

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

Be prepared when you go shopping for appliances

In the space granted me I could never write all there is to know about how to shop and do a service for consumers. It is simply too detailed a subject.

I will, however, give you the outlook of a person who sold appliances for many years and enjoyed the everyday learning achieved by doing so.

My favorite customer was always the person who came into the store with a notepad in hand.

That person had done some preparation before looking at a washer, for example. He or she may have been to the library or read consumer reports or even shopped another store before coming over to my place.

The person asked questions that allowed me to show my expertise, and as a result, the customer was learning what was important about his or her potential choice.

Energy consumption was always important and is even more so today, but not unless the consumer compares.

Price has always been a top priority of shoppers, but I think less of a factor than yesteryear. Customers want quality and today are willing to put out extra amounts to get it. So much garbage has been built that homeowners have been saturated with for too long.

Today, the American consumer is smarter than ever, and that shows itself in the ever-increasing shipments of high-cost appliances.

I used to love the person who knew what size the product had to be exactly. No guesswork, just facts such as the size of the door opening, the amount of stairs to climb or what the dimensions were of the space the product would fit into.

Warranty questions always allowed me to explain the nuts and bolts of a product, and it stands to reason in the appliance world that a stronger warranty on one brand is a good indicator of the quality of one product over another.

Like most retailers, I believed in the concept of having a sale. There was usually a good reason for it, such as having to move out end-of-the-year models to make space for newer models.

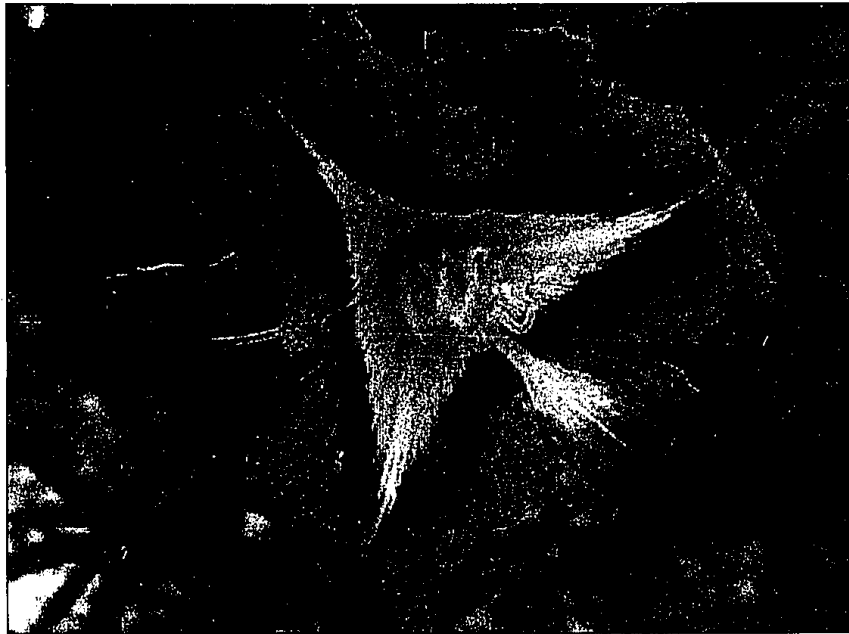
There are a few appliance stores today that are in "appliance heaven" because they thought every day of the year was a great day to have a sale.

I always respected the consumer who came in and showed me in writing the price quoted by another store. If the customer bought the product from my store even though I may have been \$10 higher on the price, I knew I did something better than the other guy.

Shopping for appliances isn't a fun trip for most but it can be an educational adventure for the homeowner who studies, even a little.

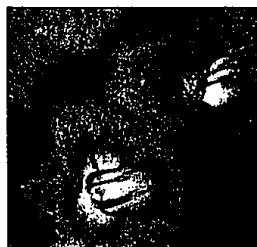
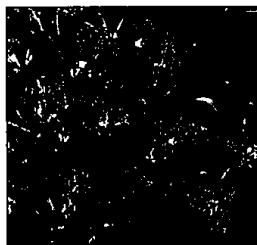
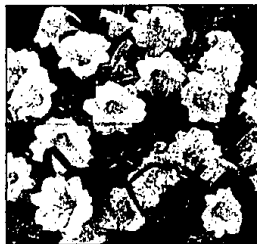
Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can now be heard on WWJ-950 and WXYT-1270. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (248) 455-7281.



