

Ways to conserve energy and save money all at once

By BARBARA HALSALL
Herald Special

SHOPPING THAT SAVES
Would you like to save \$2000... Information from the Ministry of Energy tells us that this is the difference between choosing the most efficient model rather than the least efficient over the life

time of six major appliances. Appliances now carry an EnerGuide rating that appears as a sticker on the appliance and shows how many kilowatt hours of electricity it uses per month. By multiplying this figure x 12 months x the appliance life in years x local electricity costs (dollars per kWh) we will arrive



at what the Ministry of Energy calls "the second price tag". If the purchase price is thought of as a down payment, then the second price tag can be thought of as a series of monthly instalments that must be paid over the next 15 to 20 years. I have just purchased a clothes dryer. I never do anything by half measures so shopping included getting information from the Ministry of Energy as well as touring stores. Once I decided on the features that were important to me I saved gas by phoning around to compare prices. I did end up buying in town at Goodlet's who gave me the best price for the model I wanted. One of the items on my shopping

list was the EnerGuide rating. The least efficient clothes dryer was rated at 100 kWh while the most efficient was rated at 77 kWh, so the first would use 30 percent more energy than the most efficient. Another way to look at it is that my dryer could be operated for 3.5 months for free compared to the amount of energy used by the least efficient. The information from the ministry goes on to point out that some efficient appliances are more expensive and so consumers will have to decide whether the extra cost is justified by the lower "second price tag". For example, a dryer with only a timer is cheaper than a dryer with a thermostat or a humidity

sensor than will detect when the clothes are dry and shut off. This extra feature, however, will save energy and can actually prolong the life of the clothes. The information from the ministry says that there are other benefits in buying the most efficient products. They often offer better construction and advanced technology. Energy-efficient dishwashers use less hot water leaving more in the tank for other uses. Energy-efficient features available on your kitchen range will actually improve the cooking performance. The benefits of energy efficiency are significant now at today's prices. As costs for hydro increase these savings will become even more important. Checking with Halton Hills Hydro I learned that we are faced with an increase of 11.6 percent in 1992 and that Ontario Hydro is forecasting double digit increases for the next four years. YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE to the environment, when you shop wisely, and see a benefit in your pocket book.

Environmental tips for Christmas

Hi! We are the students Against the Violation of the Earth (SAVE) the environmental club at Georgetown District High School. Here are a few things our club has been putting together at G.D.H.S. In January we will be receiving blue boxes in our classrooms for paper recycling. Also, in the cafeteria there are bins for recycling cans and bottles. Our Christmas fundraiser is coming up too. We will be selling gift bags, gift cards, and envelopes made from wallpaper. They are good quality, durable and come in different designs, and sizes. They will be on sale at school before Christmas for 50 cents to \$1.00, envelopes 10 for \$1.00 and gift cards 10 for 25 cents or one free with the purchase of a gift bag. Many thanks to St. Clair Paint

and Paper, Colour Your World, and Georgetown Decorating Centre for providing us with wallpaper. Half of our proceeds will go to Toys for Tots, while the other half will be used to eliminate environmental problems at the school. We hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and here are a few tips to keep in mind over the holidays.... Wrap your gifts in newspaper or put them in reusable cloth bags instead of buying wrapping paper. Turn your Christmas lights (inside and out) off when not at home. Buy a live tree you can plant outside when you are finished with it. Recycle Christmas wrapping paper and if possible compost your Christmas tree. Merry Christmas! SAVE

Much care required when watering plants

By TOM CAVAN
Herald Special

QUESTION: My hibiscus is getting yellow leaves and the flower buds are dropping off just before opening. What am I doing wrong?
ANSWER: Yellow leaves and premature bud drop are caused from water stress. You have either kept the plant to wet or you are watering before the plant has a chance to use the water from the previous watering. The other extreme is allowing the plant to dry out to much then over watering the soil to saturation. It is important to realize that Hibiscus do use alot of water especially when in flower. Keep this plant evenly moist and never saturate or allow it to stand in water for extended periods of time. It is also important to understand that plant roots need an even mix of water and air throughout the soil root zone. If you allow a plant dry to the point that the foliage will take the plant from direct sun or heat and place it back in its proper light requirement. Return to a regular watering schedule of watering when the plant needs it. A good rule of thumb is to pick up the plant each day until it becomes light not when it wilts, since water has weight you can use this as your guide until you get back on track with your watering schedule. Hibiscus when in flower will use up more water than when it is not in flower. The blooms are like big sweat glands that transpire alot more water then leaves do.

QUESTION: My weeping fig is dropping leaves from the inside and bottom. When I water the water runs through the pot and I have to let the plant stand in water to soak it up. I have had the plant for only 6 months what can I do.
ANSWER: The problem you have is a common one. The plant has used all of the available nutrients in the soil and the soil structure has been literally eaten by the plant. This is the result of the plant out growing its soil base and should be transplanted. Transplanting of houseplants should take place when the plants are actively growing. This time span runs from mid-March to mid-November. You should not transplant a plant during the cold low-light months of winter unless you have a solarium and even then I would only recommend the transplanting of a plant that is potbound i.e. all roots and no soil, you should give a root wash with tepid water to loosen the tangled roots and remove any old soil and salts residue from fertilizing. Use a soilless mix designed for container culture and thoroughly water to settle the soil naturally and expel any air pockets. Allow the plant to dry thoroughly before watering its second time. The reason for this is the plant will have to root into the soil and you don't want to start off with its new soil into a over-watering situation. Also you must realize there will be soil that the roots are not occupying and excess water will rot the soil.

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