

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

Woman's experience points to need for lemon law

I am about to show you an E-mail I received from a homeowner but before I do so, I want to point out that I have received many like it or even more pronounced. I have many times complained about the quality of major home appliances and I speak for the whole of the service industry when I make the regular statement, "they don't build 'em like they used to."

Karin writes: I was wondering if you had any advice you could give me on getting action against a manufacturer. I purchased a certain refrigerator with ice maker/filter system in October of 1996 from a certain store. This was one of their top-of-the-line refrigerators at the time (it was not cheap).

I have had in the past the compressor replaced. In the past six weeks, I have had service come out to fix the refrigerator and now they are coming out for a fourth time tomorrow. The repairmen have at times been at my house for over five hours trying to fix it, each time saying it is fixed. I have lost hundreds of dollars worth of food.

I have spoken to the company many times without getting any help. They did extend my warranty for another year and gave me a form to fill out pertaining to my loss of food, which would only cover up to \$50.

When I spoke with them last week regarding the problem and asked the Customer Service person to please transfer me to someone that can help me, she put back to the main menu. I spent another 10 minutes of pushing buttons and waiting on line for someone to answer. Needless to say, I became frustrated. I in turn E-mailed the company and explained my frustration and problem with their product. I have yet to receive a response and my three children are also becoming frustrated with this situation. I'm tired of the phone calls that get me nowhere and all the time waiting around for a repair person to come. I was wondering if I am entitled to a new fridge (lemon law)? Can you help?

First of all, let me say that I wish I could help you, but I can't because I'm just one guy. It is only recently that the manufacturers are beginning to pay notice of what I do and just maybe in time, I will be able to do something for consumers. For now, I would like to point out the person that can help you and that is the store you purchase the appliance from.

With the purchasing power they have they are the ones who should talk to the company on your behalf. Because they have failed to do so up to this point I would suggest that you spend your hard earned dollars someplace else the next time you need an appliance. Isn't it a crying shame that a company can spend millions of dollars in advertising to bring you into their stores and then be so stupid as to alienate the very person who can enhance their gross dollar figure. I predict that consumers will some day do what is being done in Japan. Go on the Internet and have chat rooms where everyone describes their horror story with an appliance company. The strength of numbers might cause manufacturers to take a second look on how they do business. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 760 WJR. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.



Lots of hostas: A brand new patio is placed between two flowerbeds, with this one containing lots of hostas.

Designing couple

Their love of hostas, rhododendrons can be seen on Franklin Garden Walk

BY MARTY FOGLEY
SPECIAL WRITER

Yvonne and John Iuppenlatz's personal favorite plants can be seen throughout their mature, one-and-a-half-acre Franklin garden.

"My favorite plant is the hosta with hydrangeas a close second," said Yvonne. "I probably have over 250 hostas and more than 50

hydrangeas. John's favorite plant is the rhododendron and he has at least 50."

Their garden is one of the stops on the June 12 Franklin Garden Walk. The gardens visitors will see on the walk are very diverse, and include a colorful cottage garden, wildlife garden with all native species, organic garden that both feeds and entertains a whole family of active gardeners, and the Iuppenlatz's garden, which includes many plants, such as hostas, that flourish in the shade.

The Iuppenlatz's garden began 37 years ago when John began planting along the then-gravel road that runs in front of the house to block out road noise and dust. Now the tall white spruce trees, a purple beech and additional evergreens tower over that shady area. Several varieties of small shrubs such as Leucothoe, with pendulous clusters of small, fragrant white flowers, holly, ferns, including Christmas and Japanese one and the other. Perennials such as astilbe, pulmonaria and wildflowers are tucked in appropriate places.

