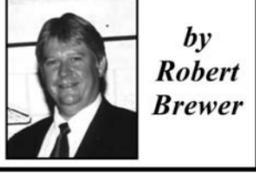


DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Extension Tips



by Robert Brewer

To fight ants properly, experts say you have to know a little ant biology. To get rid of ants, you first have to know their diet and their habitat. You've also got to kill the queen. Everything an ant colony does revolves around the life of the queen. Spring is when new ant colonies form. The reproductive ants fly into the air, mate and drop to the ground. Male ants then die. The queen's wings fall off, and she goes off to nest and make a new colony.

Knowing the ants' diet is important when selecting a bait-based pesticide product. Ants feed on sugar from plant honeydew and on protein from dead insects. In the spring, they mostly eat proteins. In the fall, they eat sugars.

Treatments with the wrong food base don't work. If the bait contains a food the ants aren't eating, you've wasted your time and money. One product covers both diet bases. Raid produces a double control product that includes both diet bases. Raid produces a double control product that includes both the protein and sugar diet. It's child-resistant and comes in see-through packages so you can easily tell when to replace the product.

Combat ant baits are effective, too. Both brands are widely marketed through grocery stores. They're the only commercial products that use an insect protein

base. And there's obviously something to that.

Ant control products come in many forms, but baits are among the favorites. Baits are so effective because ants share food. They take it back to the colony and share it with other ants, including the queen.

Granulars get down into the thatch and mulch where the ants live. The only problem is they have to be watered in, come June and July you may be facing an outdoor water ban.

Pesticide dusts are effective if applied correctly.

Homeowners tend to think that if a little bit is good, a lot must be better. They apply too much. Dust is effective forever, but there's a knack to applying it. Less is best.

Liquid sprays are effective. If you buy a liquid that contains pyrethroids, you're probably spraying close to the same product a pest control company would apply. You may have to invest in a sprayer though.

Aerosols are the least favorite ant control. They're the most widely sold type of ant and home pest control products. They kill only the ants you see, and they leave oily residues on your counter tops. But people like the instant gratification they provide.

You push a nozzle and you've got dead ants. And now they come in colorful cans and pleasant scents. They only time I would ever use them is if I had a party in 10 minutes and needed the ants dead quickly.

Whichever product you choose, use it outside. That's where the ants live. You may see them inside, but they're only coming in for resources like water.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

The cat people have spoken, or at least one cat person has done so. Cat people have a tendency to speak in the third person plural when discussing their favorite subject, and "we are not amused" that several dog stories can be found among the archives of this column, but not a single cat story. That is about to change, for better or for worse.

Cat people often assert that one can be either a cat person or a dog person, but not both. Most dog people do not insist on this condition, being, as cat people would say, less particular. Of course the implication that there is no middle path between the love of cats and the love of dogs does not play well here. We (seekers of the middle path also like the third person plural) have counted both cats and dogs among our favorite animal friends.

We will get to the cat story forthwith, but not unlike one of those penny stock newsletters that keeps you in suspense while teasing you with the great secret about to be revealed, we must provide some context for the story. Unlike those newsletters, there will not be an opportunity to buy an even greater secret at the end. We would, however, like to sell you on the idea that one can love cats AND dogs, staples AND paperclips, Ginger AND MaryAnn, Georgia AND Georgia Tech without being bipolar and without fear of being labeled as "afraid of commitment." It's no secret that we are committed to this idea.

Our cat of interest this week was named "P.C." or, "Personal Cat" when he was a kitten because of his very personable nature. P.C. was raised by a Ninja cat mother and an old German shepherd who grew up together and who loved and respected each other. On many a cold night P.C. could be found curled up next to his German shepherd for warmth. As a full member of our extended pack family, P. C. would often go for long walks on the mountain with his humans and his dogs. He learned canine/feline détente early on: Never get within three feet of the food bowl when dog is enjoying supper. Always stand your ground when confronted by strange dog (they just can't help chasing things) but do so in close proximity to a climbable tree.

During his 9 or more adult lives, P.C. trained two generations of puppies and a number of visiting canines how to respect cats. He was an expert on the vulnerable soft tissues of the canine nose and a master of the slash and run. He left a

number of disrespectful dogs bloodied but wiser, but always managed to earn respect if not downright friendship among the larger members of the pack. On several occasions his honor was successfully defended by the dogs against opportunistic interlopers of both the canine and feline persuasion.

