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The Cooks had a bath tub removed from the bathroom connected to the den. The removal now allows for a hallway to connect the den and kitchen.

Last summer they added a concrete, tri-level back porch behind the kitchen. They truly are "Cooks" on summer nights as many backyard barbecues are started on a permanent grill on the back porch.

Since their purchase, however, there hasn't been any change to the home's foundation, Mary Alice Cook contends.

The home now has three upstairs bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths.

"Structurally we've done nothing to the house," she said.

The living room is filled with character, including nubby screens in the northeast corner. In days gone by, nannies would have their sleeping quarters behind the temporary walls, thus the name, Cook said.

The nubby screens are only for decoration sake nowadays. The Cooks have a newborn



Well grounded: Mary Alice Cook and her husband Bob have lived in their Clarkston home on 81 North Main since 1980.

grandson who can crawl the living room with toys on visits, but not enough to call for a nanny!

The Cook House is one of

many in the Clarkston Historic District that may be called up on the Internet. Go to www.metro.net/lib.mi.us/ INDEX

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"After the worms arrive from Canada, they are packed in Michigan peat," said Dan Beaudoin, general manager. "After they have eaten the peat, the castings can be used to enrich the garden soil."

This is big business! DMF delivers half a million worms per year to each of six suppliers. In 2001 it sold 110 million worms.

The amount of castings is astounding, as shown in the photo of Beaudoin. At the present time it isn't set up to sell the castings or worms directly to the public. You'll have to go to a bait store for its worms.

Containers

Compost containers can be bought or homemade. Some are freestanding and can be turned by hand, others resemble an upside-down garbage can, one is made into a circle with lots of holes. Check with your favorite hardware or home store; you may have to look around.

Homemade bins are made of wooden slats, cement blocks, chicken wire and the like. Dry leaves and grass kept over winter in a black plastic trash bag also works with no effort. You can also



Colossal castings: Dan Beaudoin stands in front of a huge pile of worm castings.

add this to an existing compost pile when you add vegetable scraps to keep the pile hot.

Compost tea is one of the newest ways to add nutrients to the soil. This is made by putting compost in a large bag and letting it steep in water.

A system for home gardeners is the 6.5-gallon SoilSoup Compost Brewing System Bucket. It comes with everything you need to start brewing, including 6 pounds of worm compost. Might be worth a try; retails for \$329.

For more information, visit

<http://www.silsooup.com> or call toll-free (877) 711-7687.

Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority offers compost classes. Call (248) 288-6160 for details.

These books are excellent guides: *Brooklyn Botanic Garden Easy Compost* and *The Rodale Book of Composting*.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

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