



The headache that the average outdoor person experiences is usually minor and short of duration, and can be treated with over-the-counter medicines like these shown here. (Submitted/ Mark Rackay)

Fighting headaches in the outdoors

Reading catalogues from the big outdoor stores, like Cabela’s and Bass Pro Shops, is what I consider “light reading.” It’s amazing to me how I can spot a new piece of hunting equipment, that up until a moment ago I never knew existed, yet somehow, I can no longer exist until I have it, regardless of cost. Such is the plight of the dedicated outdoor person. Alas, I must learn to live within my means.

I was perusing a hunting catalog the other day when I came across an article about headaches. The article explained that there are 17 different types of headaches a person may experience.

I rushed into the living room, where my wife was sprawled out on the couch with an ice pack on her head. She was suffering from one of her “sick headaches” that assailed her immediately after receiving the credit card bill. I told her about the article I read, all in an effort to cheer her up.

“There are 18 types of headaches, and you are the 18th one,” she sarcastically snapped at me.

Seeing there was no cheering her up when she is in one of her moods, I retreated to my den, also known as the workbench in the garage. After all these years, I understand the importance of marital bliss and harmony, especially when battling moods.

There are many head problems that can plague an outdoor person when in the great outdoors. You don’t have the comforts of home, like a well-stocked medicine cabinet, a freezer full of ice, a dark room with a comfortable bed; all good remedies for a headache.

A headache is a symptom and not an illness. It can occur with infections, injuries, indigestion, nervous tension, tumor, allergies, a husband run amok with the credit card, and



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

scores of other reasons. The average headache is not serious and is usually short of duration. This is the headache the outdoor person usually has to deal with. There are four basic categories of headaches for those of you who want to classify the pounding in your head. They include migraines, cluster headaches, tension headaches, and sinus headaches. Each has its own different distribution of pain and they can overlap.

Headaches are common for some people when they are at higher altitudes. If this is the only symptom, some over-the-counter meds will usually knock it out. Once the person gets acclimated to the altitude, the headache usually disappears. When the person begins to develop symptoms that can include nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, weakness, mental confusion, coughing, or a rapid pulse, you better consider altitude sickness.

If not acted upon quickly the person can develop one of two forms of a much more serious altitude sickness. The first being high altitude pulmonary edema which is can cause breathlessness, fatigue, dry cough and blue lips and nails. The second form is called high altitude cerebral edema, which usually comes with a severe headache, loss of coordination, and confusion. Both of these will onset very quickly and are potentially deadly.

Altitude sickness is not usually a problem for those of us that live at a higher

altitude. If you lived in the flat lands, near sea level, and came to the mountains for a vacation, it could be a problem.

Anyone who has ever had a severe headache or migraine knows just how debilitating it can be. Not knowing when the next headache is going to ring your bell can make it hard to plan an outdoor adventure.

If it seems like you suffer headaches during or after changes in the weather, start paying closer attention. Changes in barometric pressure, no matter how slight, can induce a headache. You may have barometric headaches if you experience headaches when it is rainy, snowy, or humid. Being aware of upcoming weather changes can help you head these types of headaches and not spoiling your adventure.

When the outside barometric pressure lowers, it creates a difference between the pressure in the outside air and the air in your sinuses, with the end result being pain. The same thing happens when you are on an airplane and you feel that ear popping or pain.

If you are a migraine sufferer, you should discuss with your doctor, as there are many prescription medications that can help. In a recent study, more than 50% of migraine headaches were induced by subtle changes in barometric pressure.

Treatment for the generic outdoor headache differs from person to person, and just how bad the pain is. Usually over-the-counter drugs like acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or Excedrin will do the trick. Excedrin is a combination of the other two drugs, with a dose of caffeine to combat any sleepiness side effects. For me, sometimes an ice pack for 30 minutes does the trick.

