

# VOLCANIC ASH INFORMATION 6

Prepared by Oregon State University's Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension Service. For more information, consult the OSU Extension Service in your county or the nearest branch Agricultural Experiment Station.

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## CABIN FEVER? TIPS ON RAISING MORALE FOR THE HOUSEBOUND

"It isn't going to melt! It doesn't go away!" These may be your thoughts as you wake up to another gray, ashy morning. The house looks a little dusty. Cleaning seems futile. Outside the gray sunshine suggests the kids will probably have another "inside" day. Travel outside is restricted to 20 mph.

Some suggestions when you begin to have cabin fever might help lift the blahs or depression and raise individual or family morale.

If you're feeling dusty and depressed, think how your pets feel. Your pet may enjoy a good bath, using a capful of fabric softener or cream rinse to decrease static electricity. This will help release the ash and static in your pet's coat. Be sure you rinse your pet with lots of clear water to avoid skin irritation. Knowing you've helped improve your pet's situation will help you feel better.

Often when you're feeling down, the desire to prepare special meals or surprises is decreased. Raising morale of family members requires involvement of everyone. Is it too ashy to picnic outside? Plan an indoor picnic--complete with picnic basket, potato salad and hot dogs. Spread a blanket on the carpet and enjoy a family picnic "St. Helens Style"--indoors. Small family members might enjoy the "pretending," necessity of picking up the litter and remembering scenes of previous picnics the family has enjoyed. You might plan a family drawing with the winning prize being a trip to the favorite local picnic area when outside conditions improve.

Plan someplace in your home as a bright spot. Perhaps those pansies or roses blooming through the ash could be picked to brighten indoors.

Treat yourself after an afternoon of indoor or yard clean-up with a bubble bath; then dress for dinner enhanced by candlelight. Other family members who have had to be out in the dusty ash will enjoy the change. Perhaps today is the day to get your hair done or give yourself a manicure.

If you're a shut-in, invite some driving friends over for bridge or visiting and coffee. It will encourage you to straighten up a bit and give them an excuse to get out for fun!

Frustration needs an out! What kinds of things release your frustration? Do you need to express your feelings to someone? Why not take this opportunity to write to a friend out of the volcanic area. Or, you might want to keep a diary. Your thoughts, feelings and situation are unique to you. Expressing these now is a real talent and will become a treasured keepsake for your friends or future generations. Writing your concerns will be good therapy for frustration or depression, even if you don't mail it away.

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