

Cost of Food Less Today, Market Official Maintains

Food actually costs less today than it did 50 years ago. And what's more, the money saved could be used in the neighborhood of \$1,000 worth of appliances or other home furnishings during a year.

The president of one of Michigan's supermarket chains made this startling comment.

And he does it in the face of such advertised values in 1912 as "Prime Rib of Beef, 15c a pound" and "Bread, very special at 24c a loaf."

"DIRECT PRICE" comparisons do not mean much," he declared. "They're a little like the man who has bought a house in a new building lot back in 1933 for \$250, but unfortunately he didn't even have \$250."

Food prices in 1912 sound fabulously low when compared to 1962 prices, but the illusion fades when you compare the "real" cost—the number of working hours needed to purchase those items.

GRANDPA SPENT 60 hours or more on the job to earn in the neighborhood of \$10 to \$11 a week. Of this he spent about \$5 or around 40 per cent of his income for food to feed his family.

Today's average factory wage in the United States, according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, is \$95.82 for a 40-hour week. On the average, food takes 20 per cent of our salary today, and if we were eating the same foods as Grandpa it would take even less. But we're educated to better things today.

homemaker, the executive pointed out.

ONE OF THE big factors in holding down food costs has been the development of mass distribution to match the benefits of mass production.

Each year food retailers have increased services and conveniences for customers and at the same time continued to operate under a surprisingly small net profit. Average net profit for retail food chains, for example, is just about a penny per dollar of sales.

American consumers are not only eating better today at lower cost but they're also earning more money to earn the food, the official said, but they lead the world in that respect.

A quart of milk, for example, "costs" 7 minutes working time in the U. S., 14 in England, and 33 in Russia. It takes an American 3.2 minutes to earn enough to buy a pound of sugar while the Russian must work an hour and a quarter to buy this amount. We earn a pound of butter in 21.8 minutes while Ivan, who needless to say doesn't eat much butter, must spend three hours and 22 minutes on the job to earn that same pound.

A recent magazine article reported that there were just about 100 items in the grocery store in which Abraham Lincoln clerked. But in modern supermarkets of today many carry as many as 8,000 items; two-thirds of these are new or have been basically changed since 1946, according to the report.

"HOW MANY chickens do you think would sell today if we offered them live, befuddled and cackling instead of neatly cleaned, packaged and cut up—sometimes even with three legs?" the vice president asked.

The same principle applies to all the other time and labor-saving foods that fill store shelves and cases today. And quality is considerably higher now too, he pointed out. Americans are eating better, and liking it, he said.

HERE'S WHERE the comparison really gets intriguing.

Grandpa worked 27 hours each week just to earn enough money to feed his family. Today we buy more and better food for just a few cents.

The savings on your food bill may have paid for the TV set in the living room, and such conveniences as the dishwasher, electric range, mixer and electric skillet in the kitchen.

IF WE STILL spent 45 per cent of our income just for food as did Grandpa back in 1912, the weekly food bill in 1962 would total whopping \$43.12—so in effect we save \$23.98 each week.

An amazing thought—but it adds up to more than \$1,250 a year—which can buy a heap of pleasant living in terms of luxuries and appliances.

"FOOD TODAY is even more of a bargain than it appears from this quick look," the official added, pointing out the many services "built in" today's foods.

Many hours of shopping and preparation time are saved by the pre-washing, pre-trimming, peeling, cutting and packaging that we take for granted today.

Frozen foods, refrigeration and modern transportation in particular have contributed toward changing eating habits.

TO MOST OF us today, many food conveniences are taken for granted. But it hasn't been too long since fresh meat was available only at certain times of the year.

And few of us are so young, that we cannot remember the amazement with which we viewed the first commercially frozen food. Oranges, peas, strawberries and other seasonal foods that had always been luxuries overnight became a year-round, budget-priced staple.

In 1922 Mama can set the table with an entire meal from the freezer if she wishes—everything from canned or soup to exotic delicacies. Americans will eat more than two billion dollars worth of frozen foods in 1962, and in 1947 they were unheard of by the average

germaniums. Remember to keep them on the "dry" side, ferns, a (soft) ivy, aloe, kalanchoe, croton (you have seen them in Florida and you have a good idea of them because of their vivid colored strap-shaped leaves). Amaryllis, wax begonia, plant, wax plant, Mrs. Burlingame primulas, primroses, gladiolus, etc.

THE NORTH EXPOSURE will welcome blood leaf iris, grape ivy, asparagus fern, peperomia, wandering jew, Christmas cactus, spider plant, Chinese evergreen, strawberry begonia, Difenbachia, pic-a-back, aspidistra, dracaena, and all ivy.

THE SOUTH EXPOSURE will be the right selection for your

contracts during contact with cold foods, liquids or even cold air. Most of the time this does not affect the life of the filling. But if destructive acids repeatedly find their way into the space between surfaces, they can dislodge some of the tooth tissue and enlarge the space. It is then only a matter of time until the bacteria and food particles fill the area and start a new cavity.

The margins of the filling lose their support and may crack off under biting and chewing pressures. The filling must be removed, the newly decayed areas must be cleaned away and a new restoration made.

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She works with two patrol boys and tries to arrive ahead of schedule, "especially at lunchtime because the kids tend to hurry more."

Various types of steel basement fallout shelters and four types of bedside shelters are depicted in a new eight-page booklet, titled "Steel Shelters for Fallout Protection." Single copies may be obtained by writing to American Iron & Steel Institute, 150 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y.

THE EAST AND WEST exposures can be taken together because the index is whether the sun strikes (See PLANT CARE, 5-B)

Why do fillings have to be replaced sometimes?

