

Howdy, Folks!

For over 40 years now, I've been sharing my unique home, health, and garden tips, tricks, and tonics with folks all across America. And during that time, lots of other folks have contacted me with their own neat ideas and home solutions. So I've been diligently jotting them all down—with an eye toward using them someday.

Well, there's no time like the present, so I spent the better part of the past year sifting through all the hints, helpers, suggestions, and secrets I'd gathered over the years. I discovered that I had a virtual treasure-trove of home, health, and garden solutions right at my fingertips. I knew right away that I just couldn't keep these incredible tips under my hat any longer, so I decided to put together a terrific new book containing the most ingenious problem solvers I could find.



Believe you me—it took a lot of hard work to choose the best of the best, but I'm proud to say I've done it, and the result is this very book you're holding in your hands. It's packed full of the best-kept problem-solving secrets I've used for many, many years, plus hundreds of new ones you've never heard of before.

This book is a gold mine of fast, fun, and easy ways for you to work out all sorts of trouble with your home, health, or yard—using common, household products you've already got lying around the house. Plus, you'll save loads of time, money, and effort in the process. We've included hundreds of my personal favorite remedies and terrific tips and tricks from folks all over the U. S. of A., and, of course, oodles of tried-and-true solutions passed down to me from my Grandma Putt.

Let me tell you a little about

my Grandma Putt. Every single day with her was a lesson in frugality and what she called good, old-fashioned horse sense. Because of her years of wisdom, she always seemed to know exactly what to do when something went wrong. She wasn't a know-it-all; she just knew a good idea when she heard one.

Growing up, I learned tons of problem-solving secrets from Grandma Putt—secrets using common, everyday household products to make things last or make 'em like new. No matter what the situation was, she made do with what she had. As a result, I learned how to be thrifty, resourceful, and self-sufficient. In fact, the very same lessons I learned from her all those years ago still serve me well today.

You know, it seems to me that these

days, whenever folks want to get something done, they either drive all over

the place or are quick to call an "expert" to take care of it for them. But that's not my style. Why run around, when in all likelihood, you already have what you need to fix the problem? For instance, there's the laundry additive in your kitchen cupboard that'll make your next load of whites even brighter than bleach. Then there's the item in your medicine chest that'll remove stubborn stains from the bathroom sink. And, oh yes, don't forget the secret concoction in your garage that'll keep your kitchen appliances sparkling like new. Want to

know what they are? Would you believe lemon juice, hydrogen peroxide, and car polish?

One of Grandma Putt's favorite sayings was that an ounce of prevention is



What a Great Idea!

While working on this book, whenever I came across a really great idea, I put it in a special box like this one. So look for my Eureka! boxes where you'll learn all kinds of fun, yet practical stuff, like these tips on how to use baking soda:

☞ Soothe a bug bite or sting by applying a paste of baking soda and water to the area.

☞ To really clean tile surfaces, make a thick paste of baking soda and water, and spread it on. Let stand for a half hour, then wipe clean.

☞ Get your rain-soaked dog smelling sweet again by sprinkling him with baking soda, then toweling him down and brushing him out.

For more wild and wonderful uses for all kinds of household stuff, turn to page 327.

x Howdy, Folks

worth a pound of cure, and I couldn't agree with her more. Throughout this book, you'll find some great ideas about preventive maintenance, from easy, common stuff (like keeping cabbage from stinking up your kitchen when you boil it and keeping your closets from getting too cluttered) to being prepared for more serious emergencies, such as what to do if there's a fire in your home.

And as the seasons change, so do the problems you face and the chores that need to be done around the house. So, I've also included some terrific tips for all seasons, from making your spring cleaning a snap to taking care of those summertime mosquito blues (with a secret ingredient from your kitchen); from cleaning those autumn leaves out of your gutters (with a homemade scraper) to winterizing your air conditioner so that it'll run like a champ next summer. There are even hints on how to cure what ails you with common household products. And don't forget about the terrific tips that'll turn any old yard into a picture-perfect paradise.

I've got to tell you, folks, I could go on and on...this book was loads of fun to write, and I hope you'll find it just as entertaining to read. Toward that end, I've included a few fascinating historical facts, some clever quotable quotes, and of course, lots of lists, schedules, and recipes—in fact, I've thrown in just about everything but the kitchen sink!

So the next time you're trying to get a busted light bulb out of the socket without electrocuting yourself, or you're figuring out how to keep your dog from barking up a storm, open up this book, and you're sure to find answers to these and hundreds more questions at your fingertips. I guarantee that they'll be interesting, amusing, practical...and sometimes all three at once. If they are, then I hope you'll think to yourself, 'why that ol' Jerry Baker, he really does know a thing or two about solving life's everyday problems.' That, my friends, would be the kindest compliment you could ever pay me.

*Mid pleasures and palaces
though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble,
there's no place like home.*

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

Jerry Baker