

HOUSING

The
Portland
Observer

Northwest natural gas provides free weatherization advice

Northwest Natural Gas encourages you to save energy and money by taking advantage of existing programs to weatherize homes and upgrade inefficient heating equipment. Northwest Natural Gas offers free home energy audits to its residential customers.

The company's auditors perform an evaluation of the home and offer advice on which weatherization measures will pay back quickest in energy savings.

The company makes low interest loan or rebate options available to install weatherization measures for those customers who have natural gas heating systems.

"One of the most effective things you can do is to upgrade your heating system," said Susan Dodge, manager of Market Services. "Consider

the efficiency of the equipment. If you have an older, 70-percent-efficient furnace, that means that for every dollar of energy purchased, about 30 cents are going up the flue."

Here are some additional tips that consumers can use to cut down on their fuel costs while conserving energy:

• **Heating System:** Change or clean your furnace filter every month during the heating season. Turn the thermostat down at night. Reducing the temperature by 10 degrees at night or when the house is unoccupied can save as much as 20 percent on heating costs.

• **Heating Duct Insulation:** Wherever heating ducts are exposed to unheated areas, you're losing money. Ensure that all heating ducts are sealed with screws and tape and are

well insulated with fiberglass batting (rolls of insulation).

• **Ceiling Insulation:** If there is sufficient attic space, ceilings should be insulated to an R-38 level, which is about 15-inches of loose-fill fiberglass insulation. Either loose-fill insulation or batting can be used in many ceilings. If batting is used, the kraft face should always be installed toward the living space. Different types of ceilings require different types of insulation to avert heat loss. Our auditors can determine the best type of use. Adequate ventilation is important to prevent moisture build-up. Northwest Natural's energy auditors also can calculate the number of roof vents your house needs.

• **Wall Insulation:** Many older homes have either no wall insulation or inadequate insulation. Unfinished

walls can be insulated with batting, but finished walls require that loose-fill insulation be blown in, preferably by an experienced, professional contractor.

• **Crawl Space Ventilation and Insulation:** Crawl spaces should be insulated to an R-25 level. The craft backing should face the living space, and the insulation under a floor. Adequate ventilation is important to prevent moisture build-up. In winter, homeowners should close off crawl space vents on all but one side of the house and reopen them in summer. Also, be sure and place a plastic vapor barrier over crawl space soil to prevent moisture from rising into the house.

• **Water Heater:** Using a natural

gas water heater can save approximately 50 percent compared to electric models. Natural gas models heat water about twice as fast as conventional electric water heaters. And if a super high-efficiency natural gas water heater is installed, the savings will increase.

• **Water pipe insulation:** Like heating ducts, uninsulated water pipes—both hot and cold—waste energy. Our auditors will show you where these pipes are and estimate how much wrapping them will save you.

• **Weatherstripping Doors and Caulking Windows:** The bad news—most doors and windows let in lots of cold air. The good news—a few dollars' worth of weatherstripping or caulking can appreciably cut heat

loss. These measures reduce drafts and building heat loss while saving you money and improving home comfort.

• **Storm Windows and Doors:** Although they can be less cost-effective than other conservation measures because of their high cost and long payback, and because of the low R-value of glass and wood, storm windows and doors remain popular because of their contribution to security, home comfort and noise control.

To find out more about upgrading your natural gas furnace, converting to natural gas water heating, or to ask about weatherization audit call Northwest Natural Gas in Portland at 220-2361 or 1-800-422-4012.

Tenants' Rights Forum

Learn your rights as a renter at Oregon Housing NOW's tenant forum. The forum will include a legal overview of the Landlord/Tenant Law in Oregon and a discussion on how tenants can collectively act to strengthen their rights as renters. Skyrocketing rents in the

Portland area are leaving tenants increasingly susceptible to abuse and neglect from landlords. This is a rare opportunity to learn valuable legal information which may help prevent such problems.

The forum will be held Wednesday, December 4, 7:00 pm in the

Oregon Housing NOW! office at Augustana Lutheran Church, 2710 NE 14th Ave, Portland.

This event is free and childcare will be available at no cost. For further information, or to register for childcare, call Oregon Housing Now! at 288-0317.

Oregon director to national board

Baruti L. Artharee, Director of the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS), has been elected to serve a 2-year term on the Board of the National Association of State Housing Authorities (NCSHA).

"My election to this board is in recognition of the many accomplishments of the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department with its partners throughout the state," said Artharee. "Oregon is a leader in the nation in addressing affordable

housing needs and supportive services."

NCSHA is a national, non-profit organization created in 1970 to assist housing agencies in the 50 states to advance the interests of lower income and underserved people through financing, development and preservation of affordable housing. NCSHA's members are state Housing Finance Agencies with statewide authority.

NCSHA represents these agencies in Washington before Congress,

the Administration, federal agencies concerned with housing such as HUD and Treasury, and other advocates for affordable housing.

Artharee, 44, is responsible for the Oregon Department which provides financial and program support to create and preserve opportunities for quality affordable housing for low-income Oregonians. The Department also administers federal and state anti-poverty, homeless and energy assistance community service programs.

Clean those dirty bird feeders to prevent disease

By Carl Savonen

Imagine a fast food joint where nobody ever cleaned the kitchen, the tables or the bathrooms. Now think about your bird feeder. When is the last time you cleaned it?

Autumn is a good time of year to check and clean up your bird feeders for the winter feeding season.

Like a crowded restaurant constantly used by a large group of customers, a bird feeder needs some sanitation practices to protect visiting birds from disease, explained Ban Edge, wildlife specialists with the Oregon State University Extension Service.

