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DICO Summer 2010 Newsletter



Did I hear someone say beach, kayak, fishing, bicycle, sun, road trip? Well don't forget some other summer words like weeds, bugs and thunderstorms.



Bugs

Be sure when you go away on vacation that you don't bring home hitch hikers. What? You say you never pick up hitchhikers. I mean unwanted and uninvited hitchhikers like bugs ... bed bugs ... to put it more succinctly. They hide in your luggage and in things that are strewn about when you're at your place of lodging. Any place of lodging ... in a no star hotel to a 5 star hotel, they don't discriminate. Their egg casings are sticky so they are easily picked up. What should you look for to prevent such an event? Good question. Here are some tips:

- 1) When checking into your rooms don't just jump on the bed. First turn down the blankets and then pull back the sheets so that you can see the mattress. If there are any brown spots on the mattress or in the seams of the mattress ask for a different room. Those spots could be from bed bugs. Be sure to tell the front desk the reason you want to move so they can get the exterminator in there to prevent the problem from spreading.
- 2) Look at the luggage stand for the same brown spots before putting your luggage on the stand.
- 3) Don't throw your clothes over chairs and furniture. Check out the closet and hang your clothes.
- 4) Look inside the drawers of the dresser before putting your clothes inside.
- 5) After unpacking your clothes at home, place your suitcases in large plastic bags and seal them. You can throw in some moth balls for good measure. This will do two things:

- If you picked up any bugs they should die before you use the bags next time and - the plastic bags will keep you luggage clean while it is stored away.

The other summer bug that everybody hates is the good old mosquito. I just purchased a device that works great for keeping all kinds of bugs off me when I'm out fishing or hiking. It's called a

“ThermaCell”. You clip it onto your belt or backpack and off you go bug free for about 4 hours. Then you have to refill it. I understand it also comes in a lantern model so you can put it on your picnic table and your picnic will be bug free. It really works or I wouldn’t be telling you about it! I also heard that if you put a Bounce laundry sheet in your pocket it will keep the mosquitoes away too. I don’t use Bounce so that one I haven’t tried. Let me know if it works.



Weeds

Did you know that they may be growing dandelions commercially for their sap? Because of a rampaging fungus that is killing rubber trees in Southeast Asia, scientists are looking for another source of latex. The white liquid which oozes out of that yellow dandelion flower you picked is ... you guessed it ... latex. Scientists at the Fraunhofer Institute in Munich Germany have found a way to convert that white sap into a natural rubber. Wouldn’t that be great ... when you weed you can recycle all the dandelions you pull to make rubber.

What about that green stuff growing on your roof? Well if it was there when we conducted your home inspection, we probably talked to you about it, but in case you forgot, in New Jersey there are three main roof plant growths.

- 1) The black discoloration is usually algae. A picture of this is on the second to last page of your binder. If you don’t have your binder you can look it up on our website www.dicoinspect.com. Section 4, the Trade Talk article, “Algae on Asphalt Shingles”.
- 2) The second plant is dark green and puffy. That would be moss. Yup ... the same kind growing in shady areas of your lawn, rock garden or walks.
- 3) The third plant is that flat light green patch called lichen. Lichen also grows on the bark of trees and on rocks.

So why are these plants growing on my roof you ask? Well the color of your roof, the aggregate, is actually limestone. It also mixed into the asphalt as filler, the perfect food for algae, moss and lichen. Add a little water and shade and these plants grow. So how do I get this stuff off my roof? If you can cut back some trees and let more drying sunlight in it will burn off the moisture as well as the plants. If you can’t cut back the trees you can put zinc metal strips on the ridge of your roof. When it rains the zinc oxide will burn off the plants. “Savetime Corp” sells “Shingle Shields” (800-942-3004 or www.rainhandler.com) and Wespac sells “Z-Stop Strips” (800-845-5863 or www.z-stop.com). When you replace your roofing material be sure to get asphalt shingles that have been treated with 3M Algae Block or that have an AR designation *Algae Resistant*. A company called Going Green will also remove the plant growth and treat the shingles and warranty it not to re-grow for one year (www.roofrenewpros.com or 973-786-3623). I do not recommend the use of bleach as recommended by so many so called experts. Bleach will kill all of your plants, it deteriorates metal flashings, aluminum gutters and leaders, and it is the deactivating chemical for most of chemicals used to treat for termites.



Thunderstorm Safety

Most lightning deaths and injuries occur in summer. Even if the storm is 10 miles away it can still be dangerous. Especially if you are on water and even worse if you are in a metal boat. If you are caught outside in a thunderstorm stay away from tall objects especially if they are in a field. They are natural lightning rods. If you are caught out in the open during a lightning storm get into a low spot and lay flat until the storm passes. Rubber tires on a car provide no protection but the steel frame of a hard top vehicle provides some protection. Keep your hands off the metal parts. If you are inside, stay away from the windows and do not use corded phones. My wife and our dog Ginger always headed into the basement whenever a thunderstorm occurred. She is safer than I. I love watching the Gods free light show.



Road Trips

Going on a road trip? Well some things to do before going so you don't have a breakdown and get you the best mileage:

- 1) Change your oil and filter before going. Oil can break down on a long trip having fresh clean oil at the correct fluid level and a new filter keeps your engine running at top efficiency.
- 2) Inflate your tires to the proper tire pressure. Under inflated tires get lower mileage and they can overheat causing excessive wear or even a flat.
- 3) Use cruise control. It cuts down gas consumption and helps to prevent your from getting a speeding ticket. But do not use you cruise control if it's raining.
- 4) Keep your windows closed and use the air conditioning. Open windows create wind drag which can reduce your mileage by as much as 10 percent.



Summer Trivia

The American Pie Council says that apple pie is still #1 among American pie eaters. The other favorites rate 17% pumpkin pie; 17% sweet potato pie; 14% anything chocolate; 11% lemon meringue; and 10% cherry pie.

I scream, you scream we call scream for ice cream in the summer. Summer? Heck I love it all year round. Here are some ice cream statistics:

- American consume 1.5 billion gallons of ice cream per year.
- The average family eats 21 quarts per year.
- Ice cream sales generate 20.5 billion dollars annually.
- Only 11% of the ice cream sold is low fat or no fat the other 89% is the good stuff! The average American makes 3.4 trips to the grocery store per week.

The sweet potato is a member of the morning glory family.

Visit goknobs.com if you are trying to match up a missing cabinet or furniture knob or other hard to find hardware. They have more than a million choices.

Need to get rid of an old refrigerator? Call 877-270-3520 or visit njcleanenergy.com. They will not only pick it up, they will pay you \$50 for that old fridge.

Try to keep your air conditioner thermostat at 78°F every degree cooler than 78°F will add 6% to your energy bill. Be sure to change that air filter every 2 months. Use a high efficiency paper pleated one with a rating of Merv. 8.

That's all for now hope you have a safe and fun filled summer!

From all your friends at DICO ...

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