

Y ask OU

(Continued from Page B11)

asks how she can find out the worth of the mowers.

QUESTION — Jean W., Newmanstown, wants to buy the book, "It Happened in the Hills of Kentucky," by John Vogel, copyrighted 1952. Call (717) 949-2846.

QUESTION — Nicolette Wagman, Seven Valleys, is doing research for a book about musical instruments and makers in York County. She wants information and photographs of instruments and their makers from any era. Call her at (717) 428-1856.

QUESTION Shirley Schwoerner, Wysox, writes that some time ago she had clipped an answer in this column from Joyce Raubenstine who told how to make creams from aloe vera. The instructions were unclear, and she asks if someone can tell her the exact amount of aloe vera to use. The directions she has are as follows: To prepare a herb ointment or salve, crush the leaves of the aloe vera and mix with four parts melted fat (lard or shortening) and one part dry white wine. Heat gently for 20 minutes. Cool slightly and strain.

Shirley writes that her husband's chronic back problem was aggravated during haymaking. She rubbed aloe vera leaves on his back, and it helped instantly. He was amazed. It was a sloppy procedure, so they'd like to make the salve if possible.

Shirley adds a bit of humor by writing that she can't boil water without a 3x5 card, "so you can see my problem with the aloe vera (instructions)."

QUESTION — Kenneth Wirtz, White Hall, Md., is having trouble finding replacement parts for his electric three-point hitch that is on a 10HP Sears garden tractor purchased in 1977. The parts are no longer available through Sears. The item is Model number 917.253130 electric 3-point hitch. Wirtz would appreciate hearing from someone who no longer uses the part. He doesn't need the complete hitch, just the power assist lift. He is willing to pay a fair price for the item. Call him at (410) 329-2175.

QUESTION — Sharon Heller writes that they have 75 acres in Perry County. About half of the acreage is mowed by a neighbor who sells the 1/2 ton mixed hay rolls for his own profit. She wants to know how to find an average rental for the acreage. What is the best

way to advertise the available acreage?

QUESTION — Marie Hixson, Crystal Spring, wants to know how to grow wild rice. They live on a farm with some wet areas that she believes would be suitable for growing rice. Anyone know where she can find information?

QUESTION — Warren Glidewell, Bloomsburg, wants to know where to find Flemish giant rabbits in a fawn color.

QUESTION — C. Gutshall, Carlisle, is looking for proper cleaning instructions for printed cotton seed sacks made in the 1940s. She also would like a Web site address that offers information on older cotton and burlap feed sacks.

ANSWER — Mary Sasser, Maryland, reports that four people responded to her request for a Dick and Jane reader that dates back to about 1943-1944, and contained a story about a neighbor who was restoring an old rocking horse, which was white with dapple spots on the rump and the platform was red.

ANSWER — C. Faus, Hergins, wanted to know how to store raw vegetables such as carrots, squash, kohlrabi, and more to store for winter use. Richard Cook, Friendsville, recommends purchasing the book, "Keeping the Harvest, Home Storage of Vegetables and Fruit," available from Cumberland General Store, 1 Highway 68, Crossville, Tenn. 38555.

Thanks to Joel Gilmore, Newark, N.Y., for sending the following information:

If your garden has been even moderately successful, you're sure to be harvesting more vegetables than you can, and your freezer is full, it's time to start thinking about storing for future use. When frost threatens, and it will be here before you know it, you will suddenly have an overabundance to deal with.

Different vegetables require different storage conditions and keep for varying lengths of time. Certain general rules, however, apply to all:

- Vegetables should be mature or nearly mature at harvest.

- They should be free of all visible evidence of disease or severe insect damage.

- They should be handled carefully to avoid the cuts and bruises that increase the likelihood of mold or

bacterial decay in storage.

They should be harvested prior to any severe or chilling frost. Even a light frost may cause invisible damage that will keep them from storing well.

Where are you going to find these storage conditions? Consider one or more of the following possibilities.

Storage Locations

Refrigeration: An extra refrigerator is ideal for storing small quantities of vegetables requiring cold or cool, moist conditions. If it's a manual defrost model, so much the better, it will be easier to regulate the temperature. Armed with a thermometer and the knowledge that the temperature in the crisper is 3 degrees colder than the upper level, you should be able to provide optimum conditions.

The relative humidity is about 40 percent to 50 percent in the refrigerator, more in the crisper. That humidity can be increased by washing the vegetables, putting them into plastic bags with two to four inch holes for ventilation, and closing with plastic ties. The cold surface of the plastic bags causes the water vapor inside the bag to condense.

Insulated Cooler: A plastic foam cooler, or a box constructed of expanded polystyrene sheets, will also serve if kept outside in a sheltered area, such as an enclosed porch. If the box is kept full, the vegetables will keep each other from freezing. They are living things, even after being separated from the plants, and will continue to generate and give off heat from their respiration as long as they are alive. Again, as above, use ventilated plastic bags for humidity.

