Society offers a 10-week, Introductory Pennsylvania German Dialect class, intended for persons who wish to begin study of the dialect as spoken in the York and Lancaster Counties area. Instructor Stephen D. Miller will start this

year's introductory class on Saturday mornings, March 22 to May 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Historical Society.

To aid learning and access to the instructor, class size will be limited to the first 30 applicants on a first-come, first-serve basis. Advance registration for the course at \$75 per Society member and \$90 per nonmember is required with Lola Lehman at the Historical Society. The registration fee covers handouts and course work but not the textbook.

Open to the public, the sessions will be geared for those who have

little or no knowledge of the dialect or of German word order. The class will provide examples of the use for dialect words, word lists, questions on the lesson, and English-to-dialect exercises. Emphasis will be placed on pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and some oral reading in class. Call (717) 393-9745 to register.

Ag Education Conference

MILLERSTOWN (Perry Co.) — The Annual Summer Technical Conference and In-Service Training for the Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators (PAAE) and the Pennsylvania Young Farmers Association (PYFA) is scheduled for July 7-10 at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown.

This year's conference will be a special event, because Pennsylvania is also hosting the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Region VI Conference. In addition to Pennsylvania teachers, teachers from Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, Delaware, New York, and all of the New England states will attend.

For more information, contact Krista Pontius at Greenwood School District at (717) 589-3116.

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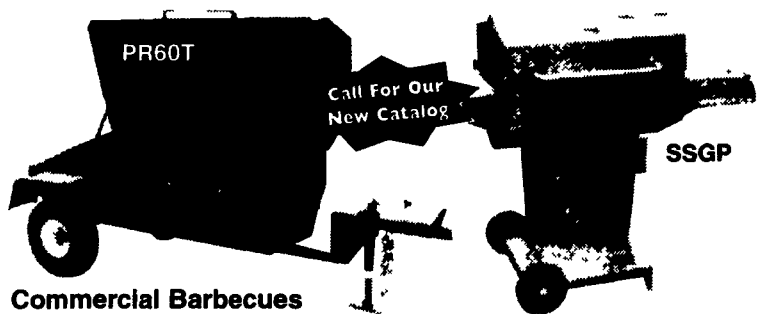
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