

Time for harvest

VEGETABLES

SOW OUTDOORS

- * spring cabbage (to harvest next spring)
- * chicory (non-forcing varieties, e.g. sugar loaf)
- * chinese cabbage
- * endive
- * kohlrabi
- * lettuce
- * parsley
- * beetroot
- * turnip
- * french beans
- * peas
- * radish
- * carrot

PLANT OUT OUTDOORS

- * broccoli/calabrese
- * cauliflower
- * kale
- * leek
- * cabbage (winter and savoy)

FRUIT

- * A lot of cane fruit ripens. Water well while berries are swelling.
- * Apple trees can be summer pruned.
- * Summer prune red currants, white currants and gooseberries. Sideshoots from this year should be pruned to 3 or 4 buds. Remove shoots which are crossing or growing into the middle.
- * Summer-fruiting raspberries should be pruned after harvest. Old canes should be untied from supports and cut down to ground level. This years canes should be tied to supports.

HARVEST

VEGETABLES - globe artichokes, broad beans, french beans, early runner beans, swiss chard, perpetual spinach, beetroot, summer cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, greenhouse cucumber, kohlrabi, lettuce, courgette and other summer squash, onions, shallots, garlic, peas, potatoes (first earlies), radish, spinach, greenhouse tomatoes.

FRUIT - blackcurrants, gooseberries, rhubarb, some strawberry varieties, summer-fruiting raspberries, red currants, cherries, peaches.



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Irish farmers go organic

Ireland's Department of Agriculture reports a 79 percent increase in farmers' applications to convert farms to organic production, the Irish Independent reports. In 2008, 130 applications were received but this leapt to 230 applications in 2009. The jump follows a 67 percent increase (from 90 to 150) in farms that had their conversion plans approved by the Irish Organic Farmers' and Growers' Association (IOFGA) after the mandatory two-year transition period. The Ag Department, IOFGA and Organic Trust conduct annual "organic farm walks" to introduce farmers to successful production alternatives, and the walks have been well attended in the last two years. "Farmers can see that there is a market for organic produce and they can get a premium price for it," said Angela Clarke, certification manager with IOFGA. "Some farmers are already using very little fertilizer or pesticides, so it is not a big step to go organic for them," she explained.

Caitriona Murphy, Huge Rise in Farms Switching to Organic, 2 June 2009, Irish Independent

GENERAL TASKS

- * Mulch beds with organic matter to preserve moisture - particularly important for seedlings which don't have extensive root networks.
- * Pinch out sideshoots of tomatoes and growing tips after the fourth tress has set. This forces plants to focus on ripening tomatoes.
- * Fertilise tomato plants weekly and keep them well-watered. Dryness around the roots prevents tomato plants from taking up sufficient calcium and can cause blossom end rot.
- * Fertilise onions and keep them well weeded (plants in the onion family don't compete well with weeds).
- * Check the undersides of brassica leaves for the eggs or caterpillars of the cabbage white butterfly. Squash any you find.
- * Protect carrot sowings from carrot rootfly.
- * Protect potatoes from blight by covering soil with a thick mulch.
- * Prevent greenhouses from getting too hot by opening doors on hot sunny days and hanging shade cloth on the sunny side.
- * Keep weeding and make sure no weeds go to seed.
- * Protect summer cauliflowers by bending leaves over the flower heads to prevent them from opening up too early.
- * Pinch out tops of climbing beans once they reach the tops of their supports. They will develop more sideshoots and more beans.
- * Water runner beans well to encourage flower set.



Copper sulphate

Copper sulphate can be used to control bacterial and fungal diseases. Mixed with lime it is known as bordeaux mixture, a combination first used in the Bordeaux region of France where vineyard workers noticed downy mildew disappeared from sprayed grapes.

The toxic components are the copper ions. Copper ions can accumulate in organisms but are only taken up from solution. Copper sulphate forms a solution in neutral/acidic water but is relatively insoluble in alkaline conditions. As bordeaux mixture contains alkaline lime the copper sulphate does not dissolve readily. When it is sprayed on plants the copper sulphate stays on the leaf surface and is not washed off readily by rain.

Copper is a micronutrient essential in small quantities for plants and animals, but moderately toxic in large quantities. Care should be taken to ensure bordeaux mix is wiped off tomatoes before eating. Concern about the possibility of copper building up in the environment and about potential harm to farm workers has caused some organic certifiers to restrict the use of copper-based fungicides. Soil Association certified growers must apply each time they wish to use it and the Soil Association monitors its use.

Garden Organic does not recommend its use. It is only effective if applied to healthy leaves and so requires preventative spraying which is considered incompatible with organic growing.

Tomato and potato blight

Tomato and potato blight are both caused by the fungus *Phytophthora infestans*. Spores of the fungus survive over winter on infected potato or tomato plants from the previous season. They then spread with wind and rain and can germinate when humidity remains above 89% for 11 hours and temperatures above 10°C for 48 hours.

Symptoms may first appear in early summer as brown/black spots on leaves which spread to other parts of the plant. Spores falling on the soil from potato plants will infect tubers. The tubers then turn brown and often rot. Tomato plants have similar symptoms and tomato fruit will turn black.

The disease is very serious and can lead to total loss of both potatoes and tomatoes. To reduce the likelihood of infection.

- ◆ Plant resistant varieties
 - Potatoes - Many potato varieties show some blight resistance, e.g. Remarka, Verity, White Lady, Arran Victory, Spunta and Stirling
 - Tomatoes - Ferline and Legend shows moderate blight resistance although will succumb eventually during a heavy infestation
- ◆ Good hygiene. Don't leave tomato plants/potato tubers in ground from the previous year and remove infected plant material immediately (bag it or burn if off site, only compost if you're sure your compost heap gets very hot).
- ◆ Consider you planting times. The earlier you plant your early potato varieties the less likely they will be infected by blight from a neighbours crop.
- ◆ Grow tomatoes in a greenhouse (they will get blight much less frequently).
- ◆ Keep leaves dry by watering at the base of plants.
- ◆ Keep plants well spaced to increase airflow within a greenhouse. This reduces humidity levels (high humidity favours growth of the fungus).



PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK UK

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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