

# Time for harvest

Timings are for the south. Crops will be 2 to 3 weeks later in the north.

## VEGETABLES

### SOW OUTDOORS

There are still quite a few seeds which can be sown. Try

- \* lettuce (sow hardy variety e.g. winter density, for next spring)
- \* japanese onions (sow seed to harvest early next summer - sets are planted later)
- \* parsley (protect from carrot root fly)
- \* spring cabbage
- \* chinese cabbage
- \* endive
- \* kohlrabi
- \* winter radish
- \* spinach
- \* turnip

### PLANT OUT OUTDOORS

- \* savoy cabbage
- \* kale

## FRUIT TASKS

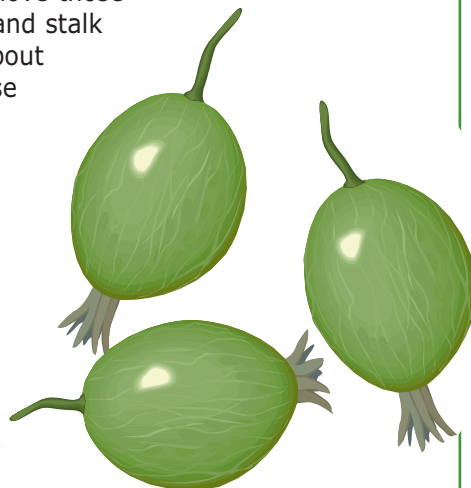
- \* Keep fruit trees and cane well watered while their fruit is swelling.
- \* Prune mature plum trees after fruiting. Remove any branches infected by silver leaf fungus (see August 2004 tips) cutting several inches past any brown-stained wood and burn prunings. Also prune any broken or overcrowded branches.
- \* Finish summer pruning apple trees.
- \* Cut out old canes from raspberry plants after fruiting.
- \* Summer prune gooseberries and redcurrants.
- \* Plant new strawberry plants and remove those more than 3 years old. Cut leaves, and stalk of remaining strawberry plants to about 1 inch from ground after fruiting. Use runners for propagation and cut off unwanted runners.
- \* Support the weight of ripening melons with nets or old tights.
- \* Support the branches of fruit trees heavily laden with fruit.

### FRUIT HARVEST

You could be picking apples, pears, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, gooseberries, peaches, apricots, cherries, melons, plums, redcurrants.

### VEGETABLE HARVEST

Your allotment should be at its peak with plenty of fresh produce to pick. This may include globe artichokes, aubergine, broad beans, french beans, runner beans, swiss chard, beetroot, calabrese broccoli, summer cabbage, peppers, cauliflower, cucumber, kohlrabi, lettuce, courgette, squash, onions, shallots, peas, potatoes (second earlies), radish, spinach, sweet corn, tomatoes, turnips.



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### Organic farming yields as good or better

A new study debunks the idea that organic farming cannot produce enough food to feed the world. US researchers compared yields of organic and conventional crops. They found that in the developing world yields from organic fields were actually higher; in the developed world they were only slightly lower. Their findings contradict arguments that organic farming is not as efficient as conventional techniques.

"My hope is that we can finally put a nail in the coffin of the idea that you can't produce enough food through organic agriculture," said Ivette Perfecto, a professor at the University of Michigan.

"Model estimates indicate that organic methods could produce enough food on a global per capita basis to sustain the current human population, and potentially an even larger population, without increasing the agricultural land base," they wrote in their report, published in the journal *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*.

"Corporate interest in agriculture ... with a lot of influence by the chemical companies and pesticide companies as well as fertilizer companies, all have been playing an important role in convincing the public that you need to have these inputs to produce food," she added.

1. Bagley et al, *Organic agriculture and the global food supply*, *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 2007, 22, 86-108.  
2. Reuters, 10 July 2007

## GENERAL TASKS

- \* Pinch out the growing tips of tomatoes after fourth truss has set. Pinch out sideshoots. Continue to train cordon varieties and fertilise weekly.
- \* Remember to thin seedlings sown earlier to the correct distance apart.
- \* Water during dry spells and remember to top up the frog pond.
- \* Keep on top of weeding and make sure no weeds go to seed.
- \* Check the undersides of brassica leaves for eggs and caterpillars of the cabbage white butterfly. Squash them before they eat your cabbages.
- \* Earth up potatoes to prevent any blight spores reaching the tubers.
- \* Cut and dry herbs by hanging them upside down in a dry room. This way you will have plenty through the winter months.
- \* Remove any carrots showing signs of carrot root fly attack.
- \* Harvested onions should be left out to dry during dry periods.
- \* Plant green manures on ground that becomes vacant. Rape and mustard sown in August can be dug into the soil in the autumn. Remember that these are brassica crops and may be susceptible to the same diseases as other brassicas.
- \* Pinch off the growing tips of runner beans once they have reached the tops of their supports.
- \* Broccoli require plenty of water when their heads are forming.
- \* Celery require lots of water.



eggs of large cabbage white



caterpillar of large cabbage white

### Cabbage white butterfly

The juvenile caterpillar stage of the cabbage white butterfly affects all varieties of brassicas, not just cabbages. They eat the leaves causing holes which increase in size as the leaves grow. The caterpillars are very common and are often found along with their excrement on home-grown or allotment-grown brassicas.

Two different species of cabbage white butterfly exist, the large cabbage white (*Pieris brassicae*) and the small cabbage white (*Pieris rapae*). They overwinter as pupae with adult butterflies emerging to mate in spring. Male butterflies have a single dark spot on their mid-wing while females have two spots.



large cabbage white butterfly

The females lay yellowish eggs on the undersides of plants of the crucifer (mustard) family, particularly favouring cabbage and broccoli. Some other plants such as nasturtiums are also affected. The eggs hatch to give caterpillars which tend to stay on the undersides of leaves. Caterpillars of the large cabbage white are yellow with black markings. Their bodies are hairy and grow up to 40mm long feeding mainly on the outer leaves of brassicas. Caterpillars of the small cabbage white are pale green and grow up to 25mm long preferring to eat the inner leaves.

Both species have two generations each year with caterpillars occurring from spring to early autumn. The caterpillars pupate on the host plant or on nearby fences, walls etc.

The most effective ways to reduce damage from cabbage whites is to

- \* Regularly monitor the undersides of the leaves of brassica plants picking off and crushing eggs and young caterpillars
- \* Cover brassica beds with horticultural fleece
- \* Sprays made from the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*. are effective but are not currently available to UK gardeners.

Other caterpillars can also damage brassica plants. In particular, damage from caterpillars of the cabbage moth (*Mamestra brassica*) is common.



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- ❖ Eliminate the hazards of pesticides
- ❖ Reduce dependence on pesticides
- ❖ Promote alternatives to pesticides

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