



March 2016

RURAL
MISSOURI

Sac Osage Electric Cooperative

News

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Visit us on the Web - www.sacosage.com

It Takes A Cut Above To Stay A Step Ahead

For years, trees have been appreciated for their shade, planted for their fruit, harvested for their wood. Trees contribute to our health, beautify our homes and farmsteads, help regulate our atmosphere, and can even reduce our electric bills, if carefully planned and planted.

However, trees can also cause headaches. Their roots can damage foundations. They can topple in storms and destroy buildings. And, their high-reaching limbs can interfere with the reliable delivery of electricity to your home.

Limbs and leaves in contact with power lines can conduct electricity, creating a potentially dangerous condition for anyone who comes near. Tree-to-line contact also contributes to what electric system professionals call "line loss." The term refers to electricity created at a generating plant that does not

reach its destination, an inefficiency that increases costs for us and for you.

Sac Osage Electric Cooperative strives to be a good steward of one of nature's gifts. However, we must maintain the integrity of the system by regularly trimming and pruning trees. Crews and contractors who work for us to clear rights of way are trained to work around high-voltage lines safely and preserve the plants when possible. Cooperatives that keep their rights of way clear can demonstrate the benefits in reliability and savings to their members.

Vegetation management for distribution lines is addressed through the National Electric Safety Code (NESC). Distribution lines deliver electric energy to cooperative members. Although there are no specific requirements, NESC states, "vegetation that

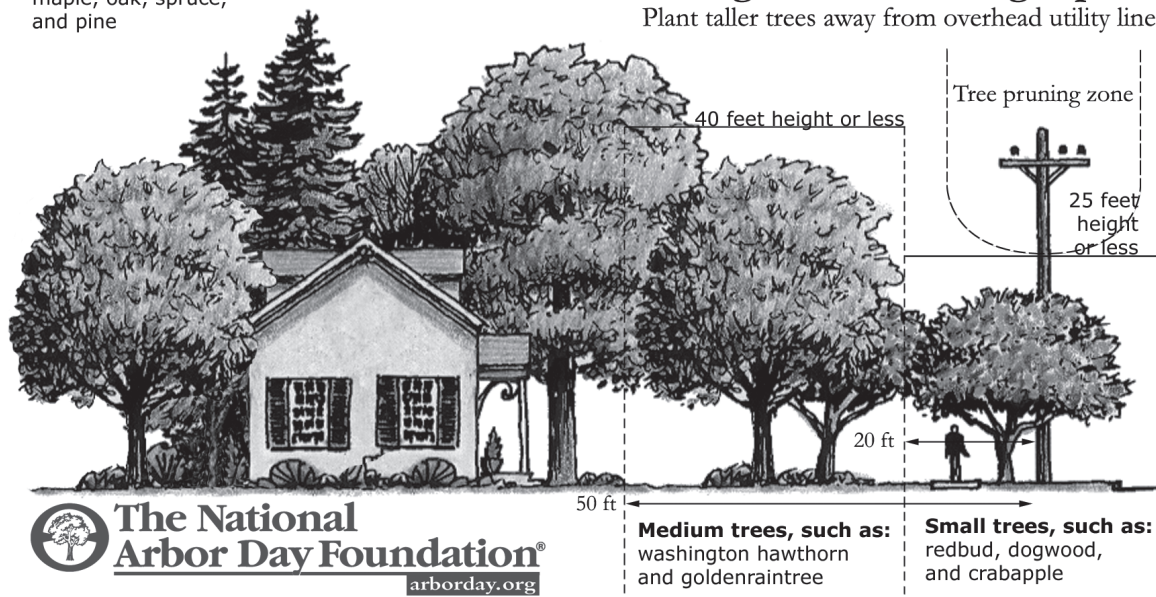
may damage ungrounded supply lines should be pruned or removed." In addition to safety concerns and outage prevention, vegetation management is necessary to reduce unexpected costs to electric cooperatives. By keeping rights of way clear, co-op crews are able to restore power more quickly, improve reliability, and prevent expensive repairs to systems damaged by fallen trees or neglected vegetation.

And, please, if existing trees are close to the lines and need trimming, don't try to tackle the job yourself. Every year, amateur tree trimmers are hurt or killed when trying to clear limbs near power lines. Call the right-of-way professionals at Sac Osage Electric.

