

# Home and Garden

## Bits and Pieces Nasty strings

by Margaret Schmale  
special writer

There's no doubt that a very talented designer must have stayed up nights figuring out the various methods used in opening containers found on supermarket shelves these days. There are several that have infuriated the basic housewife, myself included, over the years.

The oldest container opener is probably the string. It's not the most complicated around, but this simple invention has drawn me close to the brink of nervous disorder on many occasions.

The particular string that initiated me to a life of agitation was tightly sealed and covered with tin foil and paper. It was on a roll of Life Savers. It's a good thing my life didn't depend on them because I could never find the beginning of the string. I always wondered as a kid why they even bothered wadding it up and packing it on the top of each roll.

Then there is the thread that runs the length of an adhesive bandage. As the blood drips down my hand and onto the bathroom rug, I repeatedly end up with a little red thread in one hand and a hermetically sealed adhesive bandage in the other. Even when I'm trying to get one unwrapped for a wailing child, the cute little string fails to cooperate.

Every box of oatmeal is a headache. The string on the familiar container has a habit of see-sawing around the lid leaving a shredded label with the seal still intact. When force is gently applied by means of a foot in the old man's face the lid has a way of quickly detaching itself. It may take only a minute to cook, but it takes ten minutes to open.

Peanut butter, pickles, catsup and most other items in a bottle are so vacuum packed that it takes two men and a boy to unscrew them. I have tapped, run hot water and taken a pair of pliers to the lid of a jar. I end up with something that shows no sign of leakage, but would be rejected by the recycling center.

Crackers, cakes, cereal and other boxed items have the dotted line that leads to a note which tells the purchaser to gently press and lift. The Bionic Woman would do well to perform such a feat!

Pill bottles have to be the epitome of clever openings. They are now child-proofed to such an extent that a healthy person has to use all his mental and physical prowess to remove the cap. A sick person seeking immediate relief is out of luck. A man suffering from heart trouble could expire before he got his glycerin tablet.

The latest addition to assist the public is on pop cans. Two openings require the customer to press in one, then the other. If the tip of your finger is not lacerated in the process, the spray from the second hole will drench you.

I'm sure glad I live in this era. How would I have ever gotten anything open in the past?



Bird Cage Theater

The Birdcage Players performed a take off on our old King Arthur story in a skit for the Sandy Mountain Festival Sunday afternoon. The skit, entitled "King Arthur's Calamity," delighted an enthusiastic audience at Meinig Park.

## Water key to good harvest

With warmer weather and less frequent rainfall, watering the vegetable garden is crucial to a successful harvest, according to the Oregon State Extension service.

"In general, established gardens should be watered thoroughly every five to seven days," said extension agent Gray Thomas.

Dry topsoil is not necessarily a signal to start the sprinkler. Examine the soil near the plants. Scrape back the soil to get a look below the surface. If the moisture level is within an inch or so of the surface, more water is not necessary.

If watering is in order, apply at least one inch of water. Most garden sprinklers deliver about one quarter-inch of water each hour, so proper watering requires adequate saturation time.

"Turning on the sprinkler for ten minutes or watering by hand or with a spray nozzle on the end of a hose won't do the job," says Thompson.

Place a coffee can where it will catch water from the sprinkler. When an inch accumulates, you can stop watering.

Frequent light waterings will cause roots to grow near the soil surface, making the roots more susceptible to damage during hot, dry days or when weeding.

Early morning is the best time to water. With less wind and lower temperatures evaporation is kept to a minimum. Moreover, watering early in the day gives the foliage a chance to dry out before cooler nighttime temperatures set in, thus reducing the possibility of plant disease.

## Plant now for fall gardens

Vegetable gardens can be productive for at least four more months by planting hardy crops now, according to extension agent Ray McNeilan. Many tasty vegetables can be harvested in the fall by planting in July.

Bush beans can be planted in early July and will usually produce a good crop before frost. The growth of beans during the warm summer days will be much faster than the early crop. Warmer soils and warmer air temperatures speed up the rate of growth.

Most root crops can be seeded during July for fall

use. Beets, carrots, kohlrabi, onions, rutabaga, shallots and turnips all can be planted in July and harvest can begin by late summer. Most root crops can be left in the garden through the fall and winter and be used as needed. This allows use of the garden as a storage place for root vegetables.

Many leafy crops will do better in the garden with mid-summer planting. Spinach will be less apt to go to seed planted now. Chard, endive, kale, lettuce, mustard greens and spinach will supply greenery through the fall and into early winter.

Cole crops thrive in late summer and can be harvested until the heavy frozes of winter. Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and cauliflower can be direct seeded in early July or planted as transplants by late July.

The garden plot is a

valuable part of the yard, McNeilan said. Keep it productive by careful planning. Selecting the proper crops and planting at the correct time will yield

food from the fall garden to help lower the food bill in fall and winter.

## Knapp elected

John Knapp of Sandy was elected as one of three directors of the Oregon Junior Angus Association at

the organization's annual meeting earlier this month. Knapp is a 1978 graduate of Sandy Union High School.

## Strawberry beds need cleaning

When June-bearing strawberries are no longer producing, the strawberry beds should be cleaned up.

"It is important to remove old and dead plant material," according to Oregon State University extension agent Gray Thomas.

The clean-up can be done by hand, or with a rotary mower set at the proper height. (Set the mower so it cuts just above the crown of the plant.)

Remove any leftover strawberries, especially if they are rotted or damaged, as they are a potential source of disease.

In late July, apply a complete fertilizer, such as 5-10-10 or 6-20-20, at a rate of one-half cup for each ten feet

of row. Established strawberry plants should be fertilized only once a year — in July or August — to get good fruit bud formation for the next year.

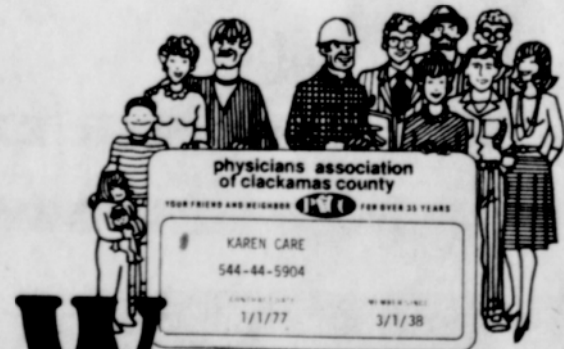
If this year's plants had excessive foliage growth and poor fruit production, fertilizing in the spring could have been the cause.

June-bearing varieties (Marshall, Northwest, Hood, Shuksan, Ranier) bear fruit only in late spring or summer. They are distinguished from everbearers (Quinault, Gem, Ogallala, Rockhill), which produce two crops, one in June and another in late summer of fall.

Everbearing strawberries do not need to be tended to for now.

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