Last month P.C. was attacked by a band of coyotes in the woods behind his house. Severely injured, he somehow managed to drag himself home and call out for help before he died. One of P.C.'s dog friends responded to his call and barked the warning that alerted us to his plight. I've seen animals injured much less severely that lashed out in desperate pain, but P.C.'s last gesture was one of affection, and all of the dogs in his pack grieved at his passing.

Nature can be quite beautiful at a glance, but like sharks hunting just under the surface of peaceful waters, a world of life and death struggles exists just beyond our awareness. Coyotes are not good or bad creatures in and of themselves. They exist. They survive. They are not respecters of property or territory. Coyotes do what coyotes do. When game is scarce in the high country, they will kill and eat your chickens and your household pets. We have co-existed with coyotes in our valley for many years, but when something comes into your back yard and eats your friends, the coyote equation must be balanced by the mathematical operation known as "subtraction." There are now fewer coyotes in our valley than there were on the day that P.C. joined his favorite German shepherd in the Elysian Fields.

It is understandable that we humans have a tendency to view life through polarized lenses of polar opposites. We have two eyes, two ears, two arms and two legs. It is dark at night and light during the day. We turn thumbs up or thumbs down on so many choices and we can certainly exercise our free willed right to prefer staples or paperclips, democrats or republicans, cats or dogs. Nevertheless it would behoove us to remember that often times an "either/or" choice is a false dilemma. It is very unlikely that an exclusive cat lover or an exclusive dog lover would be granted the honor and the pleasure of having a friend like our Personal Cat, cherished friend to canines and humans alike.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.." Danny H. Parris

Thinking about death

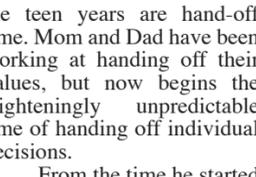
Death is a universal experience. All things that live must die. Phillip of Macedon had a slave that had been instructed to come to the king each morning of his life, no matter what the king was doing and say in a loud voice: "Phillip, remember you must die." We must die, but we must also remember that death is not the end of us. Our earthly house, this tabernacle of clay will be dissolved, but we will only experience transition. There is immortality of the soul because God has placed eternity in our hearts. All of us think about death some time or other. Some people desire to die in certain ways. Some people plan their funerals before they die. And some people just die (quit living) and are not buried for years. They are the walking dead. Some people can't live because they are preoccupied with death. Sam Houston lay dying and his house was surrounded by reporters of which he was not too fond. Before he died it is reported that he sent for two reporters to come to his bedside. He asked one to get on one side of his bed and one on the other side. He said, "I want to die like Jesus - between two criminals." Well, many people anticipate how they would like to die, and may even plan their funeral services which is good. However, to constantly dwell on dying may not be very healthy for living. It is true that physical illness, depression and various circumstances may cause individuals to have a death wish. Elijah, one of the greatest prophets of God, wished to die and prayed to die. He fearlessly had faced Ahab the King, Jezebel, and the 450 false prophets of Baal. He experienced a great revival, fire fell from heaven and God demonstrated His power in a dramatic way. Elijah, exhausted physically and spiritually, became depressed, felt sorry for himself and fled from Jezebel into the wilder-

ness. He sat down under a juniper tree and had a pity party. He told God he was the only one left serving Him. He was no better than his fathers therefore he asked God to take his life. Elijah was not really sincere when he asked God to take his life. If he really wanted to die, all he had to do was wait for Jezebel to catch up with him and she would have been glad to oblige the prophet. The best of men are men at best. One ugly woman ran Elijah out of the country. His courage failed and he wanted to die. Sometimes, when we fail, become weak, tired and weary we think we want to die. Even the finest and godliest sometimes wish to die before it's time to die. Moses, the mighty, became Moses, the midget (Numbers 11:10-15). The load of leadership led to a lapse of love for living. Moses said, "God kill me!" Every man of God has felt it - the loneliness of spiritual leadership. Yes, even the mighty Moses had a death wish. God healed Elijah by giving him rest and food. He healed Moses by giving him additional leadership. It is not difficult to understand Elijah and Moses' death wish but Jonah, another prophet of God desired to die, and it is more difficult to understand his death wish. He was extremely successful in his ministry, didn't have any opposition or listen to any complaints but he prayed "It is better for me to die than to live." Moses had a loss of confidence, Elijah a lapse of courage, but Jonah had a lack of concern for the Gentile's salvation. He wanted God to destroy the Ninevites, not save them because he feared the Assyrian empire would destroy his own people. His response to God's grace was "Over my dead body." If you have a death wish it needs to be like Paul's death wish. His was positive not negative (Phil. 1:20-224). Paul was not simply looking for escape from pain, lack of success, the burdens of ministry, nor the Roman dungeon; He was just "Homesick for Heaven" - "To be with Christ which is far better!"

