

Extend-A-Family offers a valuable service

Members of the Louise and Chesley Women's Institutes were introduced to a relatively new program servicing Grey and Bruce counties this winter, when Kundan Abelsohn, co-ordinator of Extend-a-Family spoke at their meetings.

The Extend-a-Family Association is a group of families in the area who have handicapped children or families who are interested in extending their families and their friendship to these children with special needs.

The interested family or "Host Family" is matched with a physically or mentally handicapped child from their community. The time spent together can mean a much-needed social outlet for a child who may otherwise have difficulty making friendships outside the home. For the family of the handicapped child this can provide a needed period of relief, and opportunity for mom and dad to spend time with other children in the family, or perhaps even allow time for a quiet shopping trip together. They can relax in the knowledge that their child is being cared for in a loving and nurturing environment.

For the community at large, this is a real opportunity to achieve a greater awareness of the needs and attributes of the handicapped person.

Host families find that their lives are enriched by the presence of one whose life is often different than their own.

Children can learn at an early age to accept one another in spite of their differences. Hopefully this will foster an awareness in the community to accept handicapped people as people first.

One does not have to be a family to become involved in Extend-a-Family. Single people, teenagers, senior citizens or groups can all have the opportunity to extend their lives to share some time with a handicapped child. Often this just involves a few hours a week or even a month. It is not even necessary to move outside of one's own home to offer friendship in the Extend-a-Family program. Some individuals become "Phone Pals" to a handicapped person and through a simple phone call the day can be made bright for a person for whom the phone does not usually ring. Georgina Smith (pictured

below), a member of the Parkhead Women's Institute, enjoys the relationship that she shares with her "Phone Pal" Faye Mason from Warton.

Extend-a-Family program has been growing throughout the province of



Ontario for more than 8 years. There are over 20 existing programs.

For more information contact a representative of the Extend-a-Family organization in your community.



Mrs. Georgina Smith (right), a member of Parkhead WI, enjoys the relationship she shares with her "Phone Pal" Faye Mason from Warton.

How to repot your house plants

by Tony Hogervorst
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Has your otherwise healthy, growing plant started to lose vigor or fade away? **Maybe** you should think about repotting.

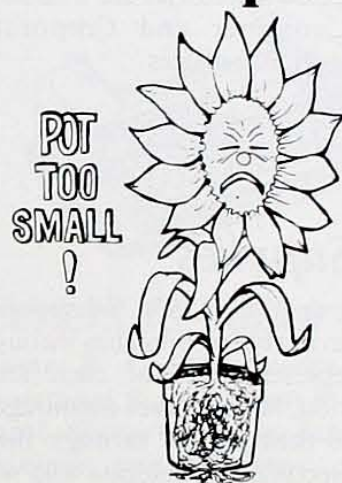
As the plant parts above the soil increase in mass (ie. grow), they require a greater root mass to support their water and mineral needs. If the pot they are in is too small they will not be able to develop that needed root mass. When you see roots growing out of the bottom of your pot you will know that it is time to repot.

Repot in your garage or basement (if it's warm enough) or if you have no choice, on your kitchen table or sink. It will be a messy job.

Repot anytime. Most healthy, growing plants will need it from time to time.

Don't repot into something that is too big! That is a common mistake. Repot in either a container only one size larger than the previous one, or in a pot which has a diameter one-third to one-half of the height of the plant. Repot again when the roots sneak out of the drain hole.

When you purchase a new pot, rinse it once with warm water. Keep



your old pot for starting cuttings or spring garden plants.

If you use new potting soil, you shouldn't need to fertilize right away. But if you use old soil, mix in a bit of plant food or add it to your first watering.

How do I repot? First, put in a half inch to two inches (depending on size of new pot) of stone chips or gravel. Then put in dry soil and plant. Press down firmly with your fist or palm and water well.

So if your plant appears underfed or underwatered, or the bottom leaves are fading, or the roots are climbing down into your carpet, maybe you should think about repotting!