

From bugs to weeds, Extension Service can help solve problems

By Suzie Rollins Singer
staff writer

Want to know why your tomatoes are wilting? What can be done about a tree sprawling into your neighbor's yard? How about a canning question? Or how to get that blood stain off of your brand new velvet couch?

These are some of the hundreds of questions the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service staffers answer daily.

"We get questions from people on the way to prepare fields to plant corn. Or how much is a cord of wood?" said Wayne Nierman, division manager of the County Extension Division.

EXPERTS IN agriculture, horticulture, natural resources and home economics are on hand during regular business hours to assist callers at no charge.

For general information, call 858-0880. The Garden Hotline telephone number is 858-0802; the Food Hotline number is 858-0804.

Besides answering phone calls, Extension employees give instruction and practical information through demonstrations, publications, workshops and consultation.

They cover food and fiber production and marketing; commercial and home horticulture; human nutrition; food safety; family resources management; child development and family relationships; energy and soil management.

MOST EXTENSION department staff members are employed by Michigan State University. The county pays for the secretaries and office space for

the division, Nierman said. Of the \$1 million 1982 budget, the county paid \$330,000 and the state appropriated the rest.

When questions stump staff members, they call MSU specialists for the answers.

During summer, the most commonly asked questions about natural resources include: how to build a pond; how to control algae; how to control aquatic weeds; where fish to stock ponds can be bought; and so on problems.

"In the winter, we get a lot of questions on the effect of ice on lakes and ponds," Nierman added.

Agriculture specialist John Leech fields questions from farmers.

"Questions about insects, diseases, pesticides and nutrient deficiencies are popular from commercial farmers. Small farmers want to know why eggs don't hatch or how to feed a pig," Leech said.

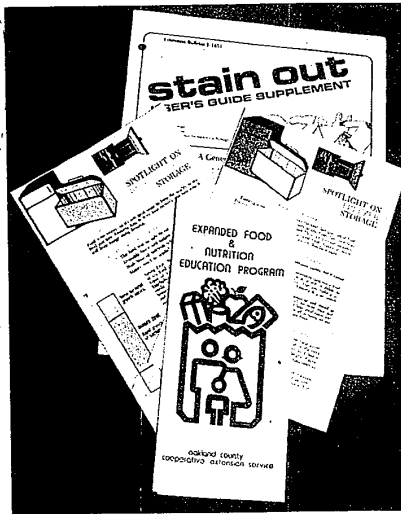
ONE HOME economist, Renee Deter, said her calls center on canning processes and food safety.

"We're getting a lot of calls on blanching and how long food can be stored if the refrigerator goes out."

Another home economist, Lois Thieleke concentrates on helping persons learn food preparation methods.

"We have people grow certain foods then not know how to prepare them," she said.

"We also try to help low-income people learn nutrition and cooking techniques. Some people get food supplements and don't know how to prepare them. Others may have to cook with only a hot plate and not know how. We help them with these types of problems," Thieleke added.



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

The County Cooperative Extension Service has printed materials explaining such topics as proper methods of food storage and how to remove fabric stains.

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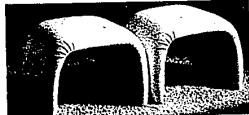
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