God does not want you to live with a death wish unless it is to go be with Him and that only by His time clock.

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen



Last time we said that the teen years are hand-off time. Mom and Dad have been working at handing off their values, but now begins the frighteningly unpredictable time of handing off individual decisions.

From the time he started first grade, Hermie has been given all the age-appropriate decisions he could handle. "Do you want to wear this shirt or this shirt to school today?" "Do you want to feed Fido now or after we finish dinner?"

Those kinds of decisions seldom have life-altering side effects - although Fido may disagree. But it raises the stakes when parents begin talking to their kids about curfews, about entertainment, about their friends, their language, their use of time. Last time I said it may require a major attitude adjustment on the part of dad and mom to begin the letting-go process. Second I said, we give them lots of approval when they get things right. And third, that we need to be respectful in our response when they don't.

"I get all that, Dr. Don, but how do I handle it when they mess up?"

As a high school junior, Ella's curfew is set at 10:30 on

Saturday nights. Plus she has to disclose where she's going to be, how she's going to get there, and who she's going to be with. Ella shows up home at 10:45 p.m. Dad and mom tell her they're glad she's home and bid her goodnight. No raising of voices; no threats. But Ella suspects she may not have seen the final act of this drama. She's right.

Two weeks later is the playoff for the AAAA basketball championships. Dad says, "Ella, since you missed curfew a couple of weeks ago we're going to move curfew ahead an hour tonight. You will need to be in by 9:30." "But, Dad, the game won't be over till 10:00 or so - and this is the big one!" "I know, that's a bummer, honey, but that's the way it is." "But, Dad, can't I have another chance?"

"When a player commits a foul on the basketball court the ref doesn't give him a second chance. In our family we have to be able to count on each other. Be on time tonight and it'll move back to 10:30 next week. Have fun, sweetheart. Call us if you need a ride. See you at 9:30."

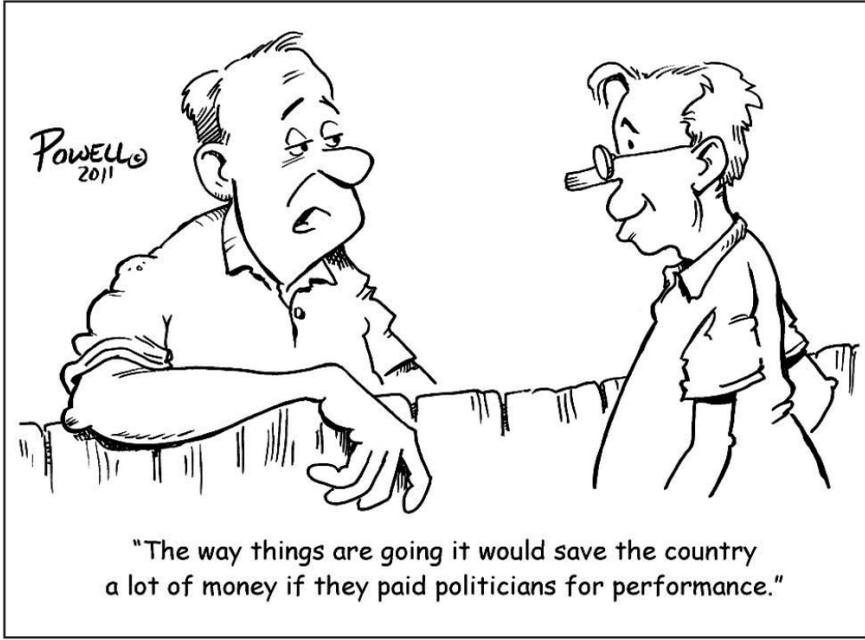
Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@rarekids.net.

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

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