Tall trees, such as:
maple, oak, spruce,
and pine

Plant the right tree in the right place

Plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines



 **The National Arbor Day Foundation**
arborday.org

If you decide to plant a tree, you can help make our crews' tasks easier. Look up for power lines.

Think about the mature height of the tree. Don't plant trees that could eventually reach up and touch power lines.

Youth Tour Deadline

There is still time if you are a high school junior to enter the 2016 Youth Tour Program.

It is a chance to take a "trip of a lifetime" to our nation's capital this summer.

"What sets Electric Cooperatives apart from Investor Owned Utilities?" is the question you will need to answer as you enter the essay contest for an opportunity to travel along with approximately 85 other students from across Missouri to Washington D.C. in June. Deadline for entering is Friday, April 8th. For more information you may visit our website at www.sacosage.com or call Janna Dody or Aaron Ash at 417-876-2721.



Spring fever?

"Fever-lurk, neither play nor work," warns one old fable.

In Old French, fever-lurden or fever-lurgan meant a fit of idleness. With the vernal equinox commencing on March 20, perhaps it is time for a spring tonic of cleansing greens to purge your winter-dulled system of its steady diet



of winter squashes, potatoes and cabbage. If the dandelions are not up yet, consider the early cresses, high in iron, or some sheep sorrel or lamb's quarters. Many herbalists make teas of the roots and aerial parts of the burdock plant. Like dandelions, most of these spring tonic greens are high in vitamins and minerals.

Love in springtime

The vernal equinox occurs on March 20.

In honor of spring, we offer some folklore tips on how to attract and keep the attentions of your beloved. Eat tomatoes, potatoes, hot spices, oysters and octopus. Or, put marigolds in your



wedding bouquet. Keep in mind, however, that romance can be hazardous. New World settlers banned public acts of affection. When a sea captain returned to Boston after three years at sea, he kissed his wife in public and was sent to the stocks for "lewd and unseemly behavior."

What's up with umbrellas?

Umbrellas were first used in ancient Mesopotamia as sunshades. However, in the first century A.D., Roman women began oiling their paper sunshades to provide rain protection, and the umbrella, as we know it, was born. It was not until the 18th century, however, that umbrellas became acceptable for men.



Beginning in 1750, Jonas Hanway always carried an umbrella around London, rain or shine. He initially was publicly humiliated and ridiculed, but gradually the stigma faded and the idea took hold. When Hanway died in 1786, all proper British gentlemen were carrying umbrellas.

For recipes, gardening tips and weather forecasts, visit:
www.almanac.com

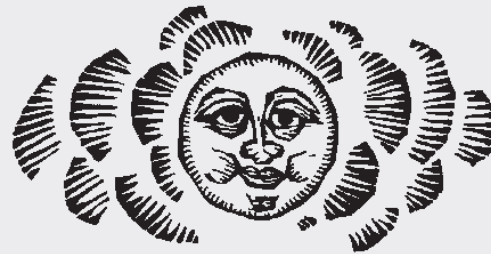
Recipe for Lemon Lace Cookies

1 cup (2 sticks) butter
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup flour
1-1/2 cups rolled oats
1/2 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 tablespoon lemon peel, grated
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
Powdered sugar, to dust



Cream the butter and sugar. Add the remaining ingredients, except for the powdered sugar, and mix. Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Drop rounded teaspoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheets, then press flat with the bottom of a glass dipped in the powdered sugar. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes. When cool, sprinkle with additional powdered sugar. Makes about 2 dozen cookies.

THE OLD FARMER'S



WEATHER PROVERBS

When the wind veers against the sun, trust it not, for back 'twill run.

When sheep collect and huddle, tomorrow will become a puddle.

If the wind is northeast at the vernal equinox, it will be a good season for wheat and a poor one for corn.

Dust in March brings grass and foliage.

The moon, her face if red be, of water speaks she.

Rheumatic pains indicate bad weather.

In March much snow, to plants and trees much woe.

Hiring Mr. Right

Learn to choose the best contractor for the home improvement task

Dear Pat: I want to make my home more energy efficient, but some of the work needed is more than I can do by myself. When I'm hiring contractors to do these projects, how can I be sure that the work is of good quality? — Jerry C.

