



The HOME FRONT

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Little Ladies

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

As a child, I enjoyed having Ladybugs crawl on my hand. I'd try to count the black spots. Women in the Victorian era believed that if a ladybug landed on them, they would get something new. If it landed on their head, they thought they would receive a new hat. On the hand, it would be new gloves. Today some believe that if a Ladybug lands on you, your wishes will come true.

In North America we call them Ladybugs. In Britain and other English-speaking countries, they are called Ladybirds. Ladybugs aren't really even bugs. Bugs belong to the order Hemiptera. Ladybugs are part of Coleoptera, the Beetle order. These little beetles have an insatiable appetite. That's a good thing for those of you who garden because they eat the insects that invade your plants like aphids, whiteflies and other destructive bugs.

Most of us are probably used to seeing the orange Ladybug with black spots but they come in a wide range of other colors as well—gray, tan, metallic blue. The number of spots can vary, too, and some have no spots at all.

Even though they are small, they still have a defense mechanism to protect themselves from predators. When the insects are disturbed, they emit an odorous, noxious yellow fluid that seeps out of their joints.

Did you know, though, that there are "bad" Ladybugs? Asian Lady Beetles were first discovered in the United States in 1988 and are known as the Ladybugs' evil twin. They, too, devour aphids so in that regard, they are beneficial. Their hefty appetites can extend to non-pest insects as well like monarch butterfly eggs and larvae and that's not good.

Asian Lady Beetles can bite. The bites are not poisonous or extremely painful but in some cases can cause "pink-eye." In the fall or winter, if you notice large numbers of what you believe are ladybugs congregating around your home, they're probably Asian Lady Beetles. When it begins to get cold, they will attempt to enter



your home and can stain walls, furniture and fabrics with the stinky yellow fluid they secrete.

Asian Lady Beetles can be harmful to dogs. When a dog in Kansas started sleeping all the time, refused to eat and was foaming at the mouth, the veterinarian discovered over 30 Asian Lady Beetles had attached themselves to the roof of the mouth.

So how do you tell the difference between the good Ladybug and the evil twin, the Asian Lady Beetle? Look at the markings on their head. From above, Asian lady beetles have a white "M"-shaped spot where their head meets the body.

As part of our mission, we strive to educate you about environmental issues that may affect your lives.

The Ladybug acts as a natural pesticide in nature and they can be easily purchased online. Utilizing this unique feature of the Ladybug can discourage the use of dangerous pesticides that are harmful to all living things. Check out our website at www.twrcwildlifecenter.org for more helpful information.

PARK LAKES

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 Recreation Center Onsite Office.....(281) 441-9955
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 parklakeszachary@gmail.com

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WHY NOT HOST?



The decorations are packed away, gifts have been exchanged and life is back to normal once again. Why not bring a little excitement into your life by hosting a foreign exchange student!

Each of our students is fluent in English, comes with their own spending money and health insurance. Most importantly, they come with a dream to spend a year in the US so they can experience life as an American teenager!

Hosting is a very great way of bringing new cultures into your family, home, school and community. Speaking as the host mom to 14 different exchange students, I can say that

this is one of the best decisions I've made in my life.

STS Foundation accepts all of host families – from single parents, newly marrieds, empty nesters and same sex couples. In order to host, you would need to meet the following qualifications:

- Host must be 25 years or older
- Pass a background check
- Provide food for 3 meals daily
- Ensure reliable transportation to and from school (bus is ok)
- A bed for your student
- A safe and loving home

STS Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that places foreign exchange students with American host families. For more information about hosting, please contact Vicki Odom at 832-455-7881 or email at vicki.stsfoundation@yahoo.com.



PARK LAKES

BAKED SPAGHETTI

Ingredients

- 1 package (16 ounces) spaghetti
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 jar (24 ounces) meatless spaghetti sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 5 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 cups Daisy 4% cottage cheese
- 4 cups part-skim shredded mozzarella cheese
- Chopped fresh basil, optional

Directions

- Cook spaghetti according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, cook beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in spaghetti sauce and seasoned salt; set aside.
- In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, Parmesan cheese and butter. Drain spaghetti; add to egg mixture and toss to coat.
- Place half of the spaghetti mixture in a greased 13x9-in. or 3-qt. baking dish. Top with half of the cottage cheese, meat sauce and mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers.
- Cover and bake at 350° for 40 minutes. Uncover; bake until cheese is melted, 20-25 minutes longer. If desired, sprinkle with basil.





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A FEW DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A HOME HANDYMAN

by: Gordon R. Watson

DRIPPING FAUCETS

Vacationing at my mother-in-law's home always means doing some repair work. I like keeping busy, and there are generally some things needing attention. One of the recent issues there was a dripping kitchen faucet. Drips are really a thing of the past for most faucets. Happily, ceramic has replaced rubber as the seal, so most faucet manufacturers have a lifetime warranty of one sort or another. I gave her my standard verbal disclaimer (that her home's piping is old and something might break and require a real plumber). So far, I have never had to resort to calling one (knock on wood). I turned off the main water supply outside because her 1950's home doesn't have shut off valves (called stops in the trade) beneath the kitchen sink. Outside, after digging a hole in a flower planter to find the shut off valve, I gently advised her not to bury the main shut off valve because it wasn't designed to be buried, and it might be difficult to find quickly. In the kitchen again, fully expecting the old style rubber washers, I removed the kitchen faucet handle, protected the shiny chrome with masking tape, applied a wrench, and removed the faucet stem. To my surprise, the sink faucet did have new-style ceramic style seals. The problem, it turned out, was that debris, probably from her home's aging and rusting (50+ year old) galvanized pipes, had stuck in the ceramic cartridge, causing the seal to be incomplete. Fortunately, once I cleaned the debris out, the drip went away. I love it when I don't have to buy parts for a repair. The fact that the old piping is obviously corroding and slowly failing is another story for another time. Replacing that piping almost certainly will require a real plumber. Sometime I might mention to her that it might be a good idea to replace the old pipe on her schedule rather than the pipe's schedule.

