Have you Heard of the Net Generation?

Mary Gosche, Human Development Specialist

Young people between the ages of 11 and 31 who were born between 1977-97 are called Net Generation according to Don Tapscott author of the book Grown Up Digital. Both of my children would be considered in this category and they are children of two baby boomers. Other names for this generation include Gen Y or Millennials. Why all the fuss or hype? This Net generation is now the largest segment of the U.S. population. Sorry baby boomers!

This net generation has grown up surrounded by digital media, the microwave oven, and technology. They have been the most privileged and child-centered generation. I have noticed how my grown children can juggle so many tasks at once like using their mobile phone, surfing the Web, taking pictures or making a video.

Between 2006 and 2008, Professor Tapscott and his colleagues interviewed nearly 8,000 Net Genes from around the world. They found the Net Genes are smarter, quicker and more tolerant of diversity than other generations. They care strongly about justice and problems faced by their society, and are involved in some kind of civic activity at school, at work or in their communities. This generation is engaging more politically and sees government as tools for improving the world.

What makes the Net Generation different?

Net Geners have behavioral characteristics that are different from other generations. They prize freedom and freedom of choice. They want to customize things and make them their own. They like collaboration not a lecture. They want to have fun, even at work and at school. Speed is the norm, and innovation is part of their life.

The author’s major concern is that this generation is reckless in retaining their privacy. Many young people share very personal information and pictures on the Internet and social networks. According to antidotal evidence, they are foolishly influencing future employment opportunities. Some of those partying pictures may come back and haunt them later.

How can we learn from this generation in order to change our institutions and society for the better?
Something for the Gardener on your Christmas List
By Donna Aufdenberg, Horticulture Specialist

Christmas is a great time to give the gift of gardening to your favorite gardener and is always a bit sweeter if you put some thought and personalization into it.

Traditional Christmas plants are nice and can be very festive. Most gardeners like the bright colors of poinsettias or the unique bloom of the Christmas Cactus. A Norfolk pine is nice because a gardener can decorate it as a Christmas tree with mini-ornaments every year as it grows.

So what other things does the avid gardener want? If you are a gardener yourself, think about the things that you love or want. If you are just an observer, find a garden catalog to get ideas or ask someone who gardens about what gifts would be good. Here are some ideas:

A subscription to a garden magazine is a gift that lasts all year long. Magazines like the Garden Gate, Horticulture Magazine, or Organic Gardening are just a few that are really popular for gardeners.

A good gardening book on a specific topic makes a great gift. My favorite books right now are Garden Insects of North America by Whitney Cranshaw and Dirr’s Hardy Trees and Shrubs: An Illustrated Encyclopedia by Michael Dirr. There are many other books to choose from! A gift card to a book store might free you from having to make a choice.

Good quality garden gloves are wonderful. Garden gloves come in all styles and fashions so try to find out what your gardener likes: soft jerseys, waterproof rubber, breathable mesh, gripped type, stylish or made with a special clips for hanging on your belt.

Garden footwear is a plus! Regardless of the price I paid, I absolutely love mine. Most brands are made of a durable rubber that are very easily hosed off and cleaned up. I have tried several different brands and I have found out “You get what you pay for”.

Garden clippers and pruners are easily lost, broken, or fast become rusty if gardeners aren’t very prudent in maintaining them. Try to sneak a peak at your gardener’s pair. Do they need a new tool? There are some pretty nifty kits available that combine pruners with clippers, trowels and other tools in a caddy or carrying bag. They make nice gifts! Other tools on the wish list might include a new hoe, rake, spade or some new gadget on the market that promises to make gardening easier.

Garden kneelers or stools are great for those hours spent in the garden planting, weeding or harvesting. They save the back and the knees, not to mention it is a great gift for those who have a few disabilities due to arthritis or other health issues.

My favorite gift has been a hose reel on wheels. A portable hose is great when you have multiple garden beds scattered through the yard, or a greenhouse that doesn’t have running water yet! Those wheels make lugging a hose to and fro a simpler task.

A tree or shrub that your favorite gardener has been eyeing or considering makes a great gift. Even choosing an odd or new species that has unique traits will usually thrill any garden enthusiast. Consider even planting it, if you know where he or she would want it planted!

A nice garden decoration or ornament can be a unique gift. One of my favorites has been a concrete casting of a giant leaf which I use as a bird bath. Of course, you can’t go wrong with a gazing globe, windmill or some ironwork. Many enjoy the antique wagon wheels and plows.

When all else fails with gift ideas or finding a particular item, resorting to giving a gift certificate is not a bad choice. It frees you from making a decision and frees the gardener to choose his or her desires. The decision now is where to get the gift certificate or card from.