Basement: For long term storage of vegetables in a basement that has a furnace, you will need to partition off a room and insulate it. Pick the north or east side, if possible, in an area that includes a window, no heating ducts or pipes. Putting in removable slatted flooring will keep the vegetables off the floor, help the air circulate, and allow you to use water or wet material (such as dampened sawdust) underneath to increase the humidity. The room can be kept cool by opening the window on cool nights and closing it on warm days. Be sure to have a screen to keep out animals and insects and a shade to keep out light.

In-Ground Container: You can bury a galvanized garbage can upright, leaving four inches above ground level. This will keep potatoes, beets, carrots, and turnips through the winter. Keep them in perforated plastic bags of a convenient size for use. Choose a well drained site, and dig a ditch around to divert surface water. Cover

the can lid with straw and waterproof canvas or plastic.

Birthplace: Leave them in the ground. Beets, carrots, kohlrabi, turnips, radishes, rutabagas, parsnips, and horseradish can be left in the ground right where they grow. When there's a good frost — a crusting of the ground — in late November or early December, cover them with a two-foot layer of oak leaves (not maple), straw, or coarse hay. Only use non-packing materials. (One enterprising man we know collects the bags of leaves his neighbors have put out for pickup.) Then cover with burlap. Be sure to mark the area with stakes, or you'll never find what you want when everything's covered with snow. If you've mulched properly, vegetables shouldn't freeze. If, by chance, they should be frozen, take out only what you'll cook the same day; they won't keep in the refrigerator.

Curing: Some vegetables need to be cured before storing at their optimum temperature.

Potatoes: After harvest, hold them in moist air for a week or two at 60 degrees to 75 degrees. Wounds do not heal at 50 degrees or below. They will then keep for several months to cool, moist conditions. Be sure to store them in the dark to keep them from turning green. Stored potatoes tend to become sweet, but if you hold them at about 70 degrees for a week or so before using them, they'll return to normal.

Home Storage of Fruits

Apples: Late maturing varieties of apples will store for use throughout the winter if the fruit is hard, mature, and in perfect condition. Apples picked too green are subject to a number of storage disorders, such as scald and bitter pit; if picked beyond maturity, they quickly become overripe in storage.

Cool as quickly as possible after harvest for best results. For most varieties of apples, the optimum storage temperature is 30 degrees to 32 degrees with a 90 percent relative humidity. Higher storage temperatures reduce the storage life considerably, as apples ripen twice as fast at 40 degrees as at 32 degrees. Apples can be stored outdoors in insulated boxes or straw lined pits or buried in containers as long as the outside temperatures are above 10 degrees. They will last longer and retain more flavor if kept in a fruit cellar in plastic bags or in cardboard boxes lined with plastic sheets. The cardboard box and plastic bags or liners must be perforated to allow air circulation. If the fruits are individually wrapped in tissue paper or newspaper before being placed in boxes or baskets, you will achieve better results. Plastic liners help maintain high humidity and

prevent the apples from being affected by the surrounding air. The balance of humidity is subtle; excess humidity will encourage decay, and insufficient humidity will encourage shrivelling.

Avoid storing apples too long and check regularly for signs of spoilage. Mustiness will spread to healthy specimens. When spoilage or withering becomes a problem, the apples can be preserved by canning techniques. The storage duration depends on the variety.

Grapes: Grapes can be stored as whole fruit in a cellar for four to six weeks. Storage can be useful to hold the fruit until processing as juice or wine can be accomplished or to extend the time they can be eaten as table grapes. Grapes will readily absorb odors from other fruits; keep them away from other produce if possible. They can be stored in cardboard boxes, or crates lined with a layer of clean, dry straw. Pack bunches no more than two or three layers deep and place straw or sawdust between each bunch. Check often for spoilage.

ANSWER — Cindy Eshleman, R.3, Box 7957, Jonestown, PA 17038, wants to know what day of the week the Selingsgrove Horse Sale is conducted. Thanks to Maxine Klingler, Selingsgrove, who recommends she call Middleburg Livestock Auction Sales at (570) 837-2222. The auction address is Route 522, P.O. Box 185, Middleburg, PA 17842.

Another reader wrote that he presumes Cindy is referring to Middleburg Livestock Auction located on Rt.522. The auction conducts a horse sale the last Saturday of every month.

ANSWER — Mike White, Bernville, wanted to know what to do about birds pulling up corn plants. Thanks to Roy Wright, Newville, who said he successfully used a product call Crow-Fox, which is a coal-tar liquid. A farm supply store should know where to purchase it or a similar product.

ANSWER — Dick Herring wanted to know where to find railroad ties. Thanks to a reader who wrote that railroad ties are available from Reese Services, 9486 Buchanan Trail, (Pa. Rt. 16) Mercersburg, PA 17236. Phone (717) 328-3211. The private contractor has everything from new to well-used ties from the standard 8-foot to 12-14-foot sizes (used in laying switches).

Reese Services is located across the road from the intersection of Pa. Rt. 416 S. off Pa. 16 near Mercersburg.