

autumn leaves falling.....



VEGETABLES

Sow outside

Sow broad beans now for an early spring crop. Sow winter hardy varieties of lettuce, e.g. winter density, and some oriental greens, e.g. mizuna, pak choi, green-in-snow, giant red mustard, mibuna.

Plant outside

Plant spring cabbage, garlic, onion sets (overwintering or 'japanese' varieties), kale var. hungry gap.

FRUIT

- * Plant rhubarb crowns
- * Prune summer-fruiting raspberries. Cut down canes which have just fruited, and tie the best unfruited canes to supports.
- * Prepare the ground for fruit bushes and trees before it becomes too wet to dig. Plant later during winter months.
- * Order new fruit trees.
- * Propagate blackcurrants, red and white currants and gooseberries. Remove a 30 cm (12 ins) shoot just above a bud on the parent plant. Discard the top 5 cm (2 ins). Plant the cutting to two thirds of its depth.
- * Fix grease bands to apple and pear trees to prevent pests such as winter moth from crawling up the trunks.

Vegetable Harvest

Jerusalem artichokes, aubergine, sweet potato, french beans, runner beans, swiss chard, beetroot, calabrese broccoli, brussels sprouts, summer cabbage, red cabbage, savoy cabbage, peppers, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chicory (non-forcing varieties), cucumber, endive, kohlrabi, leeks (early varieties), lettuce, squash, courgettes, pumpkins, peas, potatoes (maincrop), radish, salsify, scorzonera, spinach, swede, tomatoes, turnips.

Fruit Harvest

Apples, pears, autumn-fruiting raspberries, melons, grapes.

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Exposure to pesticides may double the risk of asthma

Exposure to several commonly used pesticides appears to increase the risk of asthma, US researchers reported at a meeting of the European Respiratory Society Annual Congress in Stockholm in September.

Pesticide exposure is a "potential risk factor for asthma and respiratory symptoms among farmers," said lead researcher Dr. Jane Hoppin, from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. "Because grains and animals are more common exposures in agricultural settings, pesticides may be overlooked," she warned.

Of the 19,704 farmers included in the study, 127 had allergic asthma and 314 had non-allergic asthma. The main finding was that a history of high pesticide exposure was associated with a doubling of asthma risk. The link remained statistically significant after adjusting for a variety of potentially confounding factors including age, smoking, body weight, and state of residence.

Overall, 16 of the pesticides studied were associated with asthma: 12 with the allergic variety of asthma and 4 with the non-allergic type. Coumaphos, EPTC, lindane, parathion, heptachlor, and 2,4,5-TP were most strongly linked to allergic asthma. For non-allergic asthma, DDT, malathion, and phorate had the strongest effect. Although some of the sprays being used at the time have been withdrawn on U.S. and British farms, others are still sprayed on crops - the fungicide captan (in both the US and the UK) and the insecticide lindane (in the US).

"This is the first study with sufficient power to evaluate individual pesticides and adult asthma among individuals who routinely apply pesticides," Hoppin noted. Moreover, this is the only study to date to do this for allergic and non-allergic asthma separately.

In the UK malathion is licensed to be used by amateurs in pigeon lofts.

Pesticide exposure tied to asthma in farmers, Anthony Brown, 17 September, 2007, Reuters.

GENERAL TASKS

- * Lift maincrop potatoes two weeks after the tops have died or been cut down. Make sure the potatoes are dry before storage.
- * Earth up celery to blanch the stems making them more tender.
- * Save seed from open-pollinated varieties.
- * Vacant ground should be dug over and covered with a mulch. Green manure crops planted at the end of summer can be dug into the soil. In milder parts of the country it may still be possible to plant an over-wintering green manure (see Sept 2004 tips).
- * Prepare a container for making leaf mould. Trace a square on the ground (2 ft x 2 ft) and hammer a wooden post into each corner. Wrap chicken wire around the sides attaching it to the posts. Fallen leaves can be stored in this container. After 18 months or two years they will have broken down into leaf mould, an excellent supplement for the soil.
- * Cover compost bins to keep the rain out and heat in.
- * Reduce ventilation in the greenhouse.
- * Insulate the greenhouse and worm bin ... try bubble wrap.
- * Place water butts to collect rain water from roofs of sheds.
- * Remove yellowing leaves from winter brassicas. These are not useful to the plant and will encourage Botrytis to develop.
- * Beds you want to dig in early spring can be covered with plastic sheeting. This will keep the rain off allowing you to dig earlier.
- * Finish planting spring flowering bulbs.



Apple scab

The fungus *Venturia inaequalis* affects both fruit and leaves of apples causing scab. Initially fungal spores cause dark velvety green patches on the leaves. The fungus eventually dies leaving brown patches of tissue. On fruit the fungus causes scarred scabby lesions that do not expand at the same rate as healthy tissue during ripening. This can cause misshapen and cracked fruit. Rots such as brown rot or *Penicillium* can enter through these cracks. If infection occurs close to harvest it may only be apparent as dark sunken spots appear on the fruit in storage. Infected leaves fall prematurely and carry the fungus through to the next season.

The fungus spreads by rain splash and wind within different parts of a tree or between neighbouring trees. The fungus overwinters in fallen leaves which then release spores in the following spring. The disease spreads most rapidly when there are frequent showers in spring and early summer. Spore discharge and infection occur under precise conditions of temperature and humidity known as 'Mills periods'.

Affected fruit are still edible although generally unmarketable for commercial growers. Damage to foliage causes leaf fall which reduces tree vigour and cropping in future years.

Some steps can be taken to reduce the incidence of scab.

- ◆ clear up and destroy or compost fallen leaves
- ◆ prune out infected shoots during the winter
- ◆ choose apple cultivar with some resistance to scab, such as Discovery, Ellison's Orange, King of the Pippins
- ◆ avoid particularly susceptible cultivars, such as Cox's Orange Pippin
- ◆ avoid planting trees in damp sites with poor drainage

A related fungus *Venturia pirina* causes scab in pears.



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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