

Gardeners' Busiest Month Is July

By LEONARD A. YAGER

JULY IS THE month that many gardeners would rather rest the hoe and sit under the shade of the nearest tree and be content to let the garden grow. But it's actually the time of the year when plants need a lot of attention. Tomatoes will need pruning, plants will be thirsting for water, pesky weeds will insist on poking their ugly heads above ground, and the bugs and blights may be having a merry old time behind the gardener's back.

Fireblight is one of those exasperating diseases on apple and pear trees. If there's plenty of cool, wet weather during the time the fruit trees are displaying their beautiful array of blossoms, fireblight will be spreading like wildfire. You can readily tell what the disease looks like as infected twigs, leaves, blossoms, and partially formed fruits appear as if they had been singed with a blowtorch.

It's a perplexing situation when we realize that the bees unwittingly spread the disease in the act of cross pollinating flowers. No use eliminating the bees, because they are the only insect that will take pains to transfer pollen from one flower to the other. Of course, they get their reward in the nectar they gather from each flower and store up as honey. If there were no bees, there would be little or no fruit, and no honey.

Spray, Prune for Control

Spraying with a weak Bordeaux mixture, 1-3-50 once when the blossoms are $\frac{1}{4}$ open and once when they are $\frac{3}{4}$ opened is claimed to be effective in reducing disease infection. The spraying is not foolproof, as the disease shows up worst in cool wet year, and sprays lose their effectiveness quickly if there is very much rain.

Pruning infected limbs well below the point of infection is one method suggested to keep the disease from spreading in already infected trees. In making the pruning cuts, one should disinfect the pruning shears or saw in appropriate solutions after each cut.

Best method of control is to plant varieties that have a reasonable amount of resistance against the disease. Duchess, Gano, Ben Davis, Hibernial, Haralso and the crab apple Florence have considerable resistance. The varieties McIntosh, Jonathan, Wealthy have somewhat a lesser degree of resistance.

Rather susceptible varieties are Yellow Transparent, Fameuse, Delicious, Wealthy, and the crab apples Whitney, Martha and Hyslop. The Alexander apple and Transcendent crab apple are very susceptible to the disease. Unfortunately, no pear variety has high resistance to this disease, so they should not be planted in areas where fire blight is an annual problem.

Many kinds of fruits are self-unfruitful. Occasionally gardeners wonder why their lone apple tree does not bear fruit. If there is not another apple tree in the vicinity, it will not bear, as it needs a mate to effect cross pollination and the formation of fruit. Of course, there are numerous other reasons why



trees fail to bear. Blossoms that are caught in a late spring freeze are another common result of failure. Poor weather during blossoming that reduce bee activity may be responsible for a poor set of fruit.

Tomato Diseases

It may not be tomato season yet, but now is a good time to start thinking about tomato growing problems. No doubt you have experienced having tomatoes develop a blackish-brown leathery rot on the under side or blossom end, of the fruit. Many are the times a gardener has picked what was thought to be a beautiful, ripe tomato only to find that the bottom end was rotted. This condition is known as blossom end rot.

Blossom end rot is not caused by a disease organism. Tomato plants are heavy feeders of water. If the plants don't get enough water a breakdown occurs at the weakest point of the entire plant—and that is at the blossom end of the fruit. An abundant supply of water, especially while the tomato fruits are developing will reduce this condition.

Where irrigation water is scarce, mulching with grass clippings or straw will help to conserve moisture. Plants that are pruned will develop more blossom end rot fruits than unpruned plants under dryland conditions. For this reason, the self-pruning varieties of tomatoes suit the dryland gardener best. Another symptom of dry weather on tomato plants is the upward curling of the lower leaves of the plants. This condition is especially noticed on pruned, staked plants.

Insecticides

Do you have trouble raising worm-free cabbage heads? All the members of the cabbage family—cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts, radishes and turnips—are attacked by similar insect pests. Flea beetles and the cabbage butterfly are two important pests. They need not be serious if the plants are carefully dusted at weekly to 10-day intervals.

Use 3 or 5 percent DDT dust on the plants while they are small. But a month before the heads or plants are ready to harvest, change to pyrethrum or rotenone dusts as these do not leave poisonous residues like DDT. Keep on the watch for insect pests and apply control measures as soon as the first signs of insects occur. Know what you are trying to control before applying any pesticide.

Poultry Department

HOW TO USE ALFALFA IN LAYERS' DIET

By H. E. CUSHMAN

Q. I would like to reduce my feed bill by using a good alfalfa pasture. However, I have a very particular market and I am fearful that the yolks will get too dark. What would you suggest?—A. P. F., Cascade county.

A. There are two ways in which this can be accomplished. One is to house the birds until late in the afternoon and then let them run on the pasture for an hour or two. The disadvantage of doing this is that the birds may fuss around all day trying to get out. When they are housed at all times they don't know any better than to be satisfied with a life of incarceration. Further, with only a few hours a day, they may not make best use of the pasture. They may not stray far enough afield to keep the alfalfa well eaten down.

The other method of handling limited amounts of green feed is to cut so much daily and feed it to them in a self-feeder. The big disadvantage here would be the labor involved. You could not afford to skip a day once you begin the practice. You will have to watch your egg yolks to find out just how much green feed you can get into them without causing any perceptible darkening.

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