

**Handling wastewater**

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**Operation and Maintenance**

Proper operation and maintenance of a private wastewater treatment system is the responsibility of the user. While the amount and type of maintenance required depends on the type of system, there are many similarities. These include a periodic inspection of the system to be certain that it is functioning properly and the regular removal of sludge that has accumulated in the septic tank or lagoon. In addition, in order for the system to operate most efficiently, it is important to practice water conservation, to spread water use out evenly over a period of time and to avoid using or disposing of products or materials which might damage or interfere with the operation of the system. (SCB)



**Proper electrical wiring helps prevent most rural fires**

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integrity of the walls.

All openings around the cable or conduit and spaces around the conductors must be sealed with electricians' putty.

Electrical panels should be accessible and clearly labeled for emergencies and repairs. Avoid storing anything within three feet in front of a panel. Disconnects should be located within 50 feet of the equipment site so that repair persons don't accidentally get shocked. Wiring should enter the panels from the bottom or side, never from the top. Wires strung into the top can bring condensation into the box, causing premature failure of the system.

Lighting fixtures should be enclosed, gasketed, watertight and of a non-corrosive design. Some imported light bulbs may run 40 to 50 degrees hotter than other bulbs. These imports are less efficient and will require wiring rated for higher temperatures.

For older buildings, it is important to keep upgrading the wiring as maintenance is necessary. For instance, all conductors, cables or cords with cracked insulation should be replaced whether or not the damaged or deteriorated insulation is the primary problem. Cracked insulation can allow arcing between the phase or hot conductor and a grounded surface or conductor, causing a heat build-up and eventual fire.

The key to electrical wiring codes is to ensure wiring not only works safely, but fails safely to prevent injury and loss.

For more information, contact a local Cooperative Extension office and ask for two NebGuides, "Electrical Systems for Agricultural Buildings: Recommended Practices," G87-845-A, and "Farmstead Safety Evaluation Guide," G92-1080-A.

*Source: Jerry Bodman, Livestock Systems Engineer, NU/IANR (WS)*

**How do seeds travel?**

Consider for a moment all the ways a seed can travel and be planted.

The berry is eaten by a bird or fox, that often cannot digest the seeds but carries them far from the mother plant.

The squirrel buries an acorn as part of its winter storehouse and then fails to eat it.

A milkweed, dandelion or thistle seed has a silky parachute that floats in the wind. The buffalo bur or beggar-tick sticks to an animal's fur.

The showy partridge pea pod twists open when it dries and flings away its seeds.

Porcupine grass has two tails (awns) that twist at different rates with changes of moisture and drill the seed into the ground.

*Source: The Haines Branch Interpreter (Newsletter of the Pioneers Park Nature Center), Fall '97, Volume 41. (SE)*



**Wise words from Chief Seattle**

Every part of the Earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clear and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the Earth is our mother. The rivers are our brothers: they quench our thirst and feed our children. The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath—the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. And what is man without beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit.

This we know. The Earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the Earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites one family. Whatever befalls the Earth, befalls the sons of the Earth. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. All things are connected. *Chief Seattle, 1854 (BPO)*



**Diabetes control requires healthy diet, exercise**

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the Extension Office will help you monitor your learning progress.

Topics covered in the course include a basic description of Type II diabetes and who is at risk, how to best work with your medical care team, development of food and exercise habits, how to handle diabetes complications, and understanding some of the feelings you may be experiencing with your diabetes. The course is designed to help you become a better health consumer

as you work with your medical care team in treating your diabetes. It will not replace your medical care.

For a brochure giving more information about the course, contact the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County at 441-7180. There's a \$30 fee for participation in the course to cover the cost of the book (\$20), related educational materials and postage. (AH)



**Selecting and preparing pumpkins**

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**Selection and Storage**

The best pumpkins for cooking are not the large bright ones that are popular for making jack-o-lanterns. Rather, smaller pumpkins are more flavorful and far less stringy. Choose pumpkins that have a hard rind and are heavy in relation to their size.

You can store pumpkins at room temperature for up to a week. For longer storage, store them in a cool (50° F.), dry, dark place with good ventilation for up to a month. Once cut, pumpkin should be tightly covered with plastic wrap and stored in the refrigerator for two to four days.

**Basic Preparation**

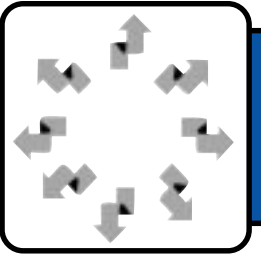
*Pumpkin can be used in nearly any recipe that calls for winter squash.* Pumpkin puree can be used in pies, breads and desserts and also in soups and

stews, or in place of mashed potatoes in shepherd's pie. It can be steamed, sauted, and stir-fried. Baked pumpkin halves are delicious stuffed with meat, rice, or vegetable mixtures. For a different taste during the holiday season, add grated raw pumpkin to stuffing for chicken or turkey.

The easiest way to prepare a pumpkin is to bake it. To prepare pumpkin for baking, wash and cut it in half lengthwise. Scoop out the seeds and stringy pulp. Place it, shell side up, in a greased, rimmed baking pan. Bake in a 325° F. oven for about one hour or until it is tender when pierced with a fork.

To use the pumpkin in a pureed form, after baking, scrape the pulp from the shell and put it through a ricer, strainer or blender. (AH)

**Miscellaneous**



**Kids play**

One of the most important things a child does is play. Play is the essential joy of childhood and is also the way children learn about themselves, their environment and the people around them. As they play, children learn to solve problems, get along with other people and control their bodies as they enrich their creativity and develop leadership skills. When children play with a broad variety of toys, the experiences help them to develop to their fullest potential.

Children bring boundless energy and imagination to their play with toys and constantly developing new and creative ways to play. Because there are so many different kinds of toys and novel ways to play with them, children learn that the world is a diverse place with unlimited possibilities. Toys thus have an exciting role in helping children to become mature, confident and imaginative adults.

—From an article by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and The American Toy Institute. (LJ)



**Laughter is good for body and soul**

Everyone enjoys a good hearty laugh. It makes us feel good, and that feeling can stay with us even after the laughter subsides. Humor can be an effective coping mechanism. It enables you to look at a problem from a different point of view, make it seem less serious and realize opportunities for increased objectivity and insight.

Humor is an effective way to relieve stress. Laughter leads to a cathartic release of emotion, can help to release pent-up feelings of anger and frustration in a socially acceptable way and is often followed by a state of relaxation and reduced tension.

Aside from the psychological benefits, laughter affects the body in a number of positive ways as well. Laughter releases endorphins—natural chemicals in the body that create a feeling of pleasure and have a pain relieving effect. How can you add laughter and humor to your everyday life?

- Start looking for the silly activities that go on around you.
- Take a 5-10 minute humor break each day. Read jokes, add to a humor notebook, listen to a funny tape.
- Rent comedy videos, go to a funny movie, watch humorous programs on television.
- If you hear a joke you really like, write it down or tell it to someone else to help you remember it.

Remember, that even in the most difficult of times, a laugh, or even simply a smile can go a long way in helping you to feel better. Laughs and smiles are enjoyed best when shared with others.

*Source: Balance, An Institute Newsletter on Work, Family and Personal Growth, UNL/IANR (LB)*

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