

HOME ELECTRONICS

A generic remote puts control in your hand



BARRY JENSEN

Did you ever turn the room upside down looking for your television remote control, rather than go up to the set and change the channel? Or how about going through a stack of remote controls but be unable to find the one you need?

The obvious solutions are to chain your remotes to a chair or tape them together. But the best idea may be to buy a remote control that will replace several, reducing the clutter and making it easier to keep track of a single unit. Then put the original remote controls in a nearby drawer.

Now that infrared remote controls have pretty much replaced remote controls that used a long cable attached to the device it controls, you can find "generic" remote controls at the grocery or electronics store.

A generic remote is one made by someone other than the original manufacturer. A generic remote control will partially replace your cable remote control, your VCR remote control, your TV remote control, your CD remote control or all of them.

A cheap remote control usually will control just one device. This may be enough for you. But you may want to buy a more-expensive remote control than you need because the more expensive remotes often have attractive features such as over-size buttons or night lights.

The more expensive generic remote controls will replace more than one original remote control. For \$12.95 I just bought a remote control that pretty much replaces three remotes. "Pretty much" because each original remote control has functions that the generic remote control does not. For instance, if I want to advance the action ahead just one frame at a time on my VCR, I must use the original remote. And when I want to program the VCR to record a program, I must haul out the original.

When you go to the store to buy a generic remote control, be sure the remote you select is listed as being able to control the kind of device you want to control. If it says it will, it probably will. Be sure to buy fresh batteries of the correct size.

To use your remote for the first time, put the fresh batteries into it. Then sit down in front of whichever electronic device you want to control. You will

have to program in the correct codes, but a list of codes is provided with the generic remote control.

When you have discovered the code that controls one function, you know that the batteries are good and that the generic remote control will work for you. Then just program in the other codes and you're ready to go.

One warning: some electronic devices can't be controlled by a generic remote

control. But it's in the interest of the company that makes generic remote controls to control as many devices and brands as possible. So you shouldn't have many problems.

Barry Jensen welcomes your comments and suggestions for topics for future columns. His telephone number is 313-953-2125. This number has voice mail attached, so you can call at any time.

New zip on screen enclosure keeps bugs away while dining

Outdoor dining has never been complete without a few swats at insects looking to share in the festivities. Now, you can enjoy sitting bug-free at the pool, patio or back yard with the Umbrella Screen Enclosure.

New this spring, the product fits easily over a patio umbrella table and features a zippered door for easy access. Made of flame-retardant, vinyl-covered polyester mesh, the UV stabilized screen allows free air circulation while

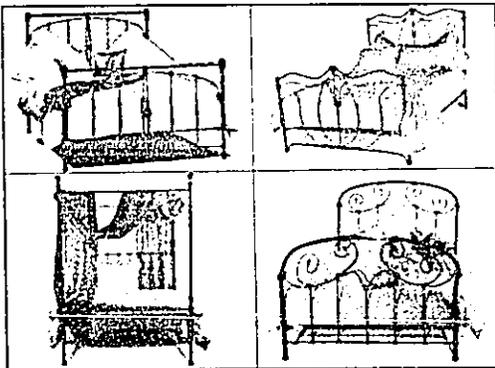
keeping the insects out. A water-fillable bag attached to the bottom of the screen provides stability in windy conditions. The Umbrella Screen can be set up and removed within minutes.

The product fits a 7-1/2-foot or 8-1/2-foot diameter umbrella and retails for \$129.98.

The Umbrella Screen is available at all English Gardens locations, including the store at 6370 Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield (call (810) 851-7506).

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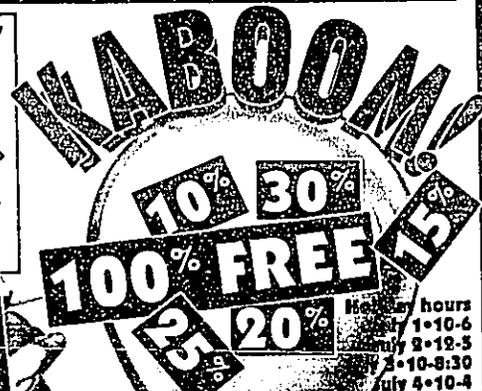
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