




Co-op News from Wyrulec Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives 
The power of human connections

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Your cooperative is a proud member of the
Nebraska Rural Electric Association

Summer hours

Wyrulec Company will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, from June 6 through Sept. 2. We will be closed on Fridays. Our winter hours, 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, will start again the day after Labor Day, Sept. 6.

Saving energy doesn't have to start, or stop, with light bulbs

By KRIS WENDTLAND

Long before electricity, people were conscious of useful elements that contributed to heating and cooling homes and other buildings. You can be conscious of these elements also.

Landscaping to save energy

Adding natural energy-saving elements to your home can save money and add value to your home. *Barbara J Cross* You might even improve your own health, either from enjoying the visual beauty of your improved landscape, digging in the dirt, or both.

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Fescue - perhaps not your first choice in grass, but familiar to the West

Saving energy

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According to *Energy-Efficient and Environmental Landscaping*, "Heat loss at a building's surface is proportional to the square of the wind velocity rushing past it. For example, if wind speed doubles, heat loss quadruples; if wind speed increases five times, heat loss is multiplied twenty-five times."

Grass can help manage costs

Thick grass can cool a home. According to the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, the "front lawns of eight average size houses have the cooling effect of about 70 tons of air conditioning, while the average home-size central air unit has only a three- to four-ton capacity." Thus, for an "average," 1/5th-of-an-acre-sized lawn, a home benefits twice as much from a healthy lawn as it does from central air.

It is estimated that 80 percent of U.S. households have a private lawn. Lawns trap dust, filter pollution, and store rainwater. Lawns cover perhaps 25 million acres of land in the U.S. Hospitalized patients recover faster when they can look upon a grassy landscaped area, according to The Lawn Institute, and child mortality, suicide, and energy consumption are lower compared to areas with no plants.

Cecil S Sauer Where water is an issue, such as the arid West, buffalo grass and blue gramma can be sensible lawn choices.

Shrubs can sing with savings potential

Shrubs that shade exposed parts of the foundation, as well as other parts of the house, from the hot summer sun can help keep the house cool. Shrubs that shield the foundation from cold winter



Clematis - a fast, manageable vine

winds can further ensure that heating dollars are working efficiently.

If shrubs completely block the wind, a pocket of undisturbed air results downwind from the barrier they create. This undisturbed air can act as insulation. The low pressure wind on the edge of the pocket, however, can pull undisturbed air out of the pocket. Thus, if the pocket isn't very big, the value of the shrubbery for decreasing heating costs is small.

If the shrubbery is less dense, the wind isn't completely blocked. This means the pocket isn't quite as protected, but can often be affordably bigger, ensuring that less of the insulating air is pulled back into the wind stream. Thus, the insulating pocket can be more effective. In this way, greater heat energy savings in the house can be captured.

This is the sort of reasoning one must go through when deciding not only where to plant shrubs, but the specific



Juniper - takes direction well, but grows slowly



Cottonwood - the western plains survivor

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type of shrub and how many to plant. It's surprisingly easy to increase ones' energy costs by choosing the wrong location and the wrong shrub, so don't rush the process and consult with local greenhouses or nurseries.

For evergreen shrubs, discuss junipers, boxwood and others. Most are not fast-growing, so patience is as important as planning.

Pick shade wisely

Trees are the longest living organisms on the planet. They can improve water quality and reduce noise pollution. Over its lifetime, a tree can absorb a ton of carbon dioxide.

The right tree choices can ensure that warming sunlight is not blocked in the winter, but is blocked throughout the summer months. The heat from an unshaded brick patio, asphalt driveway, or concrete sidewalk can be reduced by 20-30 percent just by selectively planting trees.

The Venturi effect is the noticeable increase in wind speed at a break in a wind barrier. Higher wind speeds just whisk air you've already spent money conditioning (either heating or cooling) away faster, forc-

ing you to spend more heating or cooling the replacement. Thanks to the Venturi effect, shrubs and bushes should be planted beneath trees used for windbreaks if the branches of those trees don't come close to the ground.

The right trees, planted in the right place, can decrease the need for air conditioning by 30 percent. They can also decrease the amount of energy used for heating by 20 to 50 percent, depending on the efficiency of the home and specific weather conditions.

Tall deciduous trees appropriate for the greater Goshen County area can include mountain ash, narrowleaf cottonwood (a straight and cottonless cottonwood), sienna glen maple, and Kentucky coffee. Evergreens include eastern red cedar, Rocky Mountain juniper, Austrian pine, and several others. Be sure to keep trees of this size well away from overhead powerlines.

Use those drops sensibly

Water also plays a significant role in heating and cooling a home or other building. Water is a good reservoir of heat energy. It doesn't warm quickly and

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consumes a lot of energy evaporating. Vines and other canopy-creating plants can be used to save water, increase humidity, and minimize both the full heating power of the sun and the full cooling power of wind.

Vines along a south wall lower the heat from sunlight that can be absorbed by the wall while also helping the wall retain heat at night. A trellis situated slightly away from the house creates a wall of insulating air between the vine and the house. This undisturbed, insulating air keeps the house cooler in the summer and,

if the vine is an evergreen, warmer in the winter.

New plans, new habits, new results

It's not always possible to further reduce the energy bill without sacrificing either convenience or comfort, but many of us aren't yet to that point. Many of us could save a lot of money with minimal changes to our energy-use patterns. And when it comes to landscaping specifically to meet an energy goal, lots of people will appreciate examples to look at or advice to think about.

The same is true, in many cases, of the people who own and operate greenhouses, landscaping companies, and nurseries. They have a lot of information and experience to help people satisfy both aesthetic and energy conservation goals. At Wyrulec Company, we want you to benefit from the advantages of affordable electricity, but it's in both your interest individually and your interest as a co-op owner to get the most from every electron activity you pay for.



Mountain ash - to brighten the day

Electrical safety vacation checklist

By CHRISTINE SMITH

Summer vacations are hard to pull off these days, so peace of mind is important. Fires can start when lightning storms strike electronics or small appliances; burglaries tend to increase because folks aren't at home. The electrical safety checklist below will help you decrease the risk of problems occurring while on vacation:

1. Turn off all electrical appliances, including toaster ovens, stoves, and curling irons. *Terri S Walford*
2. Unplug television sets and computers—these items are especially susceptible to lightning and power surges.
3. Use a timer on indoor lights. Look for one that can be set to a random pattern rather than regular times throughout the day.
4. Install motion-detecting lights outdoors.
5. Set the thermostat to 80° in the summer and 55° in the winter if you plan to leave for an extended period of time.
6. Give your house key to a neighbor and make sure he or she has a phone number where you can be reached.

Source: National Sheriffs' Association *Jack Cecil*

❁ Bright, but not hot to touch ❁

We have CFLs in stock that are 100-watt replacements. They will fit into any light fixture rated over 23 watts. They operate at 23 watts but provide light equal to a 100-watt incandescent. There isn't much time in June that isn't already lit by the sun, but for those times, choose CFLs. Dad will appreciate a collection on the 19th, especially if they come with a new flatbed. The bulbs are \$1.00 each. The flatbed is more.

Happy Father's Day

Each month, we hide the names of five members in this riveting, insightful newsletter. If you see your name this month, call the office, 307-837-2225, and get a lot of green (\$25) to spend on Dad!