COURTESY OF SOUTHERN MICHIGAN HEMEROCALLIS SOCIETY

On view: Such beautiful flowers as this are in LaVere Webster's Historic Daylily Garden in Rochester Hills, scheduled to be featured on a tour as part of the American Hemerocallis Society's national convention this month. At left, from top, the Stella D'Oro daylily offers longer-lived blooms. Center, daylilies are hardy plants that are easy to grow. Bottom, Rosy Return is among the new breeds of daylily.



Daylilies dazzle, delight

Gardeners come in all shapes and sizes, all preferences and leanings. While some grow vegetables for their tables, others grow the flowers in the tables' centerpieces.

One thing all gardeners share, however, is their appreciation for a plant you can pop into the ground and get immediate results.

One such plant is the daylily. It's hardy, needs no special care and comes back bigger every year. Enthusiasts of the breed, the hemerocallis fulva, are having a convention to celebrate the bloom this month.

The 56th annual American Hemerocallis Society National Convention will take place Thursday-Sunday, July 18-21, at the Troy Marriott.

The convention will host growers, collectors, merchants and hybridizers of the flower from all over North America. There will be banquets, slide shows, auctions and master panel discussions throughout the weekend.

According to Southern Michigan Hemerocallis Society president Nikki Smith, the big event of the weekend will be a bus tour of gardens all over Southeast Michigan.

"We're going to visit 10 gardens

over two days," she said. "We're going as far west as Dexter, as far north as Metamora and as far south as Monroe."

Aside from discussions about new strains of the plant (there are more than 50,000) and ways to maximize their potential, there will be talks on a problem daylily enthusiasts have never had to deal with in the past: Pests.

"It used to be said that daylilies were a perfect perennial because there were no pests that destroyed it," Smith said. "Now we're seeing something called daylily rust."

The rust is actually a fungus that experts believe came from either Costa Rica or Puerto Rico. The convention will host people who are studying the problem and have suggestions about pesticides and fungicides that can combat it.

Popular plant

Greg Jones, owner of Gilbert H. Wild and Son in Missouri (established in 1885), sends approximately 900,000 daylilies to all 50 states and several northern European countries every year as well as pro-

Here are some tips for growing daylilies

Gilbert Wild and Son offers these general tips for growing daylilies. Its Web site (gilbertwild.com) offers other hints, along with an interactive map showing general hardiness by latitude and climate.

Daylilies bloom best in full sun. They will tolerate part-shade conditions, but require a minimum of six hours of direct sun per day.

Many red and purple varieties benefit from partial shade in the hottest part of the day, since dark colors absorb heat and don't withstand sun as well as

Please see TIPS, C4

By Alex Lundberg

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Famed designer adds fabrics to collection

BY MARY KLEMIC
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Joe Ruggiero gets his inspiration for his home designs from his world travels, but they can fit right at the home next door.

That's also true for his new area: fabrics. Ruggiero, the host of two series on HGTV, has created a new fabric line with Sunbrella® fabrics for Norwalk® Furniture.

Durability is an important feature. Sunbrella's fabric is composed of 100 percent solution-dyed acrylic yarn made for heavy

wear, color fastness and no fading.

Ruggiero's pieces are at the new Joseph A. Keenan Studio Collection, 288 E. Maple in Birmingham. The store is the first designed to showcase Ruggiero's "wardrobe for the home" - furniture, fabrics, lighting, rugs, art work, bed linens and accessories.

"I love the idea of long-wear fabrics," Ruggiero said when he was at the store recently for a preview of the collection.

His pieces are for "family homes that are lived in," he said.

"(I design for someone) who's not a multi-millionaire, who has a good design eye, who wants good design but doesn't want to break the bank."

Ruggiero - whose company, Joe Ruggiero and Associates Inc., is based in Los Angeles - has visited 16 countries in four years.

His eye for detail gives special features to the fabrics - translating small stone tiles on boulevards in Lisbon into a pattern of scattered squares; timber siding on homes in Sweden into stripes;

Please see DESIGNER, C4



Design Studio: Joe Ruggiero's new fabric styles include Design Studio, with hand-loomed and men's suiting textures.

