

Mother Nature's little garden helpers

by Dick West

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Spring is everywhere, most especially in lawns and gardens.

You might think by this time that grass, trees, shrubs and flowers would know how to grow by themselves. Forget it, Verna.

Lawn and garden plants still require a good deal of human guidance in order to fulfill nature's plan. Here are a few more things you can do by way of rendering assistance:

Pruning — Essentially, it is easier to plumb prunes than to prune plums. Plum trees are notoriously inept at branching out.

Left to their own devices, some plum trees will sprout all of their branches on the same side; some will put out branches without any leaves on them; some will grow big branches above their small branches, making the tree topheavy.

The most egregious fault of plum trees, however, is their lackadaisical approach to producing plums. Plum trees are likely to spend the entire harvest season in a barren condition if you don't watch them.

I have found that the most satisfactory system is to prune plum trees plumb down to the ground.

That method prevents branches from growing the wrong way and also spares one the embarrassment of explaining why the plum tree has no plums.

Or, you can simply let plum trees grow at will and pretend they are lilac bushes.

Fertilizing — Never fertilize your lawn with fertilizer alone. That will promote

the growth of things other than grass that have sprung up in the yard.

A good lawn-tender must learn to identify things other than grass that have sprung up in the yard and ascertain what chemicals are bad for them. Then one buys a brand of fertilizer that has the toxic chemicals mixed in with the good stuff.

Chance are the toxic chemicals also will be hard on the grass, but a good grade of fertilizer will enable the lawn to overcome.

The best time to fertilize is some weekend when you are going to be out of town.

Planting — Nothing you want growing in your lawn or garden comes up voluntarily. Everything desirable must be planted. There are no exceptions to this rule.

There is, however, another way out.

Some psychiatric clinics offer attitude adjustment sessions at which you can learn to admire plants that come up voluntarily.

The surprise element is about the same either way.

That is, you will be surprised by some of the things that come up voluntarily, but you will be equally surprised at the way the things you plant turn out.

Watering — The third best time for watering lawns and gardens is immediately before pruning, fertilizing and planting.

The second best time is immediately after pruning, fertilizing and planting.

The best way is to water lawns and gardens instead of pruning, fertilizing and planting.



Loose cannon in ship of state

by Donald A. Davis

United Press International

WASHINGTON — While President Reagan keeps promising that beyond the distant horizon the economy will be tranquil and verdant, interest rates and unemployment still rumble amok like loose cannons on his ship of state.

For no matter how many good indicators his spokesmen haul out for public view, the cost of borrowing money and the millions of people out of work remain the two critical points that possess their own momentum.

And like the loose cannon, they can be ignored only at great peril.

Viewing the statistics, there is no doubt that the president can legitimately point to some victories on the economic front, particularly the fall in the rate of inflation, a topic which once drew immense criticism.

The telling measure, however, is that even the staunchest defender of Reaganomics shies from claiming the economy has reached the turning point that has been forecast.

"There is good reason to believe the recession is bottoming out," he said on April 5, hedging even his own forecast.

But none of his aides want to be ordained to wear sackcloth and ashes if the squiggly lines on the charts start going the wrong way again.

The spokesmen claim mere prudence prevents them from making such an announcement. It is also, however, a barometer of their own lack of confidence in the heralded turnaround.

For until the interest and unemployment rates tumble, the rest of the mix

remains unstable.

To paraphrase Newton, for every positive indicator pointed out by Reagan economists, there is an equal and opposite number showing bad things happening on the money front.

For instance, the claim of housing starts being up is countered by timber industry officials telling the president the lumber business is facing disaster. Praise for a reduction in inflation must be tempered by the savings and loan industry tottering close to ruin.

Interest rates are not under control and even the latest presidential budget contributes to keeping them up. The government borrows money to cover the national deficit. With that deficit running at unheard of levels, the amount of interest paid on it is astronomical.

Reagan says interest rates remain high because money market men lack confidence that the government will stick to its economic recovery program. That is because, he claims, Congress will not rubber stamp his budget this year and issue a blank check.

There are other reasons:

— The cloud of gloom provided by the published doubts of supply side economists from budget director David Stockman last year has not been dispelled.

