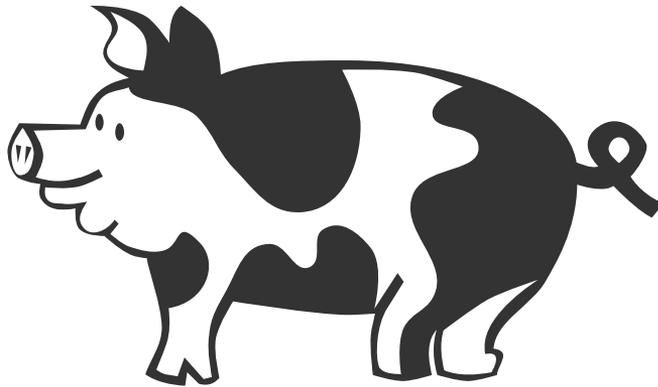
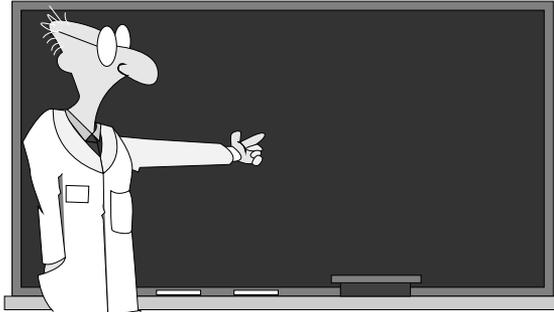


INTRODUCTION

It Sure Doesn't *Feel Like Work!*



As most of you know, there's nothing I love better than putterin' around the old backyard. Whether I'm mowing the lawn, digging up a new flower bed, or picking the world's sweetest corn from my vegetable garden, I'm in "hog heaven," as my Grandma Putt used to say. Why, I even get a kick out of coming face-to-face with those little challenges that Mother Nature offers up from time to time. I welcome chances to outwit ornery critters, fend off dastardly diseases, and batten down the hatches when heavy weather heads my way — they're great opportunities to exercise what Grandma Putt called "the old gray cells."



Grin 'em Down

There's no doubt about it, Grandma Putt had some mighty powerful "gray cells" and when she set out to battle a problem in her yard, there wasn't any doubt about the outcome! Over the years, I've come up with my own methods for grinnin' down garden-variety varmints and sending yard problems packin'. And in my travels around this great land of ours, I've picked up more than a few ideas from folks with some pretty impressive gray cells — and great-looking yards — of their own.

In this book, I've combined it all — Grandma Putt's good old-fashioned grow-how with some newfangled ideas and, of course, my own special tips, tricks, and tonics. The result: an arsenal of surefire weapons that'll help you win your yard and garden battles hands down.

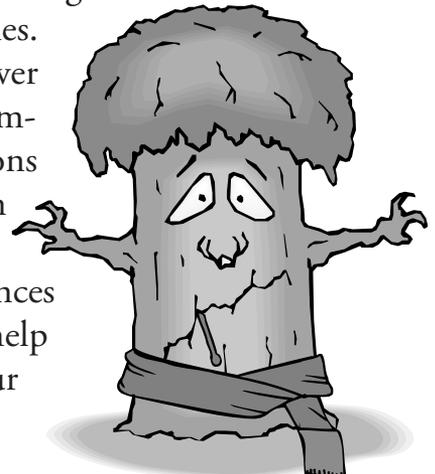
Head 'em Off at the Pass

The old saying goes that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Well, when it comes to yard problems, I believe that an ounce of prevention is worth about a ton and a half of cure! That's why, in Part I of this book, I'll tell you how to get your plants off to a good, healthy start. That way, Old Man Trouble is less likely to come a-callin' — and if he does decide to pay a visit, you can send him packing pronto.

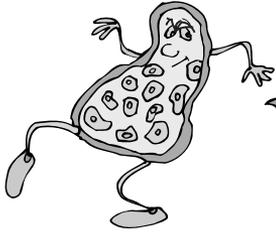
Guarding the Green

In Part II, we'll get down to particulars: I'll share my secrets for solving specific plant problems. I'll cover every kind of plant in your yard, from one-summer annuals to trees that, given a little TLC, could live to see your great-grandchildren climbing their branches.

I'll also answer the most common questions I've heard in my travels, because chances are, they'll help you and your yard, too.



The Invasion Forces



Believe you me, yard problems come in all shapes, sizes, and forms. In Part III, I'll give you

the lowdown on a whole bunch of 'em, from the teeny, tiniest terrors to the biggest of the four-legged brigade. I'll even clue you in on what to do when Mother Nature throws a curve ball your way in the form of fierce winds, too little or too much rain, or frosts that play the old game of now you see me, now you don't.

Hard Knocks

Then we'll move on to one of the most important parts of your yard, what we professionals call the "hardscape." All that refers to is the solid, nonliving, and more or less permanent fixtures such as fences, walls, and walkways. In Part IV, I'll pass along some helpful hints for keeping your current hardscape in tip-top condition. I'll even tell you how to use new fences, walls, and walkways to solve some big outdoor problems.

It's a Date

Finally, if you're anything like me, you get so wrapped up in your daily duties that you tend to forget those little seasonal chores that can fend off big-time trouble. But don't worry: Just turn to Part V, where you'll find my Calendar of Care that reminds you what to do and when to do it. I've also gathered all of my terrific tonics together so at the first sign of trouble, all you need to do is reach for a recipe and bid your problems adieu!



Go for It!

So with this arsenal at hand, you'll be able to tackle any problem your yard can dish up. But don't get me wrong, folks — I'm not trying to make your backyard sound like one woe after another. On the contrary! As Grandma Putt used to say, "There's no greater fun a body can have than tendin' this great green earth." And, as always, she was right as rain. So get out there and, above all else, have fun, folks!

