

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

With Halloween right around the corner I would like to offer a few safety tips for trick-or-treaters, parents, and homeowners. We at the Sheriff's Office hope that everyone has a safe and happy Halloween.

Trick-or-Treaters

Carry a flashlight. Walk, don't run. Stay on sidewalks. Obey traffic signals. Stay in familiar neighborhoods. Don't cut across yards or driveways. Wear a watch you can read in the dark. Make sure costumes don't drag on the ground. Shoes should fit (even if they don't go with your costume). Avoid wearing masks while walking from house to house. Carry only flexible knives, swords or other props. (If no sidewalk) walk on the left side of the road facing traffic. Wear clothing with reflective markings or tape. Approach only houses that are lit. Stay away from and don't pet animals you don't know.

Parents

Make your child eat dinner before setting out. Children should carry a cellular phone, or be accompanied by someone with a cell phone, so they can call home. Ideally, young children of any age should be accom-

panied by an adult.

If your children go on their own, be sure they wear a watch, preferably one that can be read in the dark.

If you buy a costume, look for one made of flame-retardant material.

Older children should know where to reach you and when to be home.

You should know where they're going.

Although tampering is rare, tell children to bring the candy home to be inspected before consuming anything.

Look at the wrapping carefully and toss out anything that looks suspect.

Homeowners

Make sure your yard is clear of such things as ladders, hoses, dog leashes and flowerpots that can trip the young ones.

Pets get frightened on Halloween. Put them up to protect them from cars or inadvertently biting a trick-or-treater.

Battery powered jack o'lantern candles are preferable to a real flame.

If you do use candles, place the pumpkin well away from where trick-or-treaters will be walking or standing.

Make sure paper or cloth yard decorations won't be blown into a flaming candle.

Healthy food alternatives for trick-or-treaters include packages of low-fat crackers with cheese or peanut butter filling, single-serve boxes of cereal, packaged fruit rolls, mini boxes of raisins and single-serve packets of low-fat popcorn that can be microwaved later.

Non-food treats: plastic rings, pencils, stickers, erasers, and coins.

Extension Tips



by **Robert Brewer**

The \$100 hole

Have you heard the old gardening adage "Dig a \$100 hole to plant a \$10 tree"? There is much wisdom in this saying, although most people don't realize exactly why this is. So, this is the reason why.

We start by looking at what seems a straightforward process, the transplanting of plants. First, plants don't typically move of their own volition, once they have germinated in a particular site—they tend to stay put. That's the way nature works, and so that is the way plants were designed, with few mechanisms to deal with the shock of being moved.

You've been accustomed to growing in the one place where you sprouted. You were accustomed to a certain amount of light, moisture, drainage, soil type, climatic conditions.

Now you are being asked to grow in an entirely different spot, different light, different soil, more or less rainfall. Also, your branches are facing in different directions.

Major roots were ripped out of the ground and were inevitably cut as your root ball was cut out, probably your fine moisture-gathering root hairs were torn apart as your root ball shifted during transport.

Almost all plants that are being transplanted go through some degree of what is known as "transplant shock", their normal growth patterns and biological processes are upset, with varying degrees of resultant symptoms. In minor cases plants return to the growth process rather quickly. In more severe cases "transplant shock" results in stunted growth, or to complete kill in the winter.

Transplant shock is not something that can be completely prevented. The best way is to pamper your plant through readjustment years, which may range from one month for a perennial to a year or two for a tree. Try to create ideal

conditions as close to what the plant would have come from.

You can't control new climate and winter conditions, wind or rain, but you can control the soil that your new plant has been set in. You control the drainage and the foundation on which it will sit.

The reliable rule of thumb is the hole should be at least twice as wide in diameter and one and half as deep as the root ball. Excavate the hole completely, reserve some of the soil to mix back in with your new planting soil. Use a mix of black topsoil, peat moss, sand and organic matter in varying degrees. Make sure the mix is appropriate for the type of plant being planted. For example, blueberries, rhododendrons, azaleas and mountain laurel need organic, acidic soil which means more peat moss and organic matter, and less topsoil.

When placing the plant into the new hole filled with soil, pay careful attention to the height at which you set the plant in the hole. It is critical to always try and match the level of soil on the root ball to final level of soil in the hole.

Once the plant has been set into place, fill in the rest of the hole with your soil mixture. You can fill slightly higher than the ground level and that allows for settling of the soil over time. You want water to flow to the roots.

Finally, consider applying some mulch to the finished planting hole. This applies more to trees and shrubs rather than perennials. Mulch serves a few purposes; it keeps the root area moist in between waterings and prevents it from drying out, it discourages weeds and grass from growing in the new soil, mulch is decorative, depending on what mulch you like.

