

The environment friendly gift:

Or how to get invited up to the cottage this summer

by Dr. D.A. Chant
and W.M. Glenn

Not everyone is lucky enough to own a cottage. But unless you are a complete social misfit, it's more than likely that you will be invited up to somebody's summer place before Labour Day rolls around. And once you have wrangled that precious invitation, there's a couple of simple courtesies or precautions you should take to ensure you'll be invited back.

For instance, if you're expecting to drink something cool and refreshing on those hot summer afternoons, you should take along a case or two of your favourite beverage (packaged in their handy returnable containers, of course). If you're partial to the barbecue, a side of fresh salmon or a package of specially-marinated steaks might be appreciated.

And while you're being considerate, you might want to give some thought to making things a little easier on the main attraction of the weekend, the natural environment. They say, that if you love the wild, you are always supposed to leave your campsite a little cleaner than you found it. In these pollution-conscious days, with millions of us crowding into cottage country each weekend, the adage should be taken a lot further than just packing out your trash and throwing an extra bucket of water on the campfire.

So, if you have a couple of dollars left over, you might want to bring along a special, environmentally-friendly gift for your hosts - a token of appreciation for rescuing you, at least for a little while, from the heat and the grime of a city in the summer.

Let your imagination run loose for a while - start with the environmental problems that especially worry you - and you'll come up with a long list of thank-you gifts for the cottage

owner concerned about pollution. We've compiled just a few to get you started.

Some things spring to mind immediately. A number of stores are beginning to stock and advertise a wide variety of environmentally-safe cleansers, phosphate-free detergents, and bio-degradable soaps. These are products that won't strain the septic system, feed the algae in the lake or foam up all over the neighbour's beach. And even if there's a box already under the cottage sink, a second one will never go to waste.

A pack of photo-degradable garbage bags (bags that will break down in sunlight) might make things a little easier at the local landfill site. However, a portable recycling bin with a tight lid, for carrying bottles and cans and newspapers back to the city (and its recycling truck) each Sunday, may make an even better gift.

A package of wildflower seed mix might be appreciated by the cottager who doesn't want to spend every weekend slaving over a lawn that looks like a billiard table or a golf green. Leave enough grass for a game of badminton or croquet, and seed the rest with flowers or low growing ground cover. Then sit back, forget about mowing and weeding and watering, and watch the birds.

And while we're still talking about plants, some gardeners claim certain plants can repel some furry garden raiders. The odour of nasturtiums, for instance, is reputed to be offensive to woodchucks and rabbits (while still attracting hummingbirds). The leaves are supposed to make a tasty salad, too. In the same vein, deer don't like foxgloves, moles don't favour cas-

tor plants, and rabbits will avoid the dusty miller ornamental. We can't guarantee they'll work, but everybody remembers a guest bearing flowers.

There's a growing demand for the so-called natural pest control products, such as diatomaceous earth (a nontoxic abrasive that literally punches holes in bugs' hard shells) and a number of pest control soaps. However, some of the most effective pest killers are other bugs. A praying mantis or a box of ladybugs or lace wing flies will eat their weight in aphids or other insect pests everyday. That's an unusual gift that keeps on giving.

If your hosts' garden is being ravaged by larger varmints - raccoons or possums or ground-hogs - and you can persuade them to evict rather than exterminate, perhaps a live-release trap would be welcomed. Bait the trap - they come in all sizes, from chipmunk to bear-size - with a suitable delicacy and when the spring's sprung, deport the unwelcome guest a few miles down the road. Unfortunately, live traps are not recommended for uninvited visitors of the human variety.

For the fisherman, a copy of the Ministry of Environment's 1989 Guide to Eating Ontario

Sport Fish, along with a good fish identification guide, could hit the spot. Or how about a package of barbless hooks, to make it easier to release the fish you don't plan to eat anyway, and a pair of long-handled fish pliers to remove lures quickly and easily, without manhandling the fish too long.

How about a simple acid rain test kit for measuring the local impacts of this major pollution problem? Or a water sampling

kit for collecting clean samples for analysis by the local Public Health Laboratory? The Ontario Ministry of Environment also publishes a very useful (and free) environmental manual for cottagers, titled *Cottage Country*, that might round out the package nicely.

The greatest weapon against pollution is awareness. Environmental damage can be a slow,

Continued on Page 12

**VERY EASY
VERY VOGUE
1/2 PRICE**
UNTIL JULY 31st

**SUMMER & FALL FABRIC
20% OFF
JULY & AUGUST**

**GEORGETOWN
FABRICS 877-2477**
Georgetown Market Place

gf
"a little different"

**MAID SERVICE?
WHO'S BEST?**

Maidco
THAT'S WHO
THE AWARD
WINNER
CHAMPION
MAID SERVICE
ON LIVE IT UP
TV SHOW
COAST TO COAST

Call Margaret
873-2165

**GEORGETOWN
FRUIT MARKET**
HOME OF FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES

**BOX PLANT
79¢**

140
GUELPH
STREET
877-8882

Delacour's
For All Your Fine China,
Silver, Crystal & Giftware

227 MAIN ST MILTON
878-0050

DAY CARE
12 Mos. & Up - 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

FREE Pick-up
And Delivery

- Hot Lunches & Snacks
- Games & Music
- Lots of Toys
- Car Trips

- VERY REASONABLE RATES -
For More Information Please Call 853-0370

WESTERN CARPET & VINYL

- BROADLOOM
- VINYL
- TILE
- AREA RUGS

FULL
INSTALLATION
DEPT.

**FAST,
FRIENDLY SERVICE**

184 GUELPH ST. 873-2355

96 KENNEDY RD.
BRAMPTON
456-0971

OSBORNE DECOR

**CUSTOM
PLEATED SHADES
&
MINI BLINDS
25% OFF**

**FREE MULTI-COLOUR
STRIPING
PLUS FREE INSTALLATION**

509 Guelph Street
Norval, Ontario

"CALL FOR YOUR NO OBLIGATION SHOP AT HOME SERVICE"
877-6086