We usually can’t prevent barometric pressure headaches completely, but if

you are aware that you are a sufferer, there are some things you can do, starting with always getting plenty of sleep. Most people need seven to nine hours of sleep a night.

A regular exercise routine helps keep your blood flow and breathing patterns working well. Same thing about your diet; eat healthy and never skip a meal, especially when on your trip.

Alcohol consumption can trigger a headache, especially at altitudes, so it is best to leave the booze at home. Dehydration can trigger a headache so when outdoors, be certain to drink plenty of water.

I have found that I get a serious headache every time I fly. The headache usually starts about four to five hours into the trip and can last for several hours after my arrival at the destination.

Knowing this, I drink extra water, avoid alcohol and caffeine, and take a couple ibuprofen before I feel the headache. I stay on the dosage of them until after I have arrived. It has seemed to help.

I guess my name will live forever, having the 18th type of headache named after me. If I stop ordering so much gear on the credit card, my wife claims her sick headaches would go away forever. All of that being said, I still do my best to live within my means, even if I have to borrow money to do so.

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Spring gardening tips

Don’t you just love springtime in Colorado? One day it can be about 70 degrees and a few days later it’s freezing. It keeps thing interesting, and a bit challenging for gardeners.

I was just talking to someone the other day about the hard freeze that we had on June 22, 2019. I’ve lived in Montrose quite a while and I can tell you that wasn’t the first time that it froze in June. So my best advice is, be ready for anything. You never know what to expect.

A fungal disease called Cytospora canker, which can cause an amber-colored gummy ooze called gummosis in the tree, seems to be affecting several local peach and cherry trees.

This got me thinking. Remember that early fall freeze that we had in 2020? It froze green leaves right on the tree where they remained until spring. We had a couple of other late spring freezes and early fall freezes in 2019.

This was hard on all of the trees, but especially peach and cherry trees. The hot, dry summers haven’t helped either.

Because the disease can be brought on by stress or a wound in the tree, keeping the tree as healthy as possible is the goal. Fungicides sprayed on the tree aren’t going to give you great results. Deep infrequent watering is recommended. Be sure to water out to the dripline of the tree. The frequency of watering will vary depending on the age of your tree and your soil.

Sterilizing your pruning equipment with a disinfectant such as Lysol, before pruning will also help prevent the spread of the disease.

I’m one of those people that hornets, wasps, and mosquitoes find irresistible. Can you believe that I’ve already been bothered by hornets and paper wasps? This leads me to say it’s time to get your hornet traps out to capture the queens before they begin building nests and producing a colony.

The Western yellow



Gardening A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

jacket hornet will make a nest in dark secluded places, including an old mouse hole in the ground so the nest will often go undetected. I know you’re probably thinking many species of wasps are beneficial because they eat harmful bugs, but the European paper wasps are not native and are notorious for eating caterpillars, including butterfly larva.

European paper wasps are the wasps that fly with their legs hanging down and always seem to build a nest under the eaves of your house near the front door or in a shrub where you’ll discover them when you prune. I haven’t found traps very effective in controlling them. It’s best to spray the nest with a wasp spray in the evening and destroy the nest after they’ve been killed.

If you’re pruning your shrubs this spring, keep in mind not all shrubs require the same method of pruning, knowing what a particular shrub requires is important. Multi-stem shrubs, such as dogwood, benefit from what is known as renewal thinning. Pruning out the darker, older canes to ground will renew them and help them retain the gorgeous red or yellow branches that make this plant so interesting during the winter months. When possible, remove the canes that are older than about five years.

Lilacs and snowball bushes should also have some of the older, thicker canes removed at ground level to promote new, vigorous sprouts. Otherwise, you will eventually end up with a clump of bare stems, topped with a fringe of green foliage at the top that produces few flowers.

See TIPS page A12



Honey bees and wasps are just a few of the insects that are out and about visiting local gardens. (Submitted/Linda Corwine McIntosh)