

the HERALD

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News For The Home Owner And Home Buyer

Black plastic handy for killing unwanted

The following is in answer to one of the questions being asked by gardeners.

Q: By the side of my house I have flowers which come up each year. They are lovely, but during the past two years weeds and grass come up among the flowers. Is there anything I could pour on the entire roots of all plants and weeds to kill them so they will not come up in the summer? I use salt and hot water for grass between cement blocks, but I believe something stronger will be needed in this case. G.A.K.

A: Your best bet in a situation of this kind is to use black plastic. Cover the entire area with black plastic. Black plastic keeps it dark and plants cannot grow in the dark. A roll of black plastic, 4x40 feet, costs about \$1.50. The plastic will need anchoring, either by inserting the edges in a shallow trench or by placing soil or rocks on it to keep it

from blowing. Strips of plastic can be overlapped or trenched close together to minimize the weed problem at the joints.

After the plastic is put down, pine bark or gravel can be spread over it to improve the appearance.

The problem with killing the plants with chemicals is that other weeds will soon take their place, unless something is used strong enough to sterilize the soil for a long period of time, and that could be risky.

Q: Friends of ours have a California privet hedge which they prune back each spring. Could these cuttings be rooted? Mrs. W.J.M.

A: A privet hedge is easy to establish from cuttings. It can be a successful do-it-yourself project, even for a beginner who has never rooted anything before.

Privet probably is used more than any other type of plant for clipped hedges throughout the United States. There is a variety suitable for almost every climate zone. It is fast growing, good for sun or shade, will survive in poor soil, and is not bothered by most plant diseases or insects.

Early summer is one of the best times of the year to plant privet cuttings. They should be softwood cuttings (this year's new growth). Get them into water or between moist paper as quickly as possible to keep them from drying out. Cuttings six inches long are best.

Plant them in the ground in a shady place. If they must be

planted in a sunny place, shade them until roots have developed.

DIG A HOLE about six inches deep for each cutting. Fill the holes with a mixture of good soil and sand, half and half. The purpose of the sand is to provide good drainage. Vermiculite can be substituted for sand. It is available at most large garden centers.

Three inches of the steam goes into the ground. Keep as many leaves as possible on the above-ground part and remove those from the bottom part.

It helps to use a root

promoting hormone, such as rootone, but it isn't essential. It speeds root formation.

Rootone can be purchased at a garden center. Follow directions on the label for use.

Water the cuttings often enough - perhaps daily - to keep the soil from drying out. If you can find enough glass jars to put one over each cutting, it will not be necessary to water as often.

IT IS A GOOD idea to plant two or three times as many cuttings as you need because some of them may not take. This happens even to professionals.

The cuttings should be w

Danson announces new program

Urban Affairs Minister Barnett Danson has announced that the price ceiling on new homes eligible for grants or loans under the new Federal Government housing program will be raised in the Oakville-Toronto and Vancouver areas.

Specific changes to the legislation will be made

shortly but in speaking to delegates at the recent Liberal convention Danson said he recognized the ceilings, set at \$43,000 were too low in light of the existing market conditions.

Tentative increases in the minimum amount for eligibility were pegged at \$48,000 and this would allow a far larger number of people

to take advantage of the government system.

Before he announced the changes, Danson classed homes in the Oakville area at \$41,000 or under, as eligible for grants.

The cabinet minister said the loans would go to those buying first homes which were "moderate" in price. Moderate pricing came in at

\$43,000 for Toronto homes and around \$28,000 for houses in smaller towns and rural areas.

One instigator of the change was a Vancouver Liberal delegate, who formed Danson that price lots alone in some areas of British Columbia bringing in \$30,000 or more

This week's conservation tips

Do's and don'ts for you

The biggest user of energy in the kitchen is usually the stove—electric or gas. You can economize and still turn out delicious meals.

THE OVEN

Using the oven rather than several elements saves energy because once the oven reaches the required heat it shuts off and cooks with stored heat. Elements, on the other hand, are always on.

Plan meals. With a little forethought, meals can be planned to save energy. How about a total oven meal: casserole, baked potatoes and baked apple dessert. If you have several items that usually cook at different temperatures, select the average temperature and remove each as it's done.

Multiple meals. Cook a larger-than-needed quantity of one meal. Freeze a portion of it for another day (as soon as it has cooled to room temperature). You'll save energy and money.

Keep the door closed. The more quickly you can put an item into a hot oven the less heat will be lost. Did you know that each time you open the door you lose about 20 percent of the heat that's inside? Don't peek!

Don't use the oven for small jobs. If you're toasting or broiling, use a smaller appliance such as a toaster or fry pan. Remember that toasting bread in the oven takes three times more energy than in a pop-up toaster.

Don't pre-heat unless necessary. Usually pre-heating is a waste of energy—except for cakes and pastries. Items that will be cooking for more than an hour do not need a pre-heated oven. And setting oven temperature higher than required won't make the oven heat up more quickly.

Use glass baking dishes. Glass or glass ceramic baking dishes transfer heat more efficiently than metal and let you set the temperature about 25 Fahrenheit degrees (14 Celsius degrees) lower.

Thaw frozen foods. Most frozen foods, especially meat, should be thawed before cooking. (Do it in the refrigerator to avoid bacteria build-up.) Cooking frozen foods takes longer and uses more energy. Take meat out of the refrigerator about an hour before cooking time to warm up, but be sure to keep it covered.

Turn down heat near the end. If you're cooking a roast you can save energy by turning off the heat about 30 minutes before it's finished. The remaining heat should be enough to finish the job.

Check oven temperature. At least once a year and preferably more often, check the temperature of your oven with a thermometer. You'll make sure that the dial is accurate and that you're not wasting energy.

Warming with stored heat. You can easily warm some items—buns or plates—with retained oven heat, after the main meal is cooked. Now, do you really need an electric bun warmer?

Don't use oven for supplemental heat. The oven is an expensive and inefficient way to warm the kitchen. If you need more heat, a small space heater makes more sense.

ELEMENTS

Here are some ways to save on the top of the stove. **Pots and pans.** Buy pots and pans that are bright and shiny, with straight sides and flat bottoms and tightly fitting lids. Your food will cook more quickly, more evenly and more economically.

Does the pot fit? The bottom of the saucepan should cover the element entirely but not extend more than one inch beyond the outer ring of the element.

Don't drown the beans. When you're cooking any vegetable use only a small amount of water. You don't even have to cover all the vegetables with water; the steam will cook them. You'll save energy, vitamins and flavour.

Use minimum heat. Once the water is boiling, turn the dial to the lowest heat that will keep it boiling. A higher

setting only creates more steam and doesn't speed up the cooking.

Double boiler. Use a double boiler for vegetables, sauces and heating cold foods. One element instead of two!

A pressure cooker is a good fuel saver. Use it for stews, soups, pot roasts and almost all your vegetables.

A vegetable steamer is another good idea. This small, collapsible metal basket folds or expands to fit most saucepans. Very little water—or energy—is needed to steam food.

Turn off heat. Another way to save is to turn off electric burners two or three minutes before the end of the proper cooking time. The elements will stay hot and food will continue to cook.

