

Danger, benefits go with auxiliary generators

Following the third major storm to hit the Pacific Northwest in as many years, some people who were without electricity may be considering purchase of an auxiliary generator.

Although these generators provide

Pet not good gift

Giving the "gift of life" on Christmas may be a well meaning mistake, warns Elizabeth Kaye, Superintendent of Education at the Oregon Humane Society. Arriving Christmas morning as a surprise gift to an unprepared person is an unfair way to enter a household. The animal risks being subjected to holiday commotion, crowds and over-excitement.

emergency power, they can also pose life-threatening danger to electric utility crews if proper procedures for installation and use are not followed.

"There are two ways to use an auxiliary generator," according to Bob Kallen, Sandy District manager for Portland General Electric Company.

"One is to permanently install it as part of the home's electric system. The other is to locate the unit within an extension cord's reach of the appliances you would like to operate during a power outage," Kallen said.

Permanently connected generators must be installed in compliance with the National Electric Code (NEC).

The NEC requires an approved transfer switch that prevents electricity from flowing back into PGE lines. Without this switch,

PGE crews would have no way of knowing if a downed line were energized. The result could be a serious, and possibly fatal, injury.

Before operating the generator, the transfer switch must be inspected and approved by Sandy Building Official Tom Day. Though not required, Kallen said it's a good idea

to report such installations to PGE.

When you operate a portable generator, one not permanently connected to the home wiring, use only the extension cords to connect the appliances to the generator. With these types of generators, it is important not to connect the generator to a wall outlet.

"People should bear in mind that an auxiliary generator is not designed to substitute for a home's electrical system," Kallen said.

Typical generators available for home use have an outlet of 1,000 to 4,500 watts.

A kilowatt is 1,000 watts, so a 1,000-watt generator can provide enough electricity to run 10 100-watt lightbulbs.

Kallen said it takes 325 average watts to operate a 12- to 14-cubic foot refrigerator and 341 average watts for a 15-cubic foot freezer.

"It is important to remember," Kallen said, "that once the motor for the refrigerator or freezer has stopped, it takes five times that amount of electricity to restart it."

"Usually, at least a

3,000-watt generator is needed to start the refrigerator and freezer, keep them running, and have some capacity remaining to run lights and a few other appliances while

power is off."

Persons with additional questions about the use of auxiliary generators should contact the Sandy District PGE office, 668-4158.

Students from Sandy attend Bible college

Three Sandy Union High School graduates have enrolled this fall at the Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland.

They are Mark Watkins, son of Robert Watkins, 22035 S.E. Firwood Road, Sandy, Tamara Peterson, daughter of Charles Peterson, 59160 East Sleepy Hollow Drive, Sandy, and Deanna Von Bergen, daughter of Walter Von

Bergen, Sandy.

An associate of arts degree in Biblical studies will qualify them to pursue a variety of Christian ministries in the United States or overseas.

Over 800 attend the Multnomah School of the Bible, which was founded in 1936. It is an interdenominational Bible college specializing in teaching the Bible.



Deanna Von Bergen



Mark Watkins

Christmas tree gift that will be remembered

A living Christmas tree is a decoration that lasts. It decorates your home during the holiday season, and then decorates your yard when it is transplanted outdoors after Christmas.

"Transplant shock is a bit more of a problem than usual with living Christmas trees because they have to survive the move indoors and then out again," explains Ray McNeilan, Oregon State University extension home gardening agent. "However, with the proper care and handling, the tree can make the transition easily."

Scotch pine, Douglas-fir, shore pine, blue spruce, noble fir, Austrian pine, redwood and giant sequoia are some of the more popular living Christmas trees. Before buying, check with your local nursery or garden store to find out what varieties are best adapted to local growing conditions.

Be sure you have plenty of room for some of these trees because certain varieties are known to grow quite tall, McNeilan advises.

Living Christmas trees can be purchased in containers or balled-in-burlap. Trees grown in containers are more likely to survive the indoor-outdoor transitions and are easier to deal with, according to McNeilan.

In addition, trees that were grown in their containers have well-developed root systems, and are harder than those that have just been dug and transplanted to larger pots.

On the other hand, nursery-grown balled-in-burlap trees that have been properly root-pruned can make excellent living Christmas trees, even though they do require a bit of extra care.

Use of two or three stage relocation procedure will help the tree adjust to warmer inside temperatures when it is brought home. First, place the tree in an unheated garage for four days, then in an unheated room in the house, if possible.

Containerized trees can be left in their containers indoors. A balled-in-burlap tree must be placed in some sort of tree stand or pot that will give support and allow the tree to be watered. Leave the burlap wrapped around the roots and tree trunk while it is in the house.

The tree should be placed in the coolest location in the room where it will be a decoration. Keep the tree away from hot air ducts and large windows where the sun could cause severe

scald. The tree should be kept at normal indoor temperatures no more than four to five days.

Higher indoor temperatures may cause the tree to start growing. Test the container soil surface daily and add water when it feels dry. A balled-in-burlap tree should be watered only enough to keep the rootball from drying.

"Usually homeowners don't water the tree enough and root damage results when the tree dries out," McNeilan notes.

Try to keep tree decorations from breaking twigs and branches. Hot light bulbs should be kept away from tree foliage, and don't put flocking or artificial snow on the tree.

When it's time to move the tree back outdoors, use the same multi-stage relocation process in reverse. Move the tree to successively cooler locations before moving it all the way outdoors.

When planting a containerized tree, dig a hole at least twice the size of the tree's estimated root area. Mix the soil from the hole with an equal amount of organic matter such as peat moss, compost, rotted manure, sawdust or leaf-mold.

"The organic matter is especially important in clay soils that don't drain well," McNeilan says.

Remove the tree from the container and spread the roots out as much as possible. Then place the tree in the planting hole so the soil surface meets the tree trunk at the same place it did when the tree was in the container.

Fill the hole around the plant with the mixture of soil and organic matter and water it. Don't fertilize the plant until late spring. An organic surface mulch will protect the tree from cold temperatures.

When planting a balled-in-burlap tree, dig a hole twice the size of the rootball and mix the soil from the hole with an equal amount of organic matter. Cut the twine from around the tree trunk and unwrap the burlap from the upper half of the rootball.

Place the tree in the hole so the trunkline created by the soil in the rootball is at the soil surface. Fill the hole around the tree with the mixture of soil and organic matter and water it. As with the container transplant, do not fertilize the tree until late spring. Addition of organic surface mulch will protect the tree from cold winter temperatures.

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