For those that are reading this and you ARE the gardener, be sure to leave this article out for your family or friends to see. I’m sure you would enjoy most of what is listed, as most gardeners would.
Are you tired of hearing about the flu? There is hardly a news cast that doesn’t do a report on the status of the flu epidemic these days. Every year there are colds and flu during the winter months, but this year there are two types of flu in our environment. Obviously avoiding contact with the flu virus is the best defense, but when we have to function in society that is difficult. We have heard a lot about prevention, but there are still a lot of misconceptions about what measures are helpful.

As with any time of the year, food safety is important during flu season. Keeping your hands and work surfaces clean during food preparation becomes even more important to eliminate cold and flu germs along with the usual bacteria and food borne illness threats. Washing fruits and vegetables thoroughly is also important to remove germs, especially when they are consumed without cooking. Thoroughly heating foods is another way to destroy germs that may be on the foods.

The American Dietetic Association reports that there are no specific foods that will keep you from catching the flu, however, eating a good diet will help to boost your immune system. This does not mean you have to buy specialty foods claiming to have immune boosting properties. One of your best aids in getting important vitamins and minerals to assist your body in fighting colds and flu is eating plenty of fruits and vegetables. The fruits or vegetables may be canned, frozen or fresh. This does not mean that getting enough protein, calcium, and fiber is not important. The body needs all types of foods to function well, and fight diseases.

If a person eats a well balanced diet according to the Mypyramid 2005, adding supplements is most likely wasting money. Some people believe large doses of vitamin C help to prevent illness, but a person that eats plenty of fruits and vegetables will get enough vitamin C.

Keeping your body functioning at its best also includes getting plenty of rest and exercise. Medline plus reports, “At least one study suggests that regular exercise can cut in half the number of days a person suffers from colds and the flu. Exercise helps the disease-fighting white blood cells in the body to move from the organs into the bloodstream.” Exercise also improves the quality of sleep for most people. Lack of sleep or poor quality of sleep has a negative effect on the immune system also.

It is best to avoid the flu by getting vaccinated. If that is not possible avoid contact with sick people that might have the flu. If you still get sick, check with you doctor to see if you need antiviral drugs.

Have a safe and healthy holiday season!

http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/media_23071-ENU-HTML.htm

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### What to Eat When the Flu Bug Bites

- **Popsicles or juice bars** to soothe the throat, help with hydration, and thin mucus to lessen congestion.
- **Turkey** for lean protein.
- **Juice** for hydration and antioxidants. Low sodium vegetable or 100% fruit juice are best.
- **Chicken soup** for possible anti-inflammatory properties, for hydration, and steam to ease congestion.
- **Garlic** may have antimicrobial and immune-stimulating properties, and possibly provides slight relief from congestion.
- **Ginger** added to foods or in flat ginger ale helps with nausea and possibly helps fight inflammation.
- **Hot tea** provides steam to loosen congestion, and antioxidants to fight disease.
- **Bananas** are easy on the stomach when nausea, or diarrhea are a problem.
- **Toast or crackers** are easy on the stomach and can help with hunger.
- **Meal replacement drinks** with at least 6 grams of protein and that are low in sugar provide essential vitamins, nutrients, and calories.

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In the workplace, companies need to capitalize on the Net Geners ability to collaborate with others in their company and with the global community. This will be very important in the 21st century. Netters establish close friendships through social networking. They have grown up with this type of technology, and they will expect the same type of communication with their supervisors.

Teachers need to adjust teaching styles. The lecture mode is definitely not going to reach this generation. Individualized instruction and the use of the media will be essential for creating and structuring the learning experience.

Many baby boomer parents don’t know what’s going on online with their children. In Grown Up Digital, “A 2002 survey found that 41 percent of U.S. teens under the age 18 said their parents don’t know what they’re doing online. In a 2006 report, 38 percent of high school students said they sometimes hide online activities from their parents.” Online predators are also a concern that parents need to discuss with their children and teens. Many young teens spend lots of time alone in front of the computer. Parents need to caution children and teenagers of inviting strangers into their networks.

Use technology to communicate
Communication with the Net Geners may need to be adjusted. If grandmothers can thread a sewing machine or read a crochet pattern, older adults can learn to email and to text on their cell phone. Let the child be the teacher and show you how to text and use social networks like Facebook. I like getting pictures of my granddaughter over the Internet. It took awhile to learn how to open those albums and send them to the local store to be printed.

One exploratory study revealed that communication was carried out mainly by face-to-face contact but followed by text messaging, mobile phone, and lastly by land phones. Source: Tapscott, Don. What’s up with the Net Generation?, Work & Family Life newsletter, Vol. 23, no. 6, June 2009.