Four diseases commonly affect birds using feeders:

• **Salmonellosis:** The most commonly spread disease at feeders is caused by the "Salmonella" group of bacteria. Birds can die quickly from this disease. Symptoms include abscesses in the lining of the upper digestive tract of the birds. Infected birds spread the bacteria in their droppings. Other birds get sick when infected droppings land on food.

• **Trichomoniasis:** It is caused by a one-celled protozoan parasite. Mourning doves are particularly susceptible. Trichomoniasis cause sores in the birds' mouths and throats, making it difficult for birds to swallow or drink. The disease spreads when sick birds drop contaminated food or water at a feeder or watering area.

• **Aspergillosis:** A mold that grows on a damp feed and in the debris beneath feeders. Birds inhale the mold spores and infection spreads in the lungs, causing bronchitis and pneumonia.

• **Avian Pox:** A virus that causes wartlike growths on featherless surfaces of a bird's face, feet legs or wings. The virus spreads by direct contact, by insects or by viruses shed on food by infected birds.

To minimize the spread of disease at your feeder, make sure you prac-

tice sound bird feeding sanitation. Edge suggests:

• *Give the birds enough space. Do you have only one feeder? Get another if your feeder is crowded.*

• *Clean your feeder and the droppings on the perching area each time you fill your feeder.*

• *Disinfect the feeder once or twice a month with one part of liquid chlorine household bleach in nine parts of warm water. If possible, immerse the feeder for two to three minutes and allow to air dry.*

• *Feed birds only high quality*

food. Moldy seed or bread or spoiled leftovers doesn't do them any more good than it would you.

• *Keep rodents out of food. Mice can carry some bird diseases.*

• *Act early and spread the word. Don't wait until you see sick birds huddled at the feeder. And tell your friends who feed birds to take the above precautions.*

• *Check your feeder for sharp edges where birds might cut themselves. Small scratches or cuts allow bacteria and viruses to infect a bird more easily.*

Presenting the perfect contest for all budding young Rembrandts, O'Keeffes, Picassos and Michelangelos.

It's the 1997 U.S. Savings Bonds National Student Poster Contest.

It's a fun, educational project and a great way for 4th, 5th, and 6th grade artists to use their talents and learn the benefits of saving. Plus, they can win prizes ranging from a \$200 to a \$5,000 U.S. Savings Bond, and a trip to Washington, D.C.

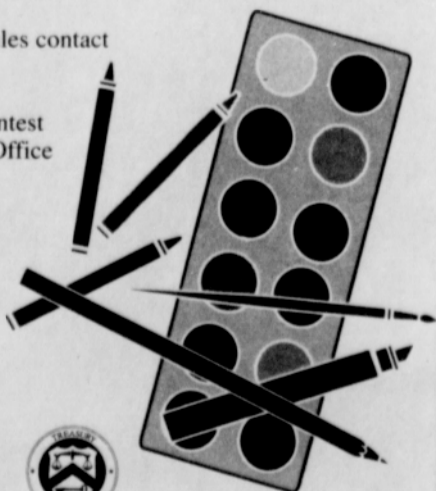
To enter students must design a poster promoting the contest theme "U.S. Savings Bonds - Invest Today, Enjoy Tomorrow." The contest deadline is February 7, 1997.

For a copy of the contest rules contact your school or write:

National Student Poster Contest
Savings Bonds Marketing Office
Room 331
Department of the Treasury
Washington, D.C. 20226

U.S. SAVINGS BONDS

A public service of this publication.



Make herb vinegars For holiday gifts

BY CAROL SAVONEN

Herb vinegars are easy and fun to make and can be given as elegant holiday gifts. They are welcome additions to salad dressings, sauces, meat dishes and cooked vegetables.

All it takes to produce herb vinegar is some garden-fresh herbs, clean glass jars and lids, vinegar and some containers to put the vinegar into when it is done, explained Nellie Oehler, home economist with the Oregon State University Extension Service.

"A great variety of herbs can be used to make flavored vinegars, either by themselves or in combinations," said Oehler. "Mint, basil, tarragon, dill, oregano and chives are all popular."

"Use about 3-4 sprigs of fresh herbs or three tablespoons of dried herbs for each pint of vinegar," she

said. "The new leaves at the tip of an herb plant are usually the most flavorful."

Oehler recommends the following procedure for making herb vinegars:

• Sterilize glass containers such as quart or gallon jars by boiling for 10 minutes. Sterilization inhibits microorganisms that cloud herb vinegars.

• Insert the desired amount of herbs into a sterilized glass jar and fill the jar with the vinegar of choice.

• Distilled white and apple cider vinegar are most affordable, but apple cider's amber color may not be as desirable for light colored herbs. White wine vinegar is more expensive, but has a very smooth flavor.

• Put a pint of vinegar in the jar per each three to four sprigs for fresh herbs. The vinegar may be added either hot or cold. "Some people

prefer to heat the vinegar to just below the boiling point and then pour the hot vinegar over the herbs," said Oehler. "Others like the flavor better when cold vinegar is added."

• Tightly cap the jar. Plastic lids or corks make the best seals, as metal jar tops will rust. Store your herb vinegar in a cool, dark place for several weeks. After the desired flavor is reached, filter the vinegar and put it into sterilized smaller containers for gifts or use in your own kitchen.

• Add a sprig of fresh herb for appearance. Or leave the vinegar unfiltered. Citrus rind, garlic, peppers or peppercorns can also add unique flavors to herbal vinegars.

• Label your vinegar with the type of base vinegar used, the flavoring ingredient and the date. Use the vinegar up within three to four months for best quality.

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