

Green gifts provide growing pleasure

Ever thought of giving someone who has just had a new baby a tree for a gift rather than a pair of nifty booties that may be packed away in a couple of months or passed on to someone else with a newborn? Or how about a flowering dogwood, pyracantha or holly bush as a housewarming gift? Whatever the occasion, there's a perfect green, growing plant to meet that gift need.

These examples are only a few of the thousands of different plant gift ideas you may discover. Along with that, many families have a tradition of giving themselves new environmental plantings to observe their own special occasions as well Birthdays and anniversaries, a new job, a school promotion, and so on.


There are a few points suggested by the American Association of Nurserymen to help make your green gift-giving more successful. Be sure it is a personal gift carefully selected for what you can discover to be the needs and preferences of the recipient. If you see the family has a liking for flowering shrubs, for in-

stance, then you have a good clue to guide your gift shopping. If the home needs added shade to keep the indoors cooler in summer, save air conditioning energy, then a leafy tree may be your best thought.

As you choose the gift at the nursery garden center, be prepared with some facts to make sure the selection is right for the location it will move to. What space is available where is the sun at different times of the day - what is the soil like - how does the property drain: this sort of information will help you and the garden center make the right choices.

Most nursery garden centers will have all the instructions and advice about putting the new plant gift in that might be needed. It is thoughtful to pass that along. In fact, a lot of people giving a tree or plant particularly when the recipients are not in a position to do the installing comfortably complete the gift-giving by doing the planting, too.

There is a special kind of pleasure in giving green gifts from nature's bounty. And the pleasure keeps on growing.



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Rising costs prioritize energy conservation

Energy conservation tips are gaining importance in many households across the country.

Aware of rising fuel costs, many homeowners are adding or replacing attic insulation and checking to make sure that windows and doors are properly sealed to prevent undue heat loss.

They're also checking to make sure the furnace is operating efficiently. But many homeowners, when planning to remodel, are missing one important energy saver—solid vinyl siding.

"Many consumers install new siding without finding out which type offers the best insulation," said John Flanagan of Mastie Corp. As one of the nation's largest siding manufacturers, the firm produces and sells all types of siding products—aluminum, steel and vinyl.

"We conducted tests on the different kinds of metal and vinyl siding we carry on our own line. And all of our tests proved that vinyl is a much better insulator than metal siding."

These test results were confirmed when the American Society for Testing and Materials, an independent organization, also tested Mastie's vinyl and metal siding. Their tests indicate that vinyl siding provides as much as 24 1/2 per cent greater insulation against heat and cold than metal siding. And that could mean a real difference in the fuel bill.

Besides being an efficient energy saver, vinyl siding has many other advantages. Because it is solid color clear through, scratches on vinyl do not show as they do on metal siding.

And, unlike metal siding, vinyl will never need repainting. Vinyl is also easy to clean. Usually, simple washing with a sponge

and soapy water will make vinyl look as good as the day it was installed.

However, the manufacturer states that even abrasive cleansers can be used without damaging the vinyl—although such extreme cleaning methods are rarely necessary.

Metal siding may dent is hit by hail or a stray baseball. Sometimes the entire panel of siding must be removed to repair these dents. Vinyl siding, however, will absorb the shock and show no sign of damage.

Safety is another important reason to consider vinyl siding. Vinyl does not conduct electricity.

Unlike metal siding, vinyl does not have to be grounded by an electrician when it is installed. And because vinyl does not telegraph sound, outside noises are muffled.

Garden

(Continued from page 36)

the roots so they cannot take up water properly. The result is a plant that is standing in water but undergoing a drought.

Q. When do I harvest my summer squash?

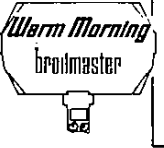
A. Zucchini, yellow straight-neck, yellow crookneck and other summer squashes should be harvested while the skin is still soft enough to be cut with your thumbnail. If you let them mature the skin will get tough and the seeds woody. Winter squash, on the other hand, should not be harvested until after they have been exposed to some cool fall weather. Their rinds should be hard enough that they cannot be penetrated with a thumbnail.

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