

Kerosene heaters can pose hazards

Kerosene heaters have become popular with North Carolinians as they try to take the chill off autumn nights without running up utility bills. As useful as these heaters are, families should remember that each year a number of serious injuries and deaths are caused by their improper use.

The most dangerous practice is putting gasoline into the heater. Gasoline is almost explosive, and it will burn out of control in a kerosene heater.

"Use only Grade A or crystal clear kerosene," warns Sandra

Dellinger, extension housing specialist at North Carolina State University. "Cloudy, murky or yellow kerosene will create other problems, such as smoke, a dirty wick and noxious fumes."





Store kerosene in a specially-designed container. Do not use a can intended for gasoline. This could confuse someone and cause a fatal error.

Make sure the heater is placed in a safe location, and warn children to get no closer than two feet from the heater. Try to keep

pets away, too.

"If you haven't bought a heater yet, consider one that shuts off automatically if it is knocked over," Mrs. Dellinger suggests.

If the heater is not vented to the outdoors, follow the manufacturer's recommendations about leaving a window open while the appliance is in use. Otherwise, oxygen from the home is used up as the heater burns. Read the owner's manual very carefully, the extension specialist says.

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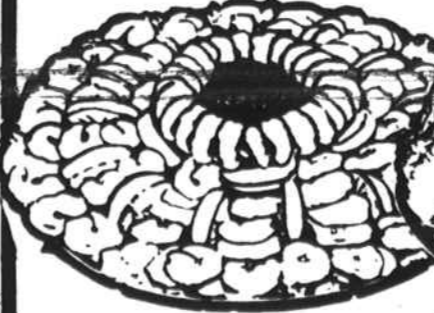
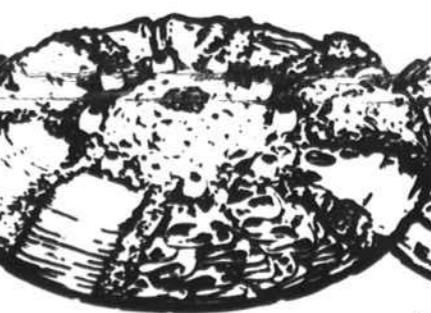

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