

Durable Play Equipment

Parents can take a hint from outlast other equipment. being developed-children love to climb on and jump from anything, and it needn't be shiny or expensive.

A "fort" of heavy wood or jumble of timbers is a great attraction and likely will support ladders for climbing, bars for swinging, or a fort to defend.



The Green Thumb

By GEORGE ABRAHAM

Leaf troubles on trees: Right now leaves of various trees are showing signs of distress. Here are a few problems showing up now.

Leaf scorch, manifested by dry, parched areas around the edges or in the centers. Can be due to hot drying winds, low moisture content, or ample water in the soil, followed by hot, sunny days.

Trees and shrubs overwatered will develop yellowing of foliage now, and many of these will fall. If too much water is around base of the plants, take a crow bar and punch holes in a circle, to let air in and water out.

There's been a lot of leaf spot diseases this summer, due to excess rains or high humidity. These diseases cause certain areas in the foliage to dry up and the tissue falls out, leaving holes in the leaves. Keep your trees fed to build up vigor.

Leaf curl is common now. It can be due to wet weather followed by hot, drying winds. Also, road heat, and fumes from cars or trucks will cause it. Scorching leaves along the highways can be due to exhausts from vehicles, plus road heat and sun.

Several shade trees such as oak, basswood, maples and others show various types of scales, galls and aphids.

Aphids can be controlled by using malathion. Aphids or plant lice exude a sugary sap which coats leaves and any cars parked nearby. If you see tiny pimples or galls on your leaves, don't become too alarmed. Although the galls can disfigure a leaf, they actually cause no serious injury. If abundant they can cause some leaves to turn yellow and drop prematurely, but normally they rarely weaken a tree.

Feeding a tree is of more value than spraying for mites. Maple gall mites, invisible to the naked eye, cause leaf deformities by their feeding punctures. They pass the winter in roughened areas in the bark, or in other protected places, then migrate to the buds in early spring. Several generations of the galls feed inside the leaf swellings during the summer, and return to the bark in late July or so.

The maple bladder gall produces globular swellings on soft maple leaves, first yellowish-green, then pink, and finally black. Growths can be abundant one year and scarce the next.

The spindle gall attacks silver maple and sugar maple, as well as other ornamentals. The crimson erineum mite produces glossy, crimson patches on sugar maple leaves. These growths look ugly but none of them are serious.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: "We planted a castor bean plant and it is beautiful. Now I'm told that the seed is deadly and should be kept away from children. Is that true?"

Yes, but don't let it worry you. You can prevent seed formation by castrating the plant after the blossoms set. A lot of plants are toxic and the only safeguard is to warn children not to eat or place in their mouth any plant or plant part not commonly used as food. We constantly add new plants to our list of toxic ones. For example, it was discovered in 1961 that seeds of wisteria vine are poisonous.



DEEP-CUSHIONED vinyl tile flooring has a fleur-de-lis pattern surrounded by glazed "tiles." Easy to maintain and attractive, it is a practical choice for a dining room. The pattern is Palerma by Armstrong. It comes in two designs and seven colorings.

Humidity Keeps Things New

Most antique buffs don't realize it, but it takes more than furniture polish to keep an antique in good condition.

"Dry air is the enemy of anything made of wood, and that goes for antiques as well," warn the engineers at a maker of home humidifiers. They point out that most homes today are too dry in winter. Dry air seeks to regain a moisture balance by drawing water from everything it touches.

SINCE THE natural moisture content of wood is from five to eight per cent, wood objects are quite susceptible to warping, cracking, and bucking as the moisture is drawn out. Veneers can peel, joints become loose, and finishes crack and craze.

The answer—you guessed it—is to maintain proper humidity with the aid of a good humidifier, one that keeps indoor relative humidity at around 30 per cent in cold weather.

Other precautions include keeping them out of the direct sunlight, away from windows or doors which may be left open, and away from heating registers or radiators.

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