An euonymus grows along the front walk, which Yvonne prunes to keep a natural look. At the corner of the driveway, another pink dogwood catches the eye, as does a stately Dawn redwood, which stands at the top of a sloping hill. As the ground becomes level with the rest of the yard, wide border gardens continue around the perimeter of the property. Light pink, deep red, white, and purple rhododendrons make a colorful scene. In fact, rhododendrons,



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM NORTMEYER

Green thumb: Yvonne Iuppenlatz tends to her garden, which will be shown on the Franklin Garden Walk.

azaleas, hostas, and hydrangeas are repeated in many of the beds. Some of the rhododendrons are quite unusual, such as the Yaku rhododendrons, 'Prince' and 'Annie Hall', with foliage that feels like velvet.

Azaleas and hydrangeas

Last year John added azaleas to the garden, with blooms of bright pink, deep red, yellow and orange. Yvonne says, "The key to growing these acid loving plants is to give them proper exposure, not a west-ern exposure, acidic soil, and to fertilize as needed."

A variety of hydrangeas grow happily along with the above plants, such as a lace cap with flat clusters of bluish violet blooms, surrounded by white flowers. The climbing specimens of hydrangeas, with lace-like

white flowers, scramble up and over an old brick grill that is no longer used and up several trees to add texture. The couple purchases most of these from Oregon; others, locally. They plant them in the spring, preferring one to two-year-old stock. Yvonne says, "Ask the nursery, they should tell you. We choose those that are cold hardy to this area."

Daphnes, one with gentle pink blooms and another with light purple, and three bottlebrush buckeyes add impact.

A row of hostas, each labeled, as are most plants, march sedately through the garden. There's also a wild flower area of trillium, Jack-in-the-pulpit, variegated Jacob's ladder, corydalis, bleeding heart and

Please see GARDEN, C5

Suite Dreams

Oakland Twp. show house shows example of bedrooms transformed into fantasies for ill children

BY LANA MINTI
STAFF WRITER

Imagine a room where a child's dreams can come true.

Where rabbits play with chipmunks, butterflies dance and tree-loving raccoons smile down at a child's soft yellow bed surrounded by fresh flowers.

That cottage-style fantasy room was designed by the Suite Dreams Project of Rochester, a nonprofit group that transforms basic bedrooms into wondrous spaces where chronically ill children can rest and recover. The room is an example of the work of the group that has touched more than 30 children since it started last year.

Along with the rabbit bedroom, there are 30 other rooms with interest-

ing concepts available for viewing at the Suite Dreams Project 2002 Designer Show House, presented by the Michigan Design Center.

The model house was decorated by top Michigan's interior designers and opens Saturday, June 8, it runs through June 30. It is located at 5568 Orchard Ridge Drive in Oakland Township. Proceeds will help Suite Dreams Project transform bedrooms of ill children as well as help design a new pediatric wing at Crittenton Hospital in Rochester. Co-founder and executive director Kris Appley, of Rochester, said when the organization was founded last year the original goal was to redesign one child's room each month. Instead



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUITE DREAMS

So sweet: A swing, raccoons, bunnies and the cottage-style bed were created by the Suite Dreams Project staff and are part of the show house. The Suite Dreams Projects transforms the bedrooms of chronically ill children into fun and magical spaces.

Please see SUITES, C4

DESIGNERS PARTICIPATING IN THE SUITE DREAMS PROJECT DESIGNER SHOW HOUSE

Wendy Alterman
California Closets
Paula Carnovale — Sweet Pea's
Cher Noss
Diana Dutchchenshen — Diana Dutchchenshen Interiors
Lucy Earl — Jones-Keene & Co.
Tara Forrest — Ethan Allen
Claudia Handley — Saffron Billiards & Barstools
Leslie Jones — Leslie Jones Interiors
Brian Killian — Brian Killian and Company
John Kline — Broken Color Design Studio
Muffy Kroha — Neiman Marcus
Randy Marciel — Gothsemane Landscape Architectural Builders
Nancy McGowan — McGowan Associates Inc.
Renee Owens — Upsfairs Downstairs
Stephanie Stevens — Upsfairs Downstairs
Andrea Proctor — Inspirations for the Home
Susan Selzman — Little Folk Art
Jennifer Stillwagon — J&S Design Group
James Evan Williams
The Suite Dreams Project