

Explaining death to children

Where do people go when they die? Does it hurt to die? Do only old people die? What is "dead"? These are a few questions children ask about death and dying.

How can you answer them? Tell them the truth, say experts. Children should not be told fairy tales about death. Explaining death to a child is not easy, especially if it's the death of a beloved grandparent.

Children need an honest explanation that will enable them to grapple with the terrible, but unavoidable, experience of loss.

In explaining the death of a loved one we suggest:

*The child be told immediately of the death, in a calm, normal voice, to prevent his/her hearing it from someone else.

*The child be told by someone close to him/her in secure, familiar surroundings.

*The child be given as honest an explanation as possible within his/her limits of understanding.

*Conveying to the child that he/she is loved and will continue to be loved even though a sad thing has happened.

*Letting the child know that it's all right to feel sad and that he/she should talk about those feelings.

*Giving the child the option

of attending the funeral and other rituals of mourning with the family. Children are often sheltered, but have the right and the need to be included.

If children are not included, they start to feel insecure and abandoned as they see adults reacting to and sharing in an experience they cannot share. If children do decide to attend the funeral, explain to them in advance what to expect. Funeral rituals offer nothing for the child to fear. Of course, the funeral will be sad, but it is always sad to lose a loved one."

Joy and Marv Johnson, authors of "Tell Me Papa" (Cen-

tering Corporation, Omaha, Nebraska) a book for children on the death of a loved one, says "A funeral is a way of saying good-bye to a dead person we love, and thank-you. You feel better because you went to the funeral. You feel better because you said good-bye. You will have been part of your family in a very special way."

You can help children accept a loss by:

*Preparing them before a death.

*Encouraging them to show their feelings.

*Including them as part of the family in the grief process.



**OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION
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Build feedlots properly

Cattle feedlot operations need not pose a threat to ground water quality if properly constructed, according to soil scientist Fred A. Norstadt.

He constructed a feedlot that holds the offending pollutants from animal wastes in the surface layers of soil until the chemicals break down into harmless forms. The major pollutants are organic matter, nitrate nitrogen, and salts.

The nonpolluting feedlot was built on 18 inches of sand over 54 inches of clay loam soil near Fort Collins, Colorado. It retained salts and retarded nitrogen movement downward to ground water. With proper management, such construction would be effective for up to 100 years, Norstadt believes.

The design was more effective in preventing potential ground water contamination than clay loam over sand, all clay loam, or all sand, he says. A feedlot built over a coarse-textured, sandy loam soil might allow some seepage of salts and nitrogen.

"The superiority of sand over clay loam may be because the pollutants move through the sand layer, then stop at the clay loam layer where oxygen defi-

ciency enhances breakdown of mineral nitrogen to harmless forms," says Norstadt.

When starting a cattle-feeding operation, proper location of the feedlot should be the first consideration. Soil surveys can indicate where sand naturally occurs over clay loam or where a suitable area can be created by trucking in needed materials. The feedlot should have about a 1½ foot drop per 100-foot run.

After the feedlot is built, management is the most important factor in pollution control. At least four inches of manure should be left on the surface at all times. If cattle start to dig holes in the manure pack, the holes should be promptly filled to prevent enlargement. This ensures slower infiltration, which favors nitrogen breakdown.

Norstadt and agricultural engineer Harold R. Duke measured water content, acidity, ammonium nitrogen, nitrite nitrogen, electrical conductivity (a measure of soluble salts), and orthophosphate in the soil layers beneath the feedlots. The feedlots were located in a semi-arid climatic zone with an average annual precipitation of 14 inches. The scientists say results may vary in other regions.

Energy advice, answers given

Q. What do I need to know before I can shop intelligently for a heat pump water heater? S.V., Portland.

A. The first thing is to learn a little about what a heat pump is and what it does. Simply put, a heat pump does what its name says it does: It pumps heat. It doesn't create heat. It merely moves heat from the air surrounding it to wherever you want the heat. In the case of a heat pump water heater uses about half the energy of an electric water heater. For a family of four, this may mean a savings of about \$125 a year.

Heat pump water heaters are more efficient than conventional heaters because they merely move heat, rather than creating it. But it's important to know that the efficiency of a heat pump is affected more by where it is installed than by differences in available models.

Therefore, before you decide to buy a heat pump water heater, you should consider where you'll install it, how the heat pump water heater will affect its surroundings, and how its surroundings will affect it.

For instance, you shouldn't install a heat pump water heater in a heated area inside your home because it will rob heat from your home heating system and won't save you any money. In Oregon, you shouldn't install a heat pump water heater outdoors because it won't work when the temperature falls below 45 degrees. You shouldn't install it in an attic or other place where the temperature commonly higher than 95 degrees. What's left? Your garage, basement, or crawl space. Install it in an unheated space of at least 800 cubic feet. And, if you can, install it close to a furnace.

