

How to keep your gas furnace perking

We've just converted from oil heat to a gas furnace. Do you have information on how to keep it running efficiently without having to call a service man in all the time?

Mr. and Mrs. J.P.

consumer mailbag

The periodic servicing of gas furnaces helps to maintain safety, save gas, and cut pollution. However, the average homeowner can achieve maximum performance from gas-heating equipment with the help of a brochure offered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, entitled, "Get the Most from Your Gas Heating Dollar."

The 12-page publication answers such basic questions as: How can I tell if my burner is properly adjusted? Should I turn off the pilot light during the summer? What are the safety hazards?

Free copies of the brochure are available on request through the Public Awareness Office, Mail Drop 50, U.S. EPA, Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27711.

I heard a speaker who came to our school say that a river in Ohio caught fire because of pollution. Did that really happen?

Mark C., Livonia

The speaker was probably referring to the Cuyahoga River in Ohio which did actually catch fire when gas from fermenting organic material on its bottom bubbled to the surface. No river in the United States has more notorious national reputation for pollution than the Cuyahoga, which flows through Akron and Cleveland on its way to Lake Erie.

Eco-Tip: To conserve energy: use exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathroom only when absolutely necessary, because they remove heat as well as odors from your house.

Consumer Mailbag answers your questions on consumer and environmental issues. Write to Concern Inc. Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy, 48069.

GRACE R. GLUSKIN
Executive Director

Food program begins Chinese culture series

The International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit will kick off a three-month series of Chinese cultural programs with an afternoon of "Eating the Chinese Way," 2:30-4:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 10, at the International Institute.

Elizabeth King, author of a new cookbook of the same title and president of the Chinese American Educational and Cultural Center of Michigan will make a presentation on the whys, hows and whats of Chinese food, showing how Chinese food is part of the art

and culture of China.

Mrs. King, a Lathrup Village resident, will include slides, a Chinese cooking demonstration featuring some of the 30 different techniques of Chinese cooking and an exhibit of ancient Chinese cooking utensils.

There also will be instructions on using chopsticks.

A "Chinese Way" program modified for adults is also offered to adult civic groups at a minimum charge. For reservations and more information call The International Institute, 871-8600.



Pat Bordman

For backyard friends, an ingenious feeder

In the late fall and early winter they start to form up. As though practicing for their long journey, they can be seen clustered in trees and swooping through the sky. It's as if they are planning together their routes and rest stops, deciding on layovers and watering holes. It's trip-tik of birdhood.

But what of their cousins that are left behind? What of their friends and sky-mates that don't turn their feathers on us for a more moderate climate? Lynne Cohn's Brownie Troop No. 485 in Farmington Hills came up with a truly clever feeder. She said a little birdie told them about it.

An empty and carefully cleaned plastic jug is the seed receptacle. Lay the jug on its side. Using either a knife, scissors or blade, cut a three-sided opening in the jug. Children can cut this opening with scissors, but both knives and blades are recommended only for adults. Children will need a little help getting started.

Bend up the flap that is formed after cutting the three sides. This serves as a protector for both the seeds and the feeding birds.

Next, right below the seed opening, insert a stick, pencil, piece of Tinkertoy, or other sturdy rod. Now the birds have a landing spot.

THE FEEDER CAN be hooked onto a tree with a wire coat hanger, as Lynne's troop did. By cutting the hanger, the two ends can be pushed into the sides of the jug.

Another choice is to thread either yarn or string through holes punched in the side of the jug. Then, simply tie to the tree branch.

Remember, the birds know how to gather food. These feeders are meant to be supplements to their diet, not their sole source of support. However, the birds will begin to depend on the supply of seed. Fill the feeder on a regular schedule, then stick to it.



Lynne Cohn hangs up a bird feeder she made with her Brownie troop. (Photo by Pat Bordman)

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