

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)
- * 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 canes well watered while their fruit is swelling.
- * Prune mature plum trees after fruiting. Remove and burn branches infected by silver leaf fungus (see over) cutting several inches past any stained wood. Prune 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 plants to 1 inch from ground after fruiting. Runners can be used for propagation or discarded.
- * Support the weight of ripening melons with nets or old tights.
- * Support the branches of fruit trees heavily laden with fruit.



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VEGETABLE HARVEST

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.

FRUIT HARVEST

Apples, pears, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, gooseberries, peaches, apricots, cherries, melons, plums, redcurrants.

Allotment manure still contaminated with weedkiller?

One of the advantages of growing your own vegetables is that you can be sure to avoid unwanted pesticides – or can you?

Last summer we reported on a weedkiller, aminopyralid, which farmers use on grassland to kill dock and other weeds. When cattle eat the grass the weedkiller passes through them into their manure. Growers using this manure as fertiliser had crops ruined. Around the country gardeners and allotment holders found their potato and tomato plants had curling, spoonlike leaves – classic signs of weedkiller damage. Many of their allotments were rendered unusable for at least a growing season.

In June 2008, the Pesticides Safety Directorate advised that aminopyralid breaks down quickly once in soil and that affected plots should be largely free of aminopyralid after six months. Upon request from the manufacturer (Dow) the UK government temporarily suspended aminopyralid's sale and use.

However, over a year later, many plots are still affected, and contaminated manure is still in circulation, to the frustration of people trying to 'grow their own' – and of manure suppliers who find it difficult to guarantee an uncontaminated product.

Dow is now applying for aminopyralid to be reinstated. But gardeners from Green Lane Allotments, badly hit by aminopyralid last year, are determined to stop this and are calling on the government to block its reinstatement. To support them sign the petition at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/aminopyralidban/>

Gardeners thinking of buying manure are advised to check its provenance thoroughly. Further information and advice is available from Green Lane Allotments at <http://www.gllotments.btik.com/home.ikml>

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.

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.

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.



large cabbage white butterfly



caterpillar of large cabbage white



eggs of large cabbage white



**PESTICIDE
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Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN UK) is an independent non-profit organisation working nationally and globally with individuals and organisations who share our concerns. PAN UK projects enable us to work effectively towards specific targets to enable us to:

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

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