

Creative Living



Monday, April 17, 1989 O&E

(O1E)



organizing
Dorothy Lehmkuhl

Windows come squeegee-clean

Q: Despite last week's snow, I'm planning for warmer weather. What's the best way to clean windows?

A: The arrival of warm air this spring can only be the best thing to winning the NCAA Championship. But does the prospect of mass window-washing dampen your spirits? If so, let's consider some techniques first.

This is no excuse for procrastination, but if you wash windows only once a year, Fall is the best time to do them. Summer dust swirling through open windows gets them grimy quickly, so they stay clean far longer when closed up tight. If they weren't done last fall, however, they still must be washed now — then again in the fall to change your schedule. Twice a year is far better anyway. (Relax! It's going to be much easier this time!)

EQUIPMENT: Invest in a commercial quality squeegee from a janitorial supply company. Good squeegees are made with hollow handles for inserting extensions and channels with replaceable rubber blades. The rubber blade should extend 1/4-inch beyond each channel end to protect from scratching surfaces. Channels of different lengths can be interchanged on a single handle. Also, a spray bottle, mild cleaning solution, towel, and sponge dampened with cleaning solution.

PROCEDURE: Protect window sill from drippings with a towel. Spray one entire window and wait a bit for the solution to saturate and suspend soil. Wipe squeegee blade with damp sponge (to moisten and clean blade). Holding squeegee blade at an angle vertically, wipe a one-inch path across the very top of the window. Wipe blade with sponge. Place full blade horizontally across top right (or left) corner of window, bringing squeegee firmly down all the way to the bottom. Wipe blade. Place squeegee at the top of window next to and slightly overlapping cleared area, pull to bottom, wipe blade, clean next area, etc., working your way across to the opposite side and wiping blade after each stroke.

Don't worry about the tiny water edges. They will dry and look fine. If spots remain, do not use sponge or towel. They will leave a blur. Erase the spot with your solution-cleaned finger. If too many spots remain, reclean the whole window. When finished, wipe up drippings with towel and move to next window. This method is particularly valuable with large windows. The smaller the pane, the greater the pain.

NEXT WEEK: The differences in cleaning solutions.



condo queries
Robert M. Melner

Q: Our board has done it again. They are not even legally constituted because of our screwed up documents and the attorney and accountant who have helped them through the most difficult times because they thought it could be done cheaper some place else. I am concerned about the marketability of my unit, this board's stupidity and the authority of the board. I am also agast at the disloyalty that the board would show toward these professionals who have served them in good stead. Your Comments?

A: Unfortunately, this is a common phenomenon in community association operation. Community associations are not known for their loyalty and/or appreciation of employees and/or professionals of the association even when they have performed an excellent job. This, of course, undermines the ability of the association to maintain continuity and to keep good people on staff.

Contractors and professionals are becoming increasingly aware of the difficulties and frustrations of dealing with community association boards and of their lack of loyalty. On many occasions, the experts, professionals, and/or employees which they have retained, and who have served them in good stead, will lose their position merely because somebody else can be found who will do it, perhaps, cheaper.

Write your board and threaten them with a claim of mismanagement if you think their actions are both irresponsible and ill-advised, resulting in undermining the ability of the association to properly be managed. Perhaps you will get their attention and save your association in the long run, thousands of dollars in expenses and, perhaps, legal costs.

Robert M. Melner is a Birmingham attorney specializing in condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit topics which you would like to see discussed in this column, including questions about condominiums, by writing Robert M. Melner, 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 407, Birmingham 48010.

'Gray water' to the rescue?

LAST YEAR'S drought had a devastating effect on many parts of the country, and there are bound to be more dry spells in the years to come. But there are ways gardeners can overcome the effects of insufficient rainfall and restrictions on water use.

In a 1987-88 survey by the National Gardening Association, America's gardeners cited "not enough water" as one of the major gardening problems. The association, a non-profit organization supported by its 200,000 members, offers some advice on dealing with drought.

Conserve water. Don't waste household water that can be used for landscape gardening — don't let it just go "down the drain."