You may wonder how the heat pump is going to move heat from the surrounding air if the surrounding air is unheated. That's because air at 45 degrees-below it or not-contains heat even though it feels cold.

A heat pump lowers the surrounding temperature a bit and dehumidifies the surrounding area. Therefore, you'll need to install a condensate drain to dispose of the water it collects.

The fan and compressor will make noise much like a room-sized air conditioner. Vibration may be a problem if you attach the heat pump to a ceiling below a living space.

If, upon considering these factors, you think a heat pump water heater is a good investment, read on: Two kinds are available. One kind is to add on to an existing electric water heater. The other stands alone. The stand-alone units are a combination electric and heat pump water heater.

When you shop for a heat pump water heater, examine the warranty. Warranties on the system and compressor vary. The first, and most expensive, replacement you're likely to need is the compressor. The life expectancy of a properly maintained heat pump is ten to 15

Poinsetta can be a beauty year round

It is one of the shames of the Christmas season, the day the poinsetta dies. But it doesn't need to be, plant experts say. With a little care, the plant can be used over and over again. Here's the way it's done.

Once Christmas has passed, wait until the poinsetta has lost its green foliage and begins to shed some of the colored bracts—usually by March or April.

At that time, the original stems should be cut back to four or five inches above pot level.

After the cold weather has passed, (no more frosty nights) and the night temperature reach a minimum of 50 degrees (f), the plant may be planted outside. Select a well shaded, drained spot for it.

By early July the poinsetta will have reached about half its season's growth. Between July 15 and August 1, cut off the terminal (top) portions of the shoots to force a bushier plant. Bring the plant inside again

before the first frost and keep it in a dark place. The plant requires up to 14 hours of total darkness each day without which the plant will not bloom. (Putting it in a closet, or placing a box over the top will work fine).

It is a tricky process and many people don't succeed in keeping a poinsetta from one year to the next. If it doesn't work, however, a budding florist may want to try again.

Another holiday plant that takes some special care to create that burst of holiday bloom is the Christmas cactus.

It's not hard, just takes attention to a schedule. The Christmas cactus also needs 14 hours of total darkness (in a closet or under a box), each day to bloom and must be kept at a 40 degrees to bloom and set buds.

If your plant is kept indoors at night where lights are turned on, begin placing it in a closet after Labor Day. Do this every day at sundown. Once the buds

begin to set, the plant may be removed from the closet.

The Christmas cactus does best when exposed to filtered sunlight and kept below 75. Above that temperature, it will not flower.

Damaged shrubs, trees need repair

If the recent cold weather, mixed with high winds, damaged trees or shrubs in your yard, make repairs as soon as possible.

The earlier damaged plants are taken care of, the better chance they have of recovering.

Most of the damage is likely to be minor, involving small limbs that are broken or cracked. Damaged twigs and limbs should be cut back to the nearest strong, healthy wood or bud. It is important to remove all broken, fractured or splintered wood to eliminate areas where rot could take hold.

When pruning back to healthy wood, make the pruning cut flush with the nearest side limb. Do not leave a stub or snag.

If tree limbs were bent but not cracked, don't cut them down right away. Remove extra weight from the limb, such as expendable side limbs, and leave it alone. With time, the limb may straighten out.

In some years, ice storms in some parts of Oregon have broken large limbs from trees, and even caused major splits in tree trunks.

A broken major limb should be sawed back to the trunk or major side limb. Make the cut as clean as possible. This will help prevent rot diseases from becoming established in the area of the cut.

Trunks that are split may be pulled together. Two methods are commonly used, one involving bolts placed through the trunk, the other using wire around the tree.

With the bolt method, holes are drilled at intervals through the split sections of the trunk. Bolts with huge washers at either end are inserted in the holes and tightened to pull the split areas together.

With the wire method, wire is inserted in rubber tubing and twisted around the trunk so it pulls the split sections together.

The problem with this method, is that the clamping pressure caused by the wire may girdle the tree. This method should be used only when minimum pressure is needed to hold the split sections together.

After the split sections are together, the outer edges of the split should be liberally painted with tree wound paint.

Some trees, of course, have been damaged beyond repair, or may require more work than most homeowners are willing to do. Young, fast-growing trees have the best chance to recover from major damage. Trees that show little regrowth each year; trees that have been damaged before; and old trees with scraggly growth are less likely to recover from significant damage.

In the early spring, an application of nitrogen fertilizer around dripline area of recovering trees and shrubs will encourage vigorous growth.

