

Introduction

Dear Jerry: As I was planting my sweet corn, I wondered how to keep raccoons from getting to it before me. I shared this question with the “Wise Old-Timers” at coffee the next day. The first said, “Human scent will keep them away,” and suggested I take an old stuffed chair he was throwing out and put it in my cornfield. “No,” said the second. “Light will keep them away, so string up some lights.” “You’re all wet,” said the third. “Use newspapers; spread ‘em around the field.” Not knowing what to do—nor wanting to offend any of them—I used all of their ideas. Boy, was I surprised around harvest time when, upon entering my cornfield, I saw a large raccoon sitting in the chair, under the lights, reading a newspaper and eating my corn. I guess you just never know!



This chuckle came from a reader in Iowa, just one of thousands of folks who have shared their jokes, tall tales, and terrific tips with me over the years.

I’ve heard about their successes (and failures), and that got me thinking. If so many of you have shared your problem solvers with me, why shouldn’t I pass them along to *everyone* else?

And that, my friend, is where the idea for this book came from. I’ve gathered the best of the best tips, tricks, and tonics from folks all across America to share with you. Perhaps your tip is in here, too!

You’ll find everything from household hints to gardening tips to health advice, all courtesy of readers just like you. Want to keep your glass shower

doors clean as a whistle? Try a dab of baby oil. Got gardenias that aren’t blooming like they should? Perk ‘em up with pickle juice. Conquer a head cold with a whiff of horseradish, a sip of hot-pepper water, or a lick of honey and black pepper.

But that’s not all! No sirree—to complement these terrific tips, I dug deep into my files and pulled out my own favorite time-tested secrets. Look for these fantastic features scattered throughout the book:

Another Great Idea! offers why-didn’t-I-think-of-that ways to solve everyday problems. So if you need to know how to remove stubborn laundry stains, get sticky tar off your car, stop heartburn in its tracks, or keep rabbits out of your vegetable patch, you’ve come to the right place.

Ask Jerry provides commonsense answers to often-asked questions like:

- How can I get my dishes squeaky clean? (Vinegar does the trick.)
- Got any advice for getting out grass stains? (A simple egg white and glycerin mixture works wonders.)
- What's a safe way to move a mouse out of my house? (Try instant mashed potatoes.)

Grandma Putt's Wisdom reveals time-tested secrets that work just as well today as they did back in Grandma's day. You'll find her favorite old-time ways for extending the growing season, keeping a cut from scarring, and polishing pewter with cabbage leaves.

Jerry's Handy Hints let you in on the stuff I myself use to solve problems that crop up around the house, in the garden, and when I'm feeling under the weather.

Quick Fixes give you the lowdown on fast and easy ways to tackle tough issues like stinky fridge odors, pounding headaches, and frisky, flower-trampling felines.

Super-Duper Solutions explain how to think outside the box in any situation. Can't find a rolling pin? Grab a zucchini. Need to stop ants dead in their tracks? Try ground peppermint. Houseplants looking dull? Polish 'em with a banana!

Take 5 lists uncommon uses for everyday items that you've already got

on hand. For instance, you'll discover five unusual wax paper tips, five great eggshell tricks, and five healing vinegar tonics, among other things.

Now that I'm done bragging about what's inside, I have to say a few words about how to use this book.

First, keep in mind that these tips come from readers like you who have used them with some success. But that doesn't mean that they'll work for your particular problem, or work in exactly the same way for you.

Second, *before using any cleaning formula*, be sure to test it in an inconspicuous area. That way you'll know if it's safe to use on your item(s).

Third, the health advice is not meant to substitute for professional medical care. If you try a recommended treatment and your ailment doesn't improve within a few days, or if your symptoms get worse, then see your doctor promptly.

Above all else, enjoy yourself and keep an open mind. You may read a tip and think, "I can't believe that works!" But give it a try—you just may be pleasantly surprised! Even if you're not concerned about removing an ink stain, soothing a sore throat, or foiling cutworms, you'll still learn some neat new ways to keep your home, health, and garden in tip-top shape.

And who knows—as you read through the hundreds of practical problem solvers here, you may be inspired to come up with a few of your own. If you do, drop me a line; I'd love to hear from you!