— The balkiness of even the Republican-dominated Senate to totally support the president has left observers perplexed. "We are not asking Congress to do what's easy; we are asking them to do what's right," he said recently.

— Tens of thousands of potential homebuyers have been simply priced clear out of the market, throwing more pressure on financial institutions as well

as the housing industry.

— The administration and the Federal Reserve Board are not taking the steps toward easing the crisis, the president saying there will be no fix.

Perhaps most of all, confidence eroded by the vast number of unemployed in the United States, an ugly picture cannot be ignored. The more people are cut back, the more people there are the more people out of work, the more people who have to pick up the more paid out in benefits, the federal budget is thrown out of balance.

Administration spokesmen say a coin to point out that while 10 million out of work, 91 million have jobs. Reasoning, 10 people drowning in the sea would be acceptable if 91 are not.

The White House rages against news media for showing the plight of individuals who are suffering, but such reporting distorts the reality of the situation as a whole. It is viewed to get an accurate picture.

The spokesmen are correct. They think people feel sorry for friends, relatives thrown out of work or nameless poor who are less fortunate than themselves. Reality is food on the table today, not abstract economics later.

The economic pressure coming from the interest rates, and the sufficient is fueled by unemployment. The question facing the administration whether to take firm, bold action with the problems now or continuing and promising a brighter tomorrow

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"I have run out of things to protest."

Letters: Vandiver says Good Friday can't be holiday

Editor:

Dear Miss Pusanik:

In response to your letter and the attached petition asking that Good Friday, April 9, be considered a school holiday, I regret that this cannot be done.

Each year's academic calendar is established by the Academic Council, and accreditation of the University's programs includes holding a certain number of class meetings. Spring break is arranged to adapt to the academic schedule of the semester. Unfortunately, this does not often coincide with the Easter season which is a time to be with family.

I certainly agree Easter and Passover are more important than a football game. In fact, this is a special time for Christian and Jewish students. However, there are other students who do not share the same beliefs, and it would be unfair not to give them time off to practice their faith.

By a copy of this letter to The Battalion, I am informing your other colleagues who signed the petition of my answer. Your understanding is appreciated.

Frank E. Vandiver
President

More review hate mail

Editor:

I was very disappointed as to the tone of the review on Ronnie Milsap's concert. Okay, so he did sing a medley of his hits because he "has so many" and you didn't get to hear all of your favorite songs, but would you rather have not heard any of it? I felt that the audience was on its feet and had a lot of life in them once there. What about that second encore? Surely the audience had nothing to do with that.

The people who went just because there was a concert got their money's worth, but the people who went to hear Milsap got their money's worth and a lot more. They saw the real Ronnie Milsap. Milsap the diverse music lover, Milsap the entertainer. Anybody could see that he was enjoying himself.

As for the blind jokes, don't they make the audience feel more at ease? A loose audience is a prime ingredient for a good show.

What about that song Ronnie sang that was someone else's? What was the name of it? Oh yea, "America." I think that was worth mentioning in the review. I enjoyed it ... even a few chills went up my back. I wasn't the only one. It seems like I can remember a few other people standing ... silently.

Tod Whitley '84

There's more to floating

Editor:

Seeing the recent piece on floating to relax on KAMU and the experimental testing of its applications in the development of accelerated learning programs made me think of the silly Battalion story in Focus where the reporter, filled with expectations and assumptions, displayed little of the vaunted objectivity so precious to journalists. Not only was the article snide in tone but superficial in content. The research being done by Dr. Thomas E. Taylor of the Chemistry Department reflects many of the educational ideas now gaining currency: can learning be enhanced by altering the way knowledge is apprehended, and if so, how? The Float to Relax people say yes learning can be accelerated and are willing to back that up with a money back guarantee on their language programs.

I think the Battalion would do the University a service if it would take a look at this and give us a fuller story. What is it about float tanks that makes them attractive to researchers in learning theory, that allows a company to offer a learn or your money back guarantee, or that prompts a group such as the Dallas Cow-

boys to use them for rehabilitation, relaxation and visualization training? It seems to me there is a story there if you'd cover it.

Will Jo
Francis

The Battalion

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Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are too long. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to preserve the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed and include the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome and are not subject to the same length constraints. Address all inquiries and correspondence to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (713) 261-11.

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