Dear Jerry: The good news is there are many contractors performing high-quality energy-efficiency work. You're smart to first figure out what you can do to ensure your contractors deliver the kind of quality-work for which you're paying.

The best quality-assurance solution for most homeowners is to start with a home-energy audit by a qualified and experienced energy auditor. Ask the auditor to specify the products and the quality standards for each recommended efficiency measure. The auditor also can help you by agreeing to inspect the finished work.

Using an auditor throughout your home energy upgrade will cost several hundred dollars, but it can pay off in a number of ways: You will know what work is truly needed and can prevent poor quality or incomplete work. Your electric co-op may offer a free or discounted audit by one of its energy advisers, or it may have a list of trusted energy auditors in the area. In some areas, there are home-performance contractors experienced in whole-home energy-efficiency upgrades who can perform the energy audit themselves and then complete the work.

Once you have a clear idea and a description of the work that needs to be done, you'll need to identify contractors. Some co-ops offer financial incentives and know of contractors who have experience or training with energy efficiency.

Here are questions to ask potential contractors.

- Is the contractor licensed and insured in your state? Do they have any additional training? For example, the Building Performance Institute certifies contractors who have training in whole-home energy-efficiency improvements.
- For heating and cooling projects, how will the contractor decide what size equip-

ment is needed in your home? Will they inspect duct work and insulation throughout the home?

- For insulation and weatherization upgrades, what is your insulation level now? What should it be? Will the contractor find and seal any air leaks before installing the insulation?

- For all projects, who will actually be at your home doing the work — the person to whom you are talking? An installer employed by the same company? Or a sub-contractor?

Make sure to do plenty of research before hiring a contractor:

- Don't take the first offer: Try to get at least two bids. The lowest quote might not necessarily be the best, and sometimes it's hard to compare bids unless they are itemized correctly. If one quote is significantly lower than others, inquire closely about the reasons for the difference in the bids.

- Check their work: Ask for and check references, read online reviews and ask your local experts about any experience they have with the contractor.

Once you have chosen a contractor, make sure you and the contractor agree on the written description of the work to be performed, the expected

timeframe for completion and the price. If the contractor insists on providing an estimate rather than a firm bid, you should discuss what might cause the final bill to be higher than quoted.

Some common areas of tension between contractors and their customers also are worth discussing:

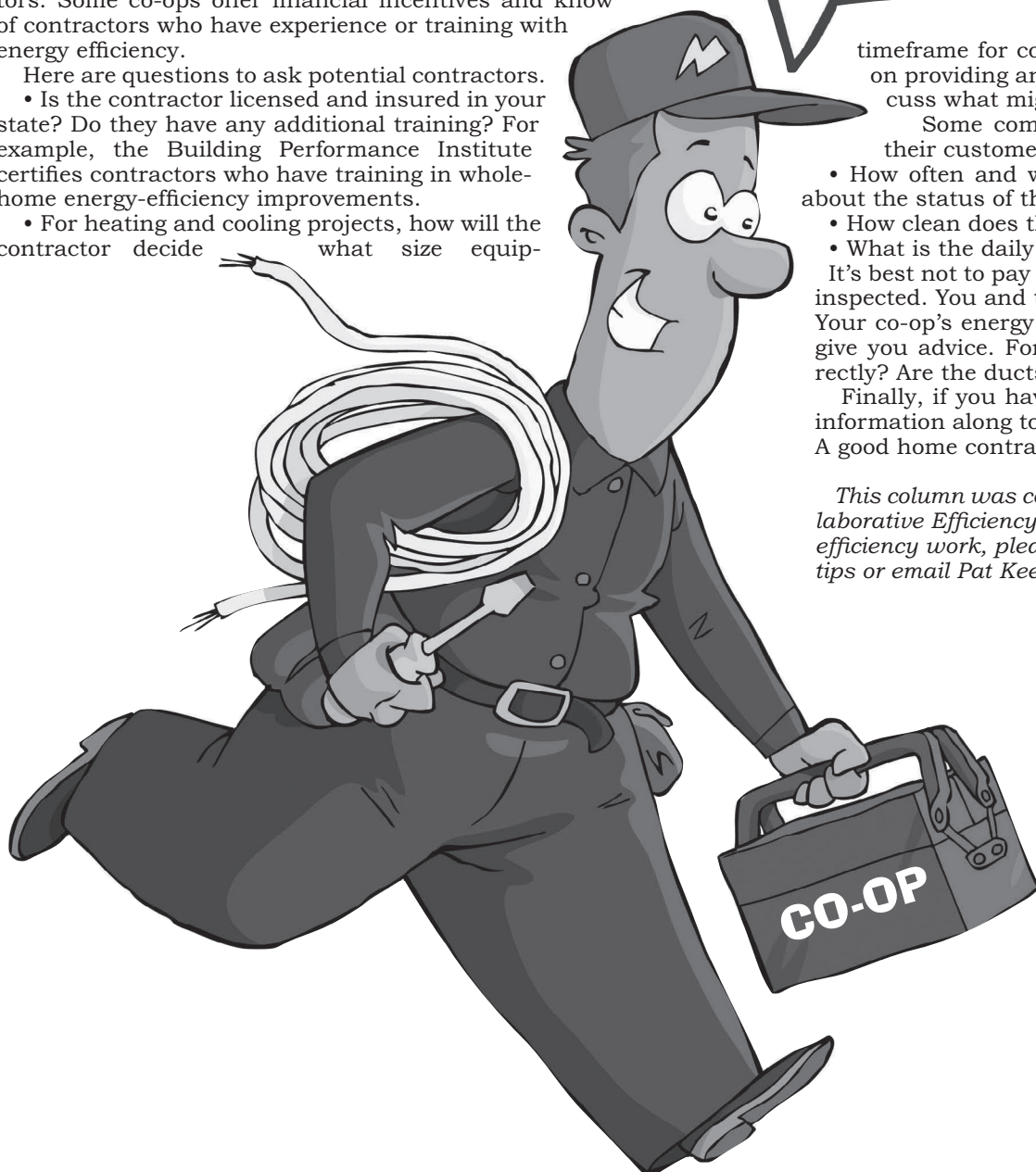
- How often and when will the contractor communicate with you about the status of the project?
- How clean does the area need to be at the end of each day?
- What is the daily work schedule?