Filling materials are simply substitutes for the sound tooth tissues that have been replaced. The best filling available cannot form an impenetrable bond with the tooth, no matter how accurately they are fitted. Consequently, there is always a minute space between the filling and the tooth into which fluids can seep, especially when the filling

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Down to Earth Indoor, Outdoor Plants Need Same Treatment

BY ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Indoor and outdoor plants follow many of the same rules for good pampering.

The right amount of water, proper fertilizer, and even TLC (tender loving care) are important factors. But the most important is the correct placement of plants.

So right now quiz yourself. Do you know the north, west and west locations on your property.

The following suggestions will give you some idea of tested plants for given locations. Just promise yourselves that you won't always think in terms of those small heart-shaped philodendrons which grace every home in the county.

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The Birmingham Eccentric Features

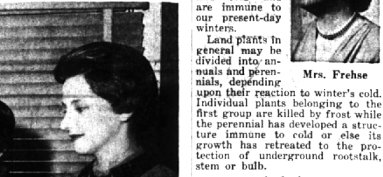
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NATURE NOW Plants Have Developed Shield Against Winter

Last week we discussed the ways used by animals to carry the species over the threat of winter. Plants, too, have developed a pattern for survival.

Primitive seaweeds and algae are protected by the water. Our most primitive land plants such as lichens, liverworts and mosses have lived through extremes of heat and cold and are surviving in our present-day winters.

Land plants in general may be divided into annuals and perennials, depending upon their reaction to winter's cold. Individual plants belonging to the first group are killed by frost while the perennial has developed a structure immune to cold. As the year's growth has retreated to the protection of underground rootstock, stem or bulb.



Mrs. Frehe

OUR TREES and shrubs are perennial plants whose woody growth is not injured by frost. Since the conifer trees developed during a time of universal in the earth's history, they evolved a protective pattern suitable to resist extremes of climate and drought.

This they attest by their unusually heavy bark which protects them from cold and heat. Their needle-like leaves are restricted in area, thus limiting evaporation even though they are retained on the tree the year round.

DECIDUOUS TREES escape winter's threat by losing their leaves and restricting their growth throughout the winter months. Standing bare against the snow and ice they are impervious to extreme cold. Even next spring's buds are closely folded and covered with a protective coat of varnish.

In other perennials frost grasses each season's growth while the life of the plant is maintained underground. Members of the large grass and nut families are good examples of this method of survival.

Some underground stems take the form of tubers such as those grown by the potato and the artichoke. These develop minute scale buds or "eyes" from which the new plant springs.

OTHERS LIKE squirrel-corn and Jack-in-the-pulpit grow from corns which are fleshy stems bearing their summer foliage. Many, such as the lilies, grow from tubers which are short thick stems covered by layers of fleshy scales and fleshy leaves. In each instance there is also enclosed a sufficient food store to launch the new growth in the spring.

The eventual fate of any species of seed plant rests with the seed itself. As an embryo, the plant carries over the pattern of its kind and only in one season but in many instances for as many years as are necessary for it to meet proper growing conditions.

Fertile louse seeds have been found dating back to the early "chess dynamites and the seed of desert plants often carry over for many seasons until there is sufficient moisture for their germination.

THOSE OF YOU who dread the grip of winter may take heart in the measure of man's ability to control his environment. In this he is unique among all living things.

STRICTLY FRESH

Tact is the art of getting your point across without stabbing someone with it.

It is not unusual for a son to for his father's shoes—socks—shirt—and suit.

In most cases, all an argument proves is that two people are present.

Some persons claim that marriage is just another union that defies management.

The easiest way to teach children the value of money is to borrow some from them.

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WEEKLY VISIT She Guards Safety of Students

BY IRMA M. DAVIS
Staff Writer

"Every time it gets cold, I add another layer of clothes. People must think I weigh 250 pounds," says Mrs. John P. Nitzke, school crossing guard.

Rain or shine, ice or snow, Mrs. Nitzke takes her post three times a day at the corner at Adams and Maple, assisting youngsters across the busy intersection on their way to and from Adams School.

Handled a gauntlet the wintry weather, she carries a "stop sign," she arrives at the corner at 7:15 a. m., and stays there until again at lunch and dismissal times. By the end of the week she has put in 10 hours guard duty.

ALTHOUGH she is not empowered by the Birmingham Police Department to issue tickets, she can report drivers. In this, she sometimes is offered assistance by inebriated passersby who become incensed at someone else's traffic manners.

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THE LIKED IT so well he determined to move here," his wife said. With their two daughters, Deborah, 9, and Lori, 4, the family now live in Highland Street.

All outdoor enthusiasts, they skate on Quanton Lake and at Eton in the winter. Mrs. Nitzke, who already has shoe skates, Mr. and Mrs. Nitzke both "like to dance but we haven't tried the twist yet."

She likes to read—fiction—and writes and consistently favors the poetry. Her "first love" Mrs. Nitzke said was journalism. She took a few courses in this field at the State University before her marriage but enjoyed working "as a switchboard operator too much to try for a college degree."

SHE LIVES ON a friendly street where people help each other. Thus, little Lori stays with one or the other of two neighborhood women who watch her while her mother, in the winter, waters the youngsters at the school crossing.

Here she listens to age-old riddles and contentedly favors the answers she learned as a child. She smoothes the ruffled feathers of little girls when they throw the balls and admires the school work which they devote to showing to her.

One little boy checks her work when he arrives at her corner and takes pride in making it home on time—something he couldn't seem to manage before the arrival of Mrs. Nitzke last fall, according to his mother.

SHE IS QUITE used to the friendly waves of drivers who travel the route every day and knows how to handle the youngsters who sometimes can't wait to get to the nearby candy store.

And, though her work at the crossing frees a local policeman for other duties, it has resulted in a potential liability to the force—little Lori, whose favorite game is "pretending I'm a school guard."

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