

## J. SCOTT CHRISTIANSON

### Tips promote efficient use of resources during summer



The Center for Sustainable Living is a local project of Mid-Missouri Peaceworks that promotes the efficient use of energy and natural resources. Here are some tips from the center for summer sustainability.

#### KEEPING COOL

The key concern for most people during a Mid-Missouri summer is to beat the heat.

- Start by insulating. The benefits will come back to you year-round. It's estimated that 20 to 30 percent of the load of heating and cooling systems is cut by adequate insulation. Encourage shade trees and shrubs around your home. Columbia's Water and Light Department will help you determine whether you need more insulation and will even give you a shade tree. Call 874-7325 for information.
- Install awnings over south and west windows, which face the sun. Check angles to be sure you are blocking the direct rays.
- Close curtains during the day to keep heat from radiating into your home.
- Attic fan and air coolers are low-cost, energy-efficient alternatives to air conditioners.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, lightweight fabrics.

- Use fans wisely. Notice when the air you are bringing in is warmer than the interior of your home. It might feel good to you to be directly in front of moving air, but you might be heating your home.

#### LAWN AND GARDEN CARE

We spend a lot of summer leisure time working on lawns and gardens. Unfortunately, much of this work is chemically and energy-intensive, but there are simple and natural alternatives.

- Water your lawn and garden only when necessary and in cool temperatures. This keeps evaporation down.
- Replant your lawn with native grasses that are drought-resistant and require less maintenance.
- Avoid using pesticides or herbicides on your lawn. These threaten water, soil and air as well as pets, wildlife and your family.
- Cut your grass carefully. Frequent cutting weakens grass plants and makes them susceptible to insects and sickness. Mow when it is cool and dry. Look into buying a manual mower. These run about \$100 and could be jointly purchased and shared. Leave grass clippings on the lawn to provide fertilizer.
- You can also use clippings in a

compost pile. Summer is an excellent time to start composting. Use the compost as a natural fertilizer for your lawn or garden.

#### INSECTS

There are simple, non-toxic ways to deal with ants and other insects that inevitably end up in your home.

- Patch it up. Locate and seal entry points with caulk.
- Eliminate food supplies by keeping things clean. Wash dishes regularly, wipe counters, clean up spills. Seal food containers. Don't leave food out.
- Try tolerance. Maintain a reasonable understanding of threatening and non-threatening insects. They are an important part of the natural balance. It would be nearly impossible to eliminate all of them from your home.
- If you are facing an infestation, consult the Center for Sustainable Living for non-toxic methods of dealing with it.
- Use safe, natural and effective insect repellents like Green Ban and Naturally Free for hikes, camping or picnics.

There are a host of tips for environmentally sound living in summer. For more information, call Elizabeth Jones, director of the Peaceworks Center for Sustainable Living, at 875-0539, or stop by the center at 804-C East Broadway.

If you have a suggestion for a column, a gripe, a success story or whatever, write it down and send it to me, care of the Columbia Daily Tribune, PO Box 798, Columbia, Mo., 65205.