It's best not to pay the contractor in full until work is completed and inspected. You and the energy auditor should both inspect the work. Your co-op's energy adviser may also be able to inspect the work or give you advice. For example, is the window flashing installed correctly? Are the ducts sealed properly?

Finally, if you have a good experience with a contractor, pass the information along to friends and neighbors, or write a helpful review. A good home contractor can be hard to find.

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Amy Wheelless of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on ensuring quality energy efficiency work, please visit www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energy-tips or email Pat Keegan at energytips@collaborativeefficiency.com.

How can I help you today?



Have questions about your home's energy efficiency? Contact your local electric cooperative and ask if they offer energy audits in your area.



Check your Boats and Docks.

Each year, people are killed by electrical shock while in the water near docks or boats plugged into shore power. Prevent a tragic electrical accident by taking the time to inspect all electrical systems on or near the water.

When it comes to your boat's electrical system, particularly those with alternating current (AC) systems, keep these tips in mind:

- There are some big differences between your house and your boat. Maintenance of the electrical system should be done by a professional familiar with marine electrical codes.
- Boats with AC systems should have isolation transformers or equipment leakage circuit interrupter (ELCI) protection, comply with American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) standards, and should be serviced by an ABYC Certified® Technician.
- Fuses are rated to protect the wire, not the appliance. If a fuse blows continuously, it should NOT be replaced with a larger one just to keep it from blowing again—something else is wrong. Get it checked out.
- Have your boat's electrical system checked at least once a year. Boats should also be checked when something is added or removed from its system.

What you need to know about electrical safety and docks:

- Install a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breaker on the circuit(s) feeding electricity to the dock. A GFCI measures the current in a circuit. An imbalance of that current, such as a discharge into the water, will trip the GFCI and cut power.
- The metal frame of docks should be bonded to connect all metal to the AC safety ground at the power source.
- Neighboring docks can also present a shock hazard. Ensure your neighbor's dockside system complies with the National Electrical Code (NEC) and has been inspected. Marinas should comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Code 303 and NEC Section 555.
- All electrical installations should be done by a professional electrical contractor familiar with marine codes.
- Because docks are exposed to the elements, their electrical systems should be inspected at least once a year.

Learn more about electrical safety at

 **Safe
Electricity.org**[®]

Daylight Saving begins, so don't forget to spring forward an hour on Sunday, March 13th.

