



TOT TALK

Every New Bern mother looks forward to her baby's first birthday. If it's the first baby in the house, there's quite a celebration, with a lovely cake that is topped with a single candle.

You'll get quite a kick out of it, but likely as not that youngster of yours won't enjoy the occasion particularly. For one thing, he or she won't appreciate being fussed over, and pulled and poked at by admiring relatives and friends.

Babies, more often than not, suffer from too much attention. Not the sort of attention that an infant actually requires, but the affectionate pestering that is usually their lot.

In the first twelve months they spent on earth they are too helpless to do much about it, but this helplessness won't last long. Very shortly you'll be confronted with a greedy bumblebee, as stubborn as a mule, and as nagging as a neglected toothache.

Maybe you've figured on this

ahead of time. Perhaps you've even worked out an elaborate plan to assure you of the perfect child. So perfect, in fact, that he will never sass you, refuse to eat the proper food, or insist on staying up late.

You've probably read all the books available on child care, and now you know all the answers. We've got bad news for you. You're going to flop as a parent, just like every other New Bernian. What the books said isn't going to work out the way you were told.

Your child may be a better child, as a result of your guidance and your love. It's something to hope and pray for, anyway. But after the first year, Junior has a mind of his own. He is an individual, and unless you break his spirit (which isn't good) he'll grow progressively individualistic.

You'd better enjoy that first birthday party, and keep your fingers crossed.

GARDEN TIME

By M. E. GARDNER
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A lady from Benson writes that her camellias are covered with scale and requests a remedy. This is camellia leaf scale and requires an oil spray for control. I would recommend summer oil, Volck, and thorough coverage. Dilute according to instructions. This is a sucking insect so the spray solution must strike the body of the insect to be effective.

A friend was complaining about having to mow his grass so often. This seemed a little strange because many people don't have nice stands of grass. My advice is to keep it growing by top dressing with fertilizer, as needed. Don't mow too close. If you do, you will be sorry when the temperature rises and the hot dry winds set in.

Set your mower to leave one and a half to two inches high after each mowing. Avoid straddling terraces or high places with a rotary mower. They will dig in and take your grass out by the roots. If you have some spots which seem to be low in nutrition, not wet, try a liberal application of cottonseed meal. I have used it with good results.

If you have not planted tomatoes the mountains, use a starter solution. Weigh out five pounds of a 5-10-10 fertilizer and stir in 50 gallons of water. For a small quantity, use four level tablespoons in one gallon of water. One-half to one pint of the solution, per plant, is about right. Stir the solution well before applying because much of the material will be in suspension rather than solution.

If you have already planted tomatoes, and most people in the lower Piedmont and Coastal Plain have, make plans to mulch and stake your plants. The stake should be five or six feet high and substantial enough to hold the plant when in fruit. Use strong, soft cloth strips. Tie the cloth strips firmly around the stake and loosely around the stem of the plant. Pruning is desirable and easy if you will pinch out the suckers that form in the axils of the leaves when they are about two or three inches long.

Keep plants free of weeds and mulch heavily with grain straw or pine needles.

Blossoms sometimes fail to set fruit due to low temperature (50 degrees) or high temperature (about 90 degrees). Try spraying the blossoms with one of the plant regulators such as Sure-Set. This may help if conditions are not too extreme. Another common cause of poor fruit set is over fertilizing with nitrogen.

Let's talk about water, in general, and then apply its use to the needs of plants.

You could, perhaps, write the history of the growth of a man in terms of his great concern about water. The habits of men have probably been influenced more by their close association with water than with the land by which they earned their bread. Like air, water is so closely bound to man's evolution that it may well be the limiting factor in his destiny.

Maybe we can better understand the need for water in plant growth if we examine some figures to see how it constitutes the greater part of living plants: 90 per cent of the edible parts of such vegetables as cabbage and spinach; 85 per cent of the fruit of the apple and strawberry; 65 per cent of the green weight of leaves and succulent twigs; and 70 per cent of the weight of roots. It serves as a solvent for mineral nutrients that enter the plant through the roots and acts as a medium through which substance are transported within the plant tissues. Approximately 3,000 gallons of water per tree, is required to mature a crop of peaches. This is the amount actually used by the tree and does not include water lost by run-off, seepage or evaporation from the soil surface.

Tremendous quantities of water are lost by transpiration from the leaf surface. Some plants have structural adaptations which reduce water losses. These include: reduction of the leaf surface in the needles of conifers, heavy cutin



SPRING CLEANING MEANS WORKING, WASHING, AND WAXING—Spring house cleaning can be a hazardous job, so do follow safety practices when you are cleaning house.

WASHING—"Garments that are definitely labeled 'Dry Away from Heat' should not be put into the dryer. Articles made of foam rubber, rubber-coated tennis shoes, galoshes and fabrics impregnated with chemicals—cleaning cloths, mops, etc., saturated with wax—should not be dried in a dryer. Under no circumstances should garments which have been cleaned with flammable fluids be placed in the dryer for drying..." (Extract from a manufacturer's manual.)

WAXING FLOORS—Many preparations are available for cleaning and caring for floors in the home. They make cleaning easier, but can also make floors slippery. You can wax floors so they will not be slippery.

Be sure floor is thoroughly washed with a mild soap or a syndet. If the wax has accumulated or the covering is discolored, use a special floor cleaner. Rinse floor surface thoroughly. Allow it to dry completely. Apply a very thin coat of wax. It can be a water-base wax or the solvent-base wax in liquid or paste form. Use an applicator for water-base wax so wax can be applied evenly with light, easy strokes. Don't retrace or rub the same spot.

For a solvent-base wax (liquid), follow the manufacturer's directions and apply a thin layer.

Paste wax can be applied by placing the wax between two layers of cheese cloth and rubbing floor, leaving a thin, even coat. Polish the wax, preferably with a hand or machine polisher, until you have a hard finish—soft wax is slippery.

Wax may be soft and slippery if detergents and cleaning agents haven't been thoroughly rinsed from floor, or if you are using a soiled applicator. Be sure to follow manufacturer's directions for drying time because wet wax is hazardous.

Use only a dry dust mop on waxed floors. Treated mops make wax soften, become smeary and slippery. Wiping up spilled agents immediately will prevent many falls.

Be sure to wear shoes that will give traction on floors; and be careful of throw rugs.

REMOVING STAINS—Stains in on the leaves of the jade plant, pubescent (hairy) leaves of the African violet and modified stems and leaves on the cactus.

How much water to apply? How often? Only you can determine this because so much depends upon your soil type, the equipment used, the competition from the roots of shade trees, rainfall, wind and temperatures. A suggestion or two may be helpful. Water infrequently but soak when applying. Avoid the common mistake of just sprinkling a little every day.

the bottom of a tall slender vase can be removed by using cleaning powder and ammonia or cleaning powder and clorox—don't use clorox and ammonia together.

If you have any cast iron utensils, don't wash them with a synthetic detergent. It removes all the seasoning (absorbed grease) causing them to stick or rust. Only soap will protect the seasoning.

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