



# Home, Health & Garden Line®

## Greetings!

The sun is starting to heat things up and we're ready to celebrate summer! That means it's time to tell the hungry mosquitoes to hit the road so you can enjoy the great outdoors without the buzzin' bad guys driving you crazy. And don't let irritating earaches detract from your fun either. Read on for simple solutions to whatever's buggin' you right now.

*Jerry Baker*

## In the News...

### Icy Vault Holds Seeds for the Future

The Doomsday Vault in Norway literally holds the seeds to the world's future in the event of natural disaster, water shortages, global warming, or war. Dug into the side of a mountain and mostly buried by snow and ice, the vault is home to more than 740,000 different varieties of seeds from around the world that will still be viable 20,000 years from now.

*“A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken.” – James Dent, humorist*

*This Season's Hot Topic:*

### Be a Buzz Buster

Pesky mosquitoes couldn't care less about your lawn—they're just hanging around waiting to sink their chops into you and your four-legged pals! Unfortunately, mosquitoes have been so bombarded with chemical pesticides that they've grown immune to nearly all of them. But that doesn't mean you have to let the vile villains spoil your fun. It just means ya gotta outwit them!

To really control backyard mosquito problems, you need to eliminate their breeding grounds. Here's a short to-do list:

- Fill in potholes and any low-lying areas where rainwater collects.
- Get rid of any debris that could hold water.
- Change your pets' water at least once a day, and refill birdbaths every couple of days.
- Empty portable wading pools as soon as the kids are through using them. Then, turn them upside down or take them indoors.

There are also a whole lot of plants out there that repel mosquitoes. But you can't just plant them and expect the skeeters to flee in horror. You need to crush the leaves to release their volatile oils, then rub them on your skin. When you do that, you can expect to stay bite-free for a couple of hours. Some of my favorite anti-mosquito plants are lemon balm, lemon basil, scented geraniums, and lemon thyme.

### Buzz Buster Lemonade

When hungry mosquitoes start chasing you indoors, fight back with some serious buzz bustin'.

Put 1 cup each of lemon-scented ammonia and lemon-scented dishwashing liquid into a 20 Gallon Hose-End Sprayer, and hose down everything in your yard three times a week, preferably in the morning.

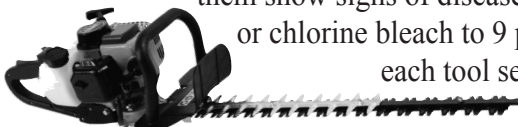


## To Prune or Not To Prune: That Is the Question

And here's the answer! If you have huge, old shrubs that are blocking your windows, interrupting your view, and keeping the sun from brightening your rooms, grab a pruning saw and pruning loppers, and cut those bushes back by about one-third.

But instead of carving them up into nice, neat cubes, leave them with a looser, more natural shape. They won't need pruning nearly as often, and that means a lot less work for you!

When pruning, sterilize your tools before moving from one shrub to another, especially if any of them show signs of disease. Use my Tool Sterilizing Tonic made of 1 part rubbing alcohol or chlorine bleach to 9 parts water. Put the mix in a handheld sprayer bottle, and give each tool several spritzes before wiping them dry and moving on.





Check out our gallery of DIY videos at [www.jerrybaker.com/how-to-videos](http://www.jerrybaker.com/how-to-videos) to get the most out of your hose-end sprayers, aerating lawn sandals, and more!

## Steer Clear of Swimmer's Ear

Maybe you've spent the afternoon in the pool, or merely relaxed in an extra-long shower. You don't have to be a swimmer to suffer the discomfort of swimmer's ear. Your doctor can recommend medicated eardrops to knock out the infection, but here's how to keep it from coming back:

- Don't reach for the towel to dry your ears—it's better to let the water evaporate on its own. Rubbing inside the ear will strip away some of the wax, the sticky stuff that helps prevent infections from taking hold.
- Use eardrops that help water evaporate more quickly. You can buy them in drugstores, but it's easy to make your own by mixing equal amounts of rubbing alcohol and white vinegar.
- Wear a bathing cap or earplugs the next time you take the plunge to prevent water from getting inside your ear.



## ANOTHER GREAT IDEA!

**The large, sturdy, waterproof plastic bottles that hold laundry detergent sure do come in handy in the garden. For example, you can turn a thoroughly washed and dried giant-size bottle into a garden-tool caddy. Here's how: Cut a big hole on the side of the bottle opposite the handle. Then insert your trowel, pruning shears, dibble, and other small hand tools into the bottle through the hole, and use the handle to tote it around. That's all there is to it!**

## 7 Super Baking Soda Solutions

Don't spend a fortune on fancy formulas; DIY with baking soda instead! Here are a few of my favorite uses to help you start sprinklin', scrubbin', and shinin' things up:

1. Clean a sink or bathtub with a sprinkle of baking soda and a bit of salt. Scrub with a sponge; rinse well.
2. Wipe down appliances with a baking soda and water paste. Buff dry.
3. Use a baking soda paste to clean your countertops, too.
4. To freshen up the toilet, sprinkle a little baking soda into the bowl, then dowse it with vinegar, and use a toilet brush to scrub it clean.
5. For the best grout cleaner around, mix 3 tablespoons of baking soda with 1 cup of warm water. Scrub the paste into the grout with an old toothbrush, and then rinse thoroughly.
6. Dissolve 2 tablespoons of baking soda in 1 quart of water, rub the solution on all your bathroom fixtures, and dry to a gleaming clean!
7. Clean a clogged drain by pouring 1 cup each of baking soda and salt into the drain. Follow it up with 2 quarts of boiling water, and then run very hot tap water at full blast to flush away the scum.



*That's not all, folks!*

**Check out [www.jerrybaker.com](http://www.jerrybaker.com) for fantastic features like:**

- ▶ Jerry's Blog with what's new in gardening, health care, and household hints.
- ▶ Critter Control solutions for battling bugs and thugs in your home and garden.
- ▶ How-to videos to guide you through the growing season.
- ▶ Jerry's favorite tips and tonics—you're just a click away from a super solution.