

Music lovers love disc sound

Starting this year, music lovers will be playing a different kind of "record" on a special player. The event marks a significant advance over the conventional stereo LP, as the 33-1/3 rpm record was over the 78. The compact disc, known as CD or DAD (digital audio disc), is an application of state-of-the-art digital technology to the task of recording playing.

There are several advantages to the new technology. An hour of music can be played on a single side (one side is recorded) of one disc, allowing for uninterrupted play of most musical works. But the most significant advantages are in the areas of sound.

Don Palmquist, executive vice president of Yamaha Electronics Corporation, a leading manufacturer of quality stereo equipment, notes, "With compact disc technology, a listener no longer hears the snaps, crackles and pops he's used to from conventional records. Therefore, there are no distractions from the musical experience itself. Another important benefit is the longevity of the disc's superb sound. The 100th playing sounds as good as the first. The contactless laser system used to 'read' the disc does not wear it out the way a stylus wears out a standard record. A compact disc is also more resistant to dam-

age than records we're used to. Most fingerprints and scratches will not impair the sound quality."

Several years ago, digital techniques began to be used in recording the masters from which conventional "black vinyl" discs are made. However, the compact disc and CD player embody the first digital record and playback disc system. Sound is transmitted into a series of binary code numbers for recording and the code is implanted in a grooveless, laser-read, 4.7 inch disc and retranslated by the compact disc player into music.

What's the catch? Well, there is one—for the time being. The price of both discs and players is, for the moment, high. CD records are selling for between \$18 and \$25, with players selling in a range from \$800 to \$1400. However, prices are expected to fall

as more players and discs are marketed.

The players are more than a new type of turntable. Programming to play a sequence of music "bands" in the order a listener desires is standard now, but some players can do much more. The Yamaha unit, for instance, not only has a readout for the band selected, but also a "real time" counter for precise timing of selections. A "phrase playback" feature allows the user to play any given section of a piece. The equivalent of the record platter slides out and back at the touch of a button. Another button activates a slide tray for selection controls.

While the price is currently high, the promise is that within a short time most music lovers will not only be listening to new discs on new machines, but also getting more enjoyment from the music.

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A wide array of gardening equipment and accessories, as well as interesting reading material is available, making Christmas gift shopping for the gardener easy, says Tony Hogervorst, rural organizations co-ordinator (Ontario Horticultural Association) with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food's rural organizations and services branch.

Some interesting gift ideas you could consider include a pair of garden shears, books on gardening, hanging baskets, decorative pots or a watering can. A small compressed air sprayer or hose-end sprayer would be useful in controlling insects and some diseases. These sprayers can also be used to apply fertilizer solutions to correct plant nutrient deficiencies, he says.

Soil test kits can be purchased to help the gardener analyze the garden soil's fertilizer requirements.

"Take a look around your local garden centre. You'll find plenty of ideas for the gardeners on your Christmas list."

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