The effort you put in now will make the difference in all things you transplant.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.."

Danny H. Parris

Longing for the lasting

All of us have our favorite seasons. For me, fall is my favorite season of the year. Springtime is beautiful as is summer and winter, but my personal opinion is that all of God's creation is more beautiful in the fall than at any other time. Seasons come and seasons go, as does all of life. God has ordained seasons and cycles. We are passing pilgrims on this earth and everything is passing. In this world of the passing, we long for that which is lasting. Man has a deep yearning to know that which is lasting, enduring and permanent. Certainly, we want that which is good to remain, but we pray for the bad to be gone. When I was a young boy you could buy a lollipop, known as an "all day sucker." It was also called a Sugar Daddy. Well, I loved to get up enough money to buy myself an "all day sucker." Man, that thing lasted a long time, but it finally disappeared. Anything that we enjoy we want it to last, but if anything is unpleasant we want it to pass. A good piece of pie, ice cream, a good meal or whatever, we savor it, eat it slowly, and enjoy it to the last bite. Sickness, suffering, hardships or difficulties of any sort are high on our list to transfer to the passing category as quickly as possible. Sadly, some of the things in this life that should be lasting vanish very quickly. Marriage, for instance, should be a relationship that is fulfilling and lasting. However, the reality is that so many marriages are miserable rather than

magnificent. Half of all marriages end in divorce. Others end due to the death of a spouse. Both experiences are devastating. We build relationships with our children; they grow up and move away; they grow up and move away. We build relationships with friends, family, neighbors and working associates but all of them are passing. In all of the passing, the passing have you found what is lasting? The reason so many people have difficulty developing lasting relationships is directly related to the fact that they begin at the wrong point. You see, for all of our earthly relationships to work properly we must begin with a relationship with God. He must be first. That is the first and great commandment. We must seek Him and His kingdom first. When we begin with a God-relationship, then and then only will we know how to love our neighbors as our self, to love our spouse, children and neighbors in the proper way. The primary reason for failed relationships is because we do not begin with God. Of course, all of us realize that this earth and all of our relationships will come to an end, as we know them. However, when you become connected to God through a new birth relationship you have experienced the lasting. All of the passing of this life will ultimately become lasting in the world to come. For all believers in Christ Jesus, we will continue lasting relationships with God and all of our loved ones in a perfect world and where all relationships are perfect forever more, world without end.

Are you frustrated with the passing and want to experience the lasting? Give your life, soul, mind, body and spirit to God first, and then you will experience that which is lasting. You are complete in Him!

RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

Before they headed out the door for school this morning, between 6 - 7 million of America's kids were given a psychotropic drug. That means that of our 68,000,000 school kids, nearly one out of ten is regularly being given a pill that messes with their minds. These meds are given to manage diagnoses like ADD, ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and a host of others. You've heard me vent before in this column, but this fact absolutely infuriates me. Let me tell you a couple of reasons why.

In verifiable, double-blind studies, no psychotropic drug consistently outperforms a placebo (a sugar pill). It seems to me that we ought to catch on that dumbing-down a behavioral issue with something from a bottle may not be the most effective way to deal with it. By medicating an unacceptable behavior we may temporarily manage it but we're not "fixing" it. That being true it suggests that we may be medicating the youngster primarily for the purpose of making life less stressful for the parents and teachers. The morality of that troubles me deeply.

Second, the jury is still out on the long-term effects as well as the side effects on the brain and nervous system of our children from these mind-altering drugs - some of which we don't even understand how they work. That's a frightfully high-risk practice. Americans smoked cigarettes for two cen-

turies before we learned that their use was a leading cause of lung cancer and a host of other catastrophic diseases. Suppose that twenty years from now researchers discover that the medications commonly prescribed for ADD affected the long-term memory, or the judgment, or the mental acuity of our kids when they were growing up.

But Dr. Don, these pills have passed the scrutiny of the FDA. True, and so did Darvocet and Vioxx and Bextra, but you can't buy any of those or scores of others today because time and further research have determined that they were not in fact safe drugs and they were eventually taken off the market. A lot of people took them in the meantime. Ask your grandparents about Thalidomide. Will Ritalin one day be in that category? The truth is, of course, no one knows, but when it comes to the mental health of my kids, I'm not a gambler.

So what's a parent to do if their child exhibits the behavior often diagnosed as ADHD, for instance? First, do nothing rashly; seek counsel. I suggest also that you pick up a copy of "The Disease of America's Children," co-authored by John Rosemond, a psychologist, and Bose Ravenel, an MD. It's the best I've read and you'll find it a helpful place to start.

Submit 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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