A clean stove for the new year

With all the extra cooking for the holidays it was easy to neglect cleaning your range and when you keep putting the cleaning chore off it just gets worse.

Reflector bowls are an attractive part of the range. However, they are more than decorative. They help provide even cooking and easier cleanup as well as help conserve energy by reflecting heat into the cooking pan.

Reflector bowls usually last a long time but stains spoil their looks. Blue or gold stains indicate overheating. This can be caused by using pans that are larger than the surface units completely. This caused the heat to go to the reflector bowl get too hot and begins to turn blue or gold. The blue or gold stain caused by overheating is not removable. To avoid these stains, we advise using care when cooking with woks, canners, steamers, and balancers, as these items are often larger than the surface units. When using these special utensils, start food cooking on a high setting then reduce to a lower setting to finish cooking. Brown stains are caused by cooked-on food from splatters and spills that have not been wiped up soon enough. In most cases this stain can be easily taken care of. However, if food spills stay on the cooktop and reflector bowls too long they can become baked on and can

be very difficult to remove.

Reflector bowls need to be cleaned frequently. Porcelain bowls may be washed in automatic dishwashers or placed upside down on oven racks during

a self-cleaning cycle. Chrome trim rings and bowls should be hand washed with other cooking utensils. Do not place chrome bowls in a self-cleaning oven or use commercial oven cleaner on them.

Snow makes good mulch

Snow is good for more than just the traditional snow ball fight or construction of a snow man.

To the resourceful home gardener or landscaper in colder regions of Oregon, snow is an excellent winter source of mulch.

A layer of snow prevents the ground from freezing hard during the winter.

If you have perennial garden of landscape plants in your yard, a mulch of snow will help prevent root damage from frozen soil.

If winter snowfall is even, there is little you have to do. The snow is already uniformly spread over the home landscape. If you shovel snow off driveways and walkways, take a little extra time to pile it around landscape plants under eaves that may have escaped coverage by snowfall.

Flower bulbs and garden root crops, in particular, will benefit from an insulating layer of snow, and the added moisture when the snow melts won't hurt either.

Of course, homeowners should take care not to pile up a lot of

snow in areas around the house where drainage is poor. This can result in unwanted quagmires slower infiltration, which drowned garden and landscape plants when the snow eventually melts.

Storage hints given

Q. Where should I store canned goods?

A. The best storage for canned foods is in a dry place at moderately cool, but not freezing temperatures. Avoid storage near steam pipes, radiators, furnaces and kitchen ranges.

Q. How long will canned foods keep?

A. This will depend upon a number of factors, such as the type of food canned, the processing it has received, how it has been handled, and the condition under which it has been stored. Generally speaking, if the can itself is normal in appearance, the food inside should still be wholesome. However, a regular turnover about once a year is

suggested.

Q. Is it safe to leave unused portions of canned foods in the can after opening?

A. Acid foods should not be stored in cans after opening. This includes foods such as tomato juice, fruit juices and drinks and other fruits. Storage in opened cans increased iron accumulation. Lead may also be picked up from soldered cans that have been opened. Further, metallic off-flavors results from acid foods left in the opened cans. If you are not going to eat food left in cans immediately, empty the contents into clean, hot water-rinsed glass or plastic containers. It is important to place the containers in the refrigerator immediately.

Losing weight. . .

It's all in your mind

There is probably no New Year's resolution more common than the resolve to lose weight. By now, hundreds of Americans have started diets and given up in frustration. They've tried every outrageous fad diet around, because they believe it's the ice cream, cookies and potatoes that are making them fat. And so, they doom themselves to yet another failed diet. They try to change the effect without doing a thing about the cause of overweight. Did you know that more people recover from cancer than maintain a weight loss for five years?

The cause of overweight is the self-image of being overweight, of "lacking discipline," of being unworthy of admiration and acceptance. We can get comfortable with a long-held self-image. . . comfortable that we'd rather be less than our most attractive selves. It can be a challenge to be attractive and to accept the approval that comes with being attractive.

Being your most attractive self begins in your mind. You must accept your mind's intelligence and your body's wisdom. You already have a body that is uniquely perfect for you, a weight that is right for you. Your perfect body is already there. But you must accept it as your own.

Once you visualize the body that is perfect for you and know that it's already yours, losing weight or gaining it comes naturally. It's so much easier to accomplish things when you let your mind work for you in positive direction—by saying, "I'm lean inside than in a negative direction as in "I will not eat ice cream."

When you're attuned to your own body, you'll naturally eat no more than you need. You'll welcome exercise as a way to feel freedom of movement.

See yourself as you want to be, and you'll be the self you want. You really think yourself thin by changing your thoughts.