Week of January 14, 2001

 **Daddy’s Girls and Their Pansies**

 Willie Chance

 Ha Ha! Daddy left his note pad out again and we found it and our crayons. We girls are going to write you another article! He is looking for his pad (and us) now. Don’t tell him that we are under the table.

 The last article we wrote was fun! Most people like ours better. Mr. Jake even told him that we should write them all. We would, but he would not agree to give us part of his pay. He says we already get it all!

 Our pansies look sad now. What about yours? Their little leaves droop and their smiling flowers are gone. They did this last year though. Just wait - they should smile again.

 It is fun to pour liquid fertilizer on them. We are going to wait until it gets warmer though. The plants like it better then. Also the water is frozen now in our bucket. You can fertilize them every two weeks or so. Put out a regular fertilizer every month if you don’t do this.

 Daddy says the pansies are sleeping now. They seem awful lonesome sleeping alone out there. We have lots of bed buddies that we sleep with! Our fish and hamster sleep in our rooms and the beanie babies go in the bed. They help keep us warm and safe feeling. Rebecca even has a guard bunny in her bed.

 Pansies need to be safe and warm, too! Daddy and Mommy often come in at night and pull the covers up on us. Pull the cover up on your pansies, too! Put a two to three inch mulch around the plants. This prevents weeds and helps them stay moist and warm. Water it down after you put it out.

 We’ve learned lots about staying warm with jackets, too! Did you know it is hard to take off your coat with your hands in your pockets? A stuffed hamster in your sleeve will also make it difficult to get your coat on quickly. Finally, take your sticker and candy collection out of your pocket before your Mommy washes.

 When covering up pansies, we do not need to take off the old jacket. Leave the mulch there and add to it. If the mulch is still good in spring, reuse it! If it is rotting, bury it in the garden to feed the wormies and to make plant roots grow.

 Did you ever see the cute prickly caterpillars that eat pansy leaves? They look like a

Dr. Seuss bug. They don’t eat much and make pretty butterflies, so we leave them. If they eat too much of your pansies then you can pick them off.

 If Daddy gets a bug he cannot control, he uses an insecticide. We cannot get near it when he sprays. He says that Sevin will kill caterpillars, but may also reduce the number of butterflies we see. No fun!

 Sometimes our pansies get purple spots all over them. This is kind of like the speckles we get on our clothes when we eat spaghetti. Daddy says we don’t have to get our food on us, but we have to get the onions and peppers out before we eat it. We also have to collect our bread crust for the birds, separate the cherries out of our fruit cocktail and blow brown bubbles in our chocolate milk. It would be easier to eat if we did not have so much to do!

 Pansies don’t have to have their speckles either. A few are not a problem but if they get bad, keep this disease from spreading by spraying Fore, Dithane, Mancozeb or Daconil. Once again, let your Mommy or Daddy do this. Make them read the label and do what it says.

 I am sorry we cannot write Daddy’s articles every week. As you can see, we have too much to do! You can E-mail him at wchance@uga.edu or call the Houston County Extension Office at 542-2020. It won’t be as much fun as talking to us. He should be able to answer your question though since we have taught him all we know.