

Home & Garden

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Smoke alarms save lives

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Few of us realize how easily—and how quickly—fire can destroy our homes and take the lives of those we love. Fortunately, a product is available that can help protect us against fire...the smoke alarm.

By providing an early warning in the event of fire, smoke alarms may allow you and your family sufficient time to reach safety. Many people have neglected to install smoke alarms despite their life-saving potential and low cost. Even those who do have smoke alarms often take them for granted—forgetting that they need some attention to continue working properly. Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) offers the following tips for purchasing and maintaining smoke alarms.

Cut your family's risk in half—buy smoke alarms today

Experts report that consumers may cut their risk of dying in a home fire in half simply by having a smoke alarm in their homes. Smoke alarms are available at nearly all hardware, department and discount stores, often for under \$20.

Look for the UL Mark

When you purchase a smoke alarm, look for the UL Mark on the product as well as on the packaging. The UL Mark tells you that a representative sample of the smoke alarm has been evaluated by Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) to nation-

ally recognized safety requirements. It also means that UL conducts follow-up evaluations to countercheck that samples of the smoke alarm continue to meet these safety requirements.

Photoelectric and Ionization type alarms

There are two types of smoke alarms available today: photoelectric and ionization. When smoke enters photoelectric alarm, light from a pulsating light source is reflected off the smoke particles onto a light sensor, triggering the alarm. When smoke enters an ionization alarm, ionized air molecules attach to the smoke particles and reduce the ionizing current, triggering the alarm. While photoelectric smoke alarms generally respond fast to smoldering smoke conditions and ionization smoke alarms generally respond fast to flaming fire conditions, both types provide adequate protection against fire. Combination smoke alarms featuring both photoelectric and ionization technology are also available at hardware, department and home improvement stores.

There's safety in numbers

Install at least one smoke alarm on each floor of the house or residence and outside all sleeping areas. Some fire safety advocates recommend installing smoke alarms inside each sleeping area if sleeping with the door closed.

Test, clean and maintain your smoke alarms

Working smoke alarms are needed in every home and residence. Test and maintain your smoke alarms at least once a month, or follow the manufacturer's instructions. Smoke alarms most often fail because of missing, dead or disconnected batteries. Replace batteries at least once a year.

Practice a fire escape plan

In addition to installing smoke alarms in your home, the safety experts at UL also recommend that you develop a fire escape plan and practice it at least

twice a year with all members of your household. In the event of a fire, every family member should know at least two ways out of

each room. Stay as close to the floor as possible during your escape. Hot air and smoke rise, so the air nearest the floor may be safer to breathe. If you encounter a closed door during your escape, feel the

door before opening it. If it's hot to the touch, use another exit. The heat could indicate fire on the other side of the door. Teach your children how to escape in case of a fire -- not to hide under the bed

or in a closet.

Some individuals, particularly children, older people and those with special needs, may not wake up to the sound of a smoke alarm. You should be aware of this when developing your home fire escape plan.

Designate a well-lit place, a safe distance away from your home, where everyone will meet in the event of a fire. This will help firefighters determine if anyone else is still inside the home. And remember, never return to a burning building for any reason.

Review of smoke alarm installation, safety and maintenance

•Read and follow the manu-

facturer's installation and maintenance instructions exactly.

•Install fresh batteries in your smoke alarms at least once a year.

•Don't allow anyone to disconnect or "borrow" the batteries from your smoke alarms. A smoke alarm can't work unless it's connected to a power source.

•If a smoke alarm's warning alarm sounds, don't panic. Stay close to the floor and get out of the building. Before opening any doors, check the temperature. If the door feels hot to the touch, don't open it. Use and alternate exit.

*It has been suggested that batteries be changed when the time changes in October and in April.



'Angel Trumpets' signaling soaring popularity



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Not a lot is written about these gorgeous newcomers. When angel trumpets (*Brugmansia sanguinea*) first hit the market, folks were awed by the huge, white flowers. Soon yellows, pinks and by-colors appeared, and sales soared.

Despite the volume being sold, though, very little has been published about how to grow them. A good amount of misinformation is floating about.

To avoid confusion, it's best to use the scientific and standard cultivar names. What many folks call angel trumpet is a *brugmansia* or a *datura*.

Brugmansias are native to Ecuador, Peru and Columbia and grow mainly on the slopes of the Andes Mountains. *Daturas* grow in India, Mexico and from Texas to California.

There two very closely related species are members of the *Solanaceae* family and cousins of the petunia, common tobacco and the deadly nightshade.

Caution

However beautiful they are, both are poisonous if eaten, especially the seeds and leaves. So it's not a great gift idea for someone with young children. However, having grown them indoors and out, with lots of pets and kids, and no one has gotten ill. Handling the plant isn't dangerous.

I recommend trying *Brugmansia arborea* or *Brugmansia versicolor* hybrids first. Others can be more challenging.

B. Arborea hybrids are commonly white with flowers that point outward like an Easter lily. The plant grows upright and can form small, tree-like branch patterns.

The popular long, dangling flowers that look like bells belong to the *B. versicolor* hybrids. These can be yellow, golden, peach, pink and orange. They grow upright, too, but with a spreading pattern. Both types can get quite large.

Easy

Brugmansias and *daturas*

See ANGEL TRUMPETS, page 4D

beauty... is it only skin deep ?

Sure, there are places where you can buy a nice looking sofa for \$499 or an attractive bedroom group for \$999. You can even finance it so you won't have to make any payments for 2 or 3 years.

There is a problem with that!

Just when it's time to start making those payments, it's time to replace the furniture.

Sometimes beauty is only skin deep.

Is that worth it? Not when you can buy a quality sofa for \$699 or a well built bedroom group for \$1399 - make no payment for a year* - and have furniture that will last long after all the payments are made.

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