

WHAT'S GOING ON IN OTHER CO-OPS

Glacier Electric



FBI Special Agent Mike Wineman takes photos of a damaged regulator as part of his investigation.

Photo by Roy Nollkamper

Vandals shoot up four transformers, two regulators in Browning, Heart Butte

The Flat Iron housing area in Browning was rattled Jan. 13 by gunfire and \$5,000 in damage to four transformers, knocking power out to 41

homes. Then, on Jan. 22, crews responded to an outage near Heart Butte that knocked out power to 250 homes and caused \$20,000 in damage, as two voltage regulators were shot up.

The cooperative is offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the culprits.

The FBI is investigating the incident.

McCone Electric

Arguing in behalf of a coal plant

Member services advisor Jack Miles writes an editorial in the "Power Talk," the co-op newsletter.

In part he writes:

In the last couple of years we have all heard about the possibility of a new power plant and coal mine starting up in McCone County.

More recently, our Governor has been speaking out about building up the economy of Eastern Montana. He wants to use our vast supply of coal to do this. Can you imagine the boost to our economy and population this would bring? I can. It would be awesome . . .

Why would anybody be against improving the living standard of eastern Montana.

For the life of me. I don't know why but, there are those that are against the proposal of a power plant/coal mine and our Governor's plan.

Southeast Electric

Name that tune!

Manager Jack Hamblin writes a column about his reaction to his teenage daughter, the opera singer, ending it with these words:

Her voice is beautiful without doubt, and I love hearing her sing. I just wish I could understand the words.

So, occasionally I slip quietly away by myself. And there, behind closed doors I grab my guitar and softly sing 'Kiss an Angel Good Mornin' or 'The Dance,' smug with the thought that if I were asked to sing my old songs in public, even if people weren't hearing my daughter's beautiful voice, at least they wouldn't need a translator to understand the words.

NORTHERN GARDENING TIPS

By Bob Gough

When does your garden grow?

Q: Should I get my garden going already?

A: It's a little early, but here's what you need to know. Squash, cucumbers, and melons take about four weeks from seeding to form a good transplant. Start them about the end of April. Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts need about six to seven weeks. Tomatoes, peppers and eggplants need about eight to ten weeks.

Rather than starting the seeds now in a rush, get your equipment set up for planting later. Window stools in Montana just don't provide enough light for starting seedlings. Instead, use a special plant light, or use a combination of about five cool white fluorescent bulbs and two incandescent bulbs.

Because light intensity decreases with the square of the distance from the source, keep the lights only an inch or two above the tops of the plants.

Incandescent bulbs give off a lot of heat, so be sure they don't damage the foliage. Use a good, low salt water source to keep the plants healthy. A touch of fertilizer now and then won't hurt

either. Finally, remember the vine crops do not transplant well, so start them in peat pots so they can be transplanted, pot and all, into the garden.

Why do cut flowers wilt in the vase?

Researchers in the Netherlands have reported the main reason for fast wilting of cut flowers is the bacterial growth at the cut stem ends and inside the stems themselves. But where does the bacteria come from. Investigators found bacteria in Dutch tapwater to be the main cause of stem plugging. To be sure this is not a cause of your flowers wilting, use distilled water to keep the flowers looking fresh for as long as possible.

Any chance of growing rhododendrons in Montana?



Not much. One of the major requirements for rhodies is an acid soil with a pH of about 4.8. That is, until now. Trials in Germany with seedling rhododendrons have identified *R. micranthum* as very tolerant to neutral soil pH. This is just a start, though, so don't get too excited. *R. micranthum* wouldn't tolerate our winters and the plants in general are intolerant of salty soils, dry winds, and heavy soils. So we've got a ways to go in getting a rhododendron that will do well in our state.

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