

Health Watch

By N. C. Medical Society

With today's emphasis on physical fitness, it's just as likely that a woman will be hit in the eye by a flying racquet ball as a man. However, according to ophthalmologists, medical eye doctors who specialize in eye care, women do have some eye problems uniquely their own.

Birth control pills, pregnancy and menopause can cause eye-related problems in a small percentage of women, say the doctors. The underlying culprit is the overabundance or underabundance of the hormone, estrogen.

It is a medically established fact that a small percentage of women experience changes in the vascular system as a result of taking the Pill and that these changes can be reflected in serious eye problems. Loss of vision can result from clotting of small blood vessels in the retina or optic nerve. Fortunately, blurred vision is usually an early warning sign and the condition may be reversible if detected and treated.

The same problem may arise during pregnancy. Some women may also have difficulty in wearing contact lenses as a result of changes in the eyes during the last three months before the baby's born. Any eye problem during pregnancy should always be described to the obstetrician who may then refer the patient to an ophthalmologist.

"Dry eye syndrome" can be a problem for post-menopausal women. In their 50's and 60's, some women experience a dry, burning feeling in the eyes caused by insufficient tears. Some of the remedies include applying artificial tears, protecting the eyes from the wind with side shields on glasses and keeping the air moist in the house with the aid of a humidifier.

Women have a better record than men in the injury department, but they are prone to other problems such as scratches from long fingernails and irritation from cosmetics. Some women experience an allergic reaction to eye shadow or mascara. Others cause problems by inadvertently scratching the eyeball with a mascara brush. Teens sometimes get into the bad habit of sharing eye makeup. This can lead to eye infections, such as trachoma, potentially

serious enough to be a common cause of blindness in underdeveloped countries.

One problem women have had in the past, hair spray keratitis, an inflammation of the cornea, is waning. Tiny ulcers can result from accidentally getting hair spray in the eyes, but this problem has diminished as aerosol sprays have been removed from the market.

Up until this point, women have not been exposed to chemical burns as frequently as men, except for injuries involving household cleaners. Oven cleaners, ammonia and bleach, when accidentally splashed in the eyes, can cause chemical burns. These injuries can be painful and dangerous. The eyes should be immediately and repeatedly flooded with clear, cool water and a physician should be consulted.

Garden Clinic

N. C. State University Answers Timely Gardening Questions

Q. Would a thornless locust be a fast growing hardwood for the Buies Creek area? (G. B., Buies Creek)

A. Yes. Occasionally, fast new growth on young trees causes them to look "weepy." If this happens, about one-half of the new growth should be cut in midsummer. New branches will develop and the tree will be stronger and have a better shape. (Bill Stanton, extension forestry specialist)

Q. When is the best time to prune a hemlock hedge? (P. H., Lenoir)

A. Early summer. Hemlock grows well all across North Carolina either as a specimen landscape plant or as a hedge. Pruning a hemlock hedge promotes dense, new foliage. Specimen trees should be allowed to grow naturally with little or no pruning to get graceful, drooping branches. Incidentally, Carolina hemlock (Tsuga Caroliniana) is slightly more tolerant of urban conditions than Canada hemlock (Tsuga canadensis). Kim Powell, extension landscape horticulturist)

Q. I have been putting wood ashes in an area in my landscape. Will my azaleas grow there? (E. E., Cary)

A. You may have problems. Wood ashes will eventually create a high pH or alkaline condition, while azaleas like a low pH (4.5 to 5.5) or acid soil.

Have a soil test made to determine the pH. You might need to add sulphur to lower the pH. Also, mix in plenty of rotted sawdust before planting azaleas and mulch heavily. And don't apply any more ashes. (Kim Powell, extension landscape horticulturist)

Q. I have wisteria on an acre lot. What will kill it and what time of year should I treat? (C. H., Hickory)

A. The easiest way to kill wisteria may be to cut the vine and then put a herbicide on the cut stump. Three herbicides that can be used this way are Ammate, Roundup and Kleenup. Ammate can also be used as a foliar spray, but this may not be practical if the wisteria is growing up trees. Treat anytime the wisteria is actively growing, which means between now and frost. (W. M. Lewis, extension agronomist)

Upstairs Report

Approximately 100 people came to The Hearthstone Inn Sunday night despite the downpour, for the first annual Upstairs Benefit. People came from Asheville, Spartanburg and all points between and varied in age from 4 weeks to seventy years old. Everyone seemed to have a wonderful time and many asked for a repeat performance very soon.

The musicians who were entertaining were all very accomplished, and all evidently enjoying themselves. Peter Kull took a talkative crowd and with a Chopin piano piece turned them into an attentive, appreciative audience, actually bringing them to their feet. "Lang Langlois was at his best as was Glen Dedmond. A lot of people walked away from the art auction with

smiles on their faces, having gotten bargain prices on good artwork. After the auction tables were pushed back, and everyone joined in on a square dance led by The Three Family Band.

The Upstairs reported that nearly a thousand dollars was raised which will almost match the grant received by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tonight at 8 o'clock two short experimental films will be shown at The Upstairs. Night Mail and New York, N. Y. will be shown free to the public at 117 South Trade, Tryon.

There will be a Musical Festival Sun., Oct. 5 at 4 p.m. Garrison Chapel Baptist Church. Tryon. Benefits Women's Day. Linda Douglas, sponsor.

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