CORROSION

Her home also has a clothesline (not all that common these days) which had all but fallen over. The old clothesline was the old style with two "crosses" each cross with a two-inch galvanized pipe stuck in concrete (with five ropes for holding the clothes). Over time, these pipes rusted away. The funny thing is that the pipes really only rusted in one place: about two inches above the ground and two inches below the ground. The remaining pipe was in near-perfect condition. Even the pipes buried twenty-four inches in the ground were near-perfect! My point in mentioning this is that this corrosion is caused by moisture and oxygen. While we will likely never have a clothesline, the principle applies to all materials such as iron and wood placed in the ground and prone to rust or wood rot. While there is little we can do about oxygen, to the degree



feasible, we should try to keep water away from anything placed in the ground. Better yet, when feasible, avoid putting anything which can rust or rot directly in the ground.

STUD FINDERS

Over the years, I have owned at least three electronic stud finders. These are the devices that are supposed to locate the wooden or metal studs behind the sheet rock. My history with them hasn't been trouble-free. My last one worked fairly well for a few years, but it recently proudly advised me that the closet wall I wanted to attach a shelf to, had no studs. I now have three "broken" stud finders in my tool box. I promise to properly dispose of them soon. Fortunately, while doing some work at my son and daughter-in-law's home, I found (in my son's tool chest) a non-electric, entirely rare earth magnet-type "stud finder" that works so well that I don't think I will ever go back to the electronic type. It is made by C.H. Hanson. Of course, it only indirectly finds the stud. It finds the nails or screws holding the sheet rock to the stud. At about \$10, it is a bargain. I just bought one for myself, and believe it may be the last I ever have to buy (unless I lose it, of course). Hint: Once a stud is found, you can apply painter's tape (masking tape (not too tight or you may strip away the paint) to the stud location, or you can place another magnet on the nail location as a marker.

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A Fun, Fruity, Refrigerated Treat

Save time on family desserts with make-ahead recipes like these Kristoff Ice Box Cupcakes. By using kid-friendly treats that add nutrition to appealing flavor, you can solve busy evenings



just by reaching into the fridge. This and other family-friendly recipes are part of Dole's healthy-living alliance with Disney's Frozen 2. For details, visit dole.com/Disney.

#Dole #DoleRecipes

Kristoff Ice Box Cupcakes

Prep time: 20 minutes, plus chill time

Serves: 12

- 3 ripe DOLE® Bananas
- 1 container (8 ounces) fat-free whipped topping, thawed
- 7 low-fat honey graham crackers, coarsely crushed
- 1 pound Dole Strawberries, hulled and quartered

Line 12-cup muffin tin with cupcake liners. In large bowl, mash bananas; fold in whipped topping.

Fill muffin cups halfway with graham cracker pieces, banana mixture and strawberries; repeat layers with remaining ingredients.

Refrigerate cupcakes 4 hours; serve in cupcake liners.

Approximate nutritional information per serving (1 cupcake): 78 calories; 3 calories from fat; 0 g fat; 0 g trans fat; 0 g polyunsaturated fat; 0 g monounsaturated fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 25 mg sodium; 164 mg potassium; 18 g carbohydrates; 2 g fiber; 8 g sugar; 1 g protein; vitamin A 0%; vitamin C 25%; calcium 2%; iron 2%; vitamin E 2%; thiamin 2%; vitamin B6 8%; phosphorus 2%; magnesium 4%; manganese 10%.

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Driveway Cleaning Tips

Ammonia

Tired of those annoying discolorations on your concrete work? To get rid of them, scrub with 1 cup ammonia diluted in 1 gallon (3.7 liters) water. Hose it down well when you're done.

Baking Soda

Salt and commercial ice-melt formulations can stain — or actually eat away — the concrete around your house. For an effective, but completely innocuous, way to melt the ice on your steps and walkways during those cold winter months, try sprinkling them with generous amounts of baking soda. Add some sand for improved traction.

Kool-Aid

Nasty rust stains on your concrete? Mix unsweetened lemonade Kool-Aid with hot water. Scrub and the rust stain should come right out.

Oven Cleaner

Get those unsightly grease, oil, and transmission fluid stains off your concrete driveway or garage floor. Spray them with oven cleaner. Let it settle for 5-10 minutes, then scrub with a stiff brush and rinse it off with your garden hose at its highest pressure. Severe stains may require a second application.

Soda

Here's how to remove oil stains from concrete drive-ways and garage floors: Gather up a small bag of cat litter, a few cans of cola, a stiff bristle broom, bucket, laundry detergent, bleach, eye protection, and rubber gloves. Cover the stain with a thin layer of cat litter and brush it in. Sweep up the litter and pour cola to cover the area. Work the cola in with a bristle broom, and leave the cola for about twenty minutes. Mix 1/4 cup laundry detergent with 1/4 cup bleach in 1 gallon (3.7 liters) warm water and use it to mop up the mess.

WD-40

Did a leaky oil pan leave a big ugly spot in the middle of your concrete driveway? To get rid of an unsightly oil spot, just spray it with a generous amount of WD-40 and then hose it down with water.



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