Find out if "gray water" is legal in your area. Gray water is water from showers, tubs, bathroom sinks and laundries that can be recycled for use in gardens and yards. Check with your local building code or appropriate sanitation and water resource departments for specific regulations on the use of gray water.

GRAY WATER CAN be used on ornamental plants and landscape. Most plants will tolerate gray water, and some might even thrive on it, since the phosphate in detergent acts as a fertilizer. However, for reasons of health and safety, don't use gray water on edible plants.

Bathroom tubs and sinks provide the best quality gray water and the easiest to recycle. Water from the laundry room is next-best. Don't use drain water from the kitchen sink. The oil, fat and grease it contains make it difficult to filter, and it can clog distribution pipes, breed disease and attract pests.

Don't overwater. A rich, loamy soil can absorb up to 1 quart of gray water per square foot a week. Sandy soils can handle more, clay soils much less.

Don't let gray water stand in puddles. It can attract mosquitoes, bacteria and viruses.

The safest way to use gray water in the landscape is to distribute it through buried perforated pipe.

If you are planting a new lawn or garden, you might consider install-

weeder's guide

Earl Aronson

ing an efficient watering method, such as an underground sprinkling system or drip watering pipes. These save labor as well as water.

FOR AREAS WITH water shortages and arid soils, the Gardening Association suggests terracing or drip irrigation.

Terracing involves creating a flat surface with a lip that follows the natural contours of the land. It provides a gardening surface that allows water to be directed to the crops in basin beds, which are more practical than raised beds in places where soil is friable and water scarce. Mulching holds water in the soil and reduces evaporation.

Drip (or trickle) irrigation uses less water and usually gets greater yield. Instead of dumping a load of water on plants at one time, drip replaces only the amount of water plants use each day. All water goes to the roots, where little is wasted.

What if too much water is a problem? Plants suffering from excess water at the roots due to poor drainage or overwatering may wilt, suffer from chlorosis (yellowing) of foliage, lose vigor or die. (If rainfall is inadequate, a good rule is to water gardens once a week so that the soil is moistened to a depth of 6 inches.)

Recommended for gardens with too much water is raised bed gardening. Creating raised beds works well if the soil is poor, rocky or compacted, if the spring season is cold and wet (as it was in the Northeast last year) or if the garden is too muddy to enter after a rain. Install drains to help alleviate soggy soil problems.

Earl Aronson is the Associated Press garden writer. For a copy of his Guide to House Plants, send \$1.50 to House Plants, AP News-features, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020. Gardening questions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Three weekly classes in home decorating will be offered in Jacobson's Livonia Store for the Home, Six Mile and Newburgh roads. All will be held 7-8:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

In the first class, Thursday, May 4, Paul Lovett from Davis and Davis Designs will discuss custom area rugs. Audrey LaCoff of Norman LaCoff and Associates will discuss window treatment and wallpaper.

In the second class, May 11, Bob Lynch of Henredon Furniture will discuss quality and craftsmanship in furniture. Also that evening, Joel Feldmesser of Emerson Leather will cover selection and quality of leather home furnishings.

In the final session, Livonia artist Susan Pickering Rothamer will focus on the care and decision-making process regarding investments in prints, lithographs or original paintings. There is no charge for the seminars.

Home-buyers seminar set

A free public seminar for home buyers is the way the Western Wayne Oakland County Board of Realtors will observe American Home Week, April 30-May 6.

"Our purpose in holding this seminar is to make potential homebuyers more knowledgeable about what could be the most important purchase of their lives," said board president Eric Hunt. "We are also stressing the fact that there will be no solicitation of any kind — this seminar is strictly for the benefit of the home buyer, especially those people who are considering the purchase of their first home."

The seminar, scheduled for 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 2, in the Holiday Inn-Livonia West, 17123

N. Laurel Park Drive, at Six Mile and I-275, will feature speakers from various segments of the home-buying process: an appraiser, an attorney, a certified public accountant, a lender and a real estate agent.

Questions such as "How much can I afford?" "What financing options are available?" and "What steps will I need to go through when I decide to buy a home?" will be covered, plus others that will come up during the question-and-answer period that will follow the speakers.

Due to the limited space, reservations should be made by calling 478-1700.



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