

June in the allotment

VEGETABLES

SOW OUTDOORS

- | | |
|---|---|
| * French beans | * Runner beans |
| * Beetroot | * Carrots |
| * Cauliflower | * Chicory |
| * Endive | * Kohlrabi |
| * Lettuce | * Peas |
| * Radish | * Swede |
| * Sweetcorn | * Turnip |
| * Squash
(courgettes,
marrows,
pumpkins) | * Cucumber
(outdoors
varieties
including gherkins) |



Beetroot, french beans, carrots, kohlrabi, peas, lettuce, endive, radish should be sown at intervals throughout the summer months to provide a constant supply.

PLANT OUT OUTDOORS

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| * Broccoli/calabrese | * Brussels Sprouts |
| * Runner beans | * Summer cabbage/red cabbage |
| * Celery/celeriac | * Leek |
| * Tomato | |

PLANT OUT IN GREENHOUSE

- * Peppers



FRUIT

- * Make sure fruit canes and trees are watered while fruit is swelling.
- * Most losses of soft fruit are due to birds. Canes/bushes can be covered with nets to prevent this.
- * Thin out plums and apples in June. This prevents weak branches from breaking. In addition, a heavy crop in one year can result in a very light or non-existent crop the following year. This pattern of biennial bearing can become established and difficult to break. Thinning out the growing fruit prevents this. Plums should be thinned to about 3-4 inches apart and apples to about 4-6 inches apart. Fruit trees naturally shed some fruit during the 'June drop' so wait until this has happened before thinning.
- * Put up pheromone traps for codling moth. These disrupt mating preventing moths from laying eggs in your apples.



To receive Gardening Tips send your email address to roslynmckendry@pan-uk.org

Government plans to reduce impacts of pesticides

One aspect of European Union (EU) environmental policy aims to 'reduce the impacts of pesticides on human health and the environment'. It requires individual countries within the EU to develop strategies to achieve this and the UK government finally published its pesticide strategy in March of this year. The strategy aims to reduce water pollution, restore biodiversity, and encourage alternatives to pesticides. One part of the strategy includes plans focussed on home and garden pesticide users. Although gardeners and householders use very few pesticides compared with farmers they have no training and so may be more likely to use or dispose of pesticides incorrectly. Indeed cases have been documented where home and garden pesticide use have led to water pollution and to human and animal poisonings.

However, the government's plans to help gardeners are focussed mainly on ensuring the public are aware of pesticide disposal facilities and that information on using pesticides correctly is widely available. While these are important, wouldn't the government be more likely to 'reduce the impacts of pesticides' if it put more effort into providing good advice on alternatives and encouraging people not to use pesticides at all?

The Pesticide Action Network is part of a group working with the government on these plans.

Aphids

Aphids are small (usually 2-5 mm long) pear-shaped, soft-bodied insects and are one of our most common garden pests. They are commonly known as greenfly or blackfly but there are actually many different species which come in many different colours, e.g. green, black, yellow, white. They are small and slow-moving with two specialised cornicles projecting from their rear. They come in both winged and wingless forms. The winged form can fly weakly but may travel long distances on wind currents.

Aphids have sharp mouthparts which pierce plant tissue allowing them to feed off plant sap. They subsequently secrete a sugary honeydew over leaves. Some aphids can feed off several different plant species while others are limited to only one. They may attack all parts of the plant but the tender new growth is much more vulnerable.

Aphids have many generations each year and life cycles are very complex. They generally overwinter as eggs but in mild winters adults may survive. When temperatures increase in the spring the adults give birth to live young which are all female allowing populations to multiply rapidly. When lots of aphids are present on a plant the winged form may be produced which can then fly to new plants. Aphids are often 'farmed' by ants for their honeydew and ants may move them to previously unaffected parts of the plant.

Although aphid infestations may not damage plants in some cases they cause serious problems. They may reduce the overall vigor of a plant. Sooty moulds can grow on the honeydew and, although these do not directly harm the plant, they block sunlight from reaching the leaves. Also, the saliva of some aphids may be toxic and can cause distortion or discoloration of leaves. Most significantly some aphids may transmit viruses to plants, such as cucumber mosaic virus.

Here are some ideas for ways to reduce aphid attack.

- ◆ Avoid synthetic fertilisers. These supply too much nitrogen to the plant allowing lush soft growth which is more susceptible to attack.
- ◆ Encourage insects, birds and bats which eat aphids (see inset).
- ◆ Cover plants with horticultural fleece to keep aphids off.
- ◆ Remove aphids mechanically using a strong stream of water.
- ◆ Spray a dilute solution of fatty acids or soft soap on affected leaves and rub the aphids off with your fingers. Repeat this once or twice a week while plants are young and vulnerable.
- ◆ Try a product such as Eradicoat which block the holes insects breathe through. Eradicoat is available from Defenders (01233 813121).
- ◆ Smear bands of grease around trees or plants to prevent ants from moving aphids around (fruit tree grease can be purchased online from Chase Organics and other companies).
- ◆ Plant species resistant to the viral diseases transmitted by aphids.
- ◆ Prune affected parts of plants.
- ◆ Plant a trap crop such as nasturtiums. Pull out nasturtiums when they are infested.
- ◆ Use an oil-based spray on trees in the winter to smother overwintering eggs.

Encourage aphid-eating insects onto your plot

Insects which feed off aphids include ladybirds, lacewing larvae, hoverfly larvae, and certain species of predatory midges and parasitic wasps. Adults of lacewing and hoverfly feed off nectar and pollen and can be encouraged onto your plot by flowering plants. Marigolds and the poached egg plant (*Limnanthes douglasii*) are particularly effective at this. Lacewing and hoverfly attach their eggs to a plant and when the larvae hatch they may eat several hundred aphids before pupating. Both the adult and larvae of the ladybird eat aphids. Ladybirds are attracted to many different plants but are commonly found feeding on the nettle aphids of nettles.

These aphid-eating insects multiply less rapidly than aphids in springtime. However, as the summer progresses they catch up and become more effective at controlling aphid populations. Populations of some aphid-eating insects can be boosted by purchasing them online from suppliers such as Chase Organics, Green Gardener and Just Green. Those available for purchase include

- ◆ lacewing larvae (*Chrysoperlus* spp.)
- ◆ predatory midge (*Aphidoletes aphidomyza*)
- ◆ parasitic wasps (*Aphidius* spp.)
- ◆ ladybird larvae (*Adalia bipunctata*)

Alternatively, you can collect ladybirds and place them on plants affected by aphids. Ladybirds are often found on sycamore trees, lime trees and nettles.

Aphid-eating insects need a supply of aphids to survive. A patch of nettles in the corner of a plot will help to maintain a healthy population.

OTHER TASKS

- * Water during extended dry periods.
- * Don't overwater vegetable transplants. This will encourage them to grow deep roots so they will need less water during the summer
- * Mulch bare ground with lots of organic matter. This reduces evaporation keeping the soil moist.
- * Apply compost around asparagus plants.
- * Keep hoeing or hand-pulling weeds.
- * Cover brassica beds with horticultural fleece making sure that cabbage white butterflies can't fly under the edges. Also check plants for the characteristic small yellow eggs on the undersides of leaves. Squash any you find.
- * Birds, particularly wood pigeons, love to eat the leaves of young brassica plants. Place stakes around the edges of the brassica bed. Stretch netting over the bed and hook it over the stakes.



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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