

**G A 'green' life takes
line, common sense D1**

**PENS Crosby skates with team, but says
injury will keep him out a while longer C8**



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Live green energy

GREEN • FROM D1

Rick McGee, agree, and say the simplest way to save money is by turning off the lights when the room isn't being used.

Don't forget the computer. Even sleep mode eats up power, so if you don't need it, shut it off.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration says electrical use has more than doubled to 3,837 billion kilowatt hours from 1970.

Designer Mark Uchida, owner of A ReMARKable Kitchen in Blawnox, says such increased use is the reason some power groups urge timer switches on dishwashers. They turn them on late at night when power use is down.

In any case, that isn't a bad idea, he says.

Hunting bright ideas

Compact fluorescent bulbs are in the spotlight as energy savers, but there are other ways to be thrifty.

Designer McGee says cutting brightness 7 percent with a dimmer doubles the life of an incandescent light. That cuts down on power used and waste, and also gets away from the disposal problem with fluorescent lights. They contain some mercury and shouldn't be sent to a landfill.

Architect Ernie Sota from Bellevue suggests the use of LEDs is becoming more beneficial. Light-emitting diode lamps are getting brighter and are usable in more settings, and are long-lasting.

By using alternates and showing more concern for lighting, questions about the manufacture, cost and disposal of fluorescents can be avoided, Hilbish says.

Planting some savings

Architect Tom Wasilowski from the Natrona Heights area of Harrison believes professionals in his line of work have been "more ahead of the game" on practical, energy-saving matters for a longer time than most people.

It's important to look at such matters as having R-38 rating in attic insulation and making use of windows to blend natural light with artificial light, but he has an even simpler idea. One that is really very green,

"Plant a deciduous tree near the house," he says. "In the summer, the leaves provide shade and, in the winter, more sunlight reaches the house."

Finding a way to clean up

Flora from the Green Building Alliance takes a rather simple approach to many matters, whether it is walking to work or hanging clothes on an outside line to cut down the use of a clothes dryer. She says house-cleaning can be done the same way.

"Some Borax and a little vinegar will take care of most anything," she says.

Clorox, meanwhile, has introduced a Green Works line of natural cleaning products made mostly of lemon oil and coconuts. They are all non-allergenic and biodegradable, not tested on animals and packaged in recyclable containers. They sell from \$2.99 to \$3.99.



Heuchera "Georgia Peach"

TERRA NOVA NURSERIES



Coreopsis "Gold Nugget"

TERRA NOVA NURSERIES



"Amethyst" coral berry (Symphoricarpos x doorenbosii)



Gaillardia aristata "Oranges & Lemons" GARDEN SPLENDOR

New mock orange, coral bell among delightful plants for '08

PLANTS • FROM D1

berries. They are brilliant pink and absolutely irresistible to both human eyes and hungry birds. The berries make a great addition to bouquets, and the shrub is reported to be deer-resistant (to what extent, I don't know). This plant makes one gorgeous late-season display.

As for my favorite new perennial, I'll start with a confession. I've gotten a little tired of all the attention paid to the coral bells (Heuchera spp.) lately. Yes, the breeding efforts are tremendous, and yes, the new cultivars are very striking, but do we really need another Heuchera? Apparently, we do. And I'm glad they didn't listen to me and kept on searching for the perfect coral bell, because I believe the folks at Terra Nova Nursery have found it in Heuchera "Georgia Peach." This shade-loving gem has luscious peach-colored leaves (as much as 6 inches across) laced in a silver sheen. Late in the season, the color darkens to a rosy purple, making it seem as though you have two different varieties. Plus, "Georgia Peach" is bred for a high tolerance to heat and humidity. Sounds perfect to me.

Two other new perennials to sing about are Gaillardia aristata "Oranges & Lemons" and Coreopsis "Gold Nugget." It seems I'm constantly on the prowl for heat- and drought-tolerant plants that will thrive in my asphalt-baked front garden. These two will fit the bill and promise to keep flowering for three to four months.

Monarda "Bergamo" has me excited, because I haven't planted a new bee balm in 10 years, and the species as a whole has so many positives (despite its penchant for powdery mildew). Monarda is attractive to butterflies and bees, is practically deer-proof, and is tolerant of my lack of summer attention and irrigation. "Bergamo" is special

Where to get them

Most of these new plants should be available at local garden centers this spring, with the exception of the potatoes and zinnias. Prices will vary.

■ For "King Harry" potatoes, contact Wood Prairie Farm at 800-829-9765 or www.woodprairie.com. One pound of "King Harry" seeds is \$7.95.

■ For "Apricot Blush" zinnias, contact Renee's Garden at 888-880-7228 or www.reneesgarden.com. One package of seeds is \$2.69.



"Apricot Blush"

RENEE'S GARDEN

because it blooms earlier and is totally resistant to powdery mildew. It's also an annual variety and is easily started from seed indoors.

For my cutting garden, I'm going to try a new zinnia called "Apricot Blush" from Renee's Garden. To me, the appeal lies in the quirkiness of homespun zinnia flowers all decked out in a mellow blend of peach and blush. That and its touted mildew resistance sent me into a tizzy when I found it in the catalog. I bought five packets of seed.

Million Bells have become all the rage for container plantings over the past few years, and deservedly so. They are prolific bloomers, they cascade quite nicely over the pot's edge, and they are pretty easy to care for. And now they've created a double form. Calibrachoa "MiniFamous Double Blue," and its sisters "Double Pink" and "Double Dark Pink," are

low-growing but spread as much as 2 feet across. They are more tolerant of summer heat than traditional petunias and bloom continuously throughout the growing season. I'm looking forward to pairing them with Dichondra "Silver Falls" in my new window boxes this spring.

And, lastly, being a vegetable gardener at heart, I need to tell you about a new potato find. Developed at Cornell University over the past few years, "King Harry" potato is the answered prayer for all organic gardeners plagued with Colorado potato beetles. This variety has been bred to have millions of tiny, sticky hairs covering each leaf, creating a very unwelcoming surface for landing potato beetles and sending them over to the neighbor's veggie patch instead. "King Harry" is also delicious and high-yielding. That's just about everything I look for in a new vegetable variety.

Horticulturist Jessica Walliser, co-author of the book "Grow Organic," can be heard from 7-9 a.m. Sundays on KDKA Radio's "The Organic Gardeners." You also can find her teaching at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, where she has been a faculty member for more than 12 years.

Send your gardening or landscaping questions to triblive@tribweb.com or The Good Earth, 503 Martindale St., Third Floor, D.L. Clark Building, Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

■ Last Saturday's Good Earth column by Bill Paxton contained an error in the amount of seed needed to overseed a lawn. The number should have been five pounds of grass seed per 1,000 square feet.

Wear more

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