

End of season.....

VEGETABLES

Sow outside

- * lettuce (sow hardy variety e.g. winter density or valor, for next spring)
- * parsley
- * spinach

Plant outside

- * spring cabbage
- * onion sets (plant 'japanese' or overwintering for June harvest)
- * garlic

FRUIT

- * Prune mature plum trees after fruiting. Remove any branches infected by silver leaf fungus cutting several inches past any brown-stained wood. Burn prunings. Also cut out broken or overcrowded branches.
- * Apple and pear trees can still be summer pruned.
- * Prune summer-fruiting raspberries. Cut down canes which have just fruited, leaving the best unfruited canes (thin if necessary), tying them to wire supports. Autumn-fruiting varieties are pruned in February.

Vegetable Harvest

You could be harvesting - globe artichokes, aubergine, broad beans, french beans, runner beans, swiss chard, beetroot, calabrese broccoli, summer cabbage, red cabbage, peppers, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, endive, kohlrabi, lettuce, courgettes, squash, pumpkins, onions, shallots, peas, mangetout, potatoes (maincrop), radish, spinach, sweet corn, tomatoes, turnips.

Fruit Harvest

You could be picking apples, pears, plums, peaches, nectarines, figs, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, early melons, grapes.



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Eating organic food protects children from pesticides

Switching to organic foods provides immediate and dramatic protection from the pesticides used on a variety of crops according to a new study by a team of US scientists.

For 15 days the scientists from the University of Washington, Seattle, tested the urine of 23 elementary school children. During the first three days and last seven days of the study the children ate normal food. But during the middle five days they ate mostly organic food. Throughout the study the children's urine was tested for the presence of two insecticides commonly used in the US, malathion and chlorpyrifos.

While eating organic food the children had no detectable malathion in their urine. However, after switching back to eating conventionally grown food one child's urine had 263 parts per billion (ppb) malathion and the average increased to 1.6 ppb.

While eating organic food the children had less than 1 ppb chlorpyrifos in their urine but this increased five-fold when they started eating conventionally grown food again.

Malathion and chlorpyrifos kill insect pests by poisoning their nervous system. In large amounts these insecticides also

poison the human nervous system. The effect of smaller amounts, such as those detected in this study, is uncertain. However, because the brains of infants and young children are still developing they are likely to be particularly vulnerable to nerve poisons.

Malathion and chlorpyrifos do not last long in the body so changing to eating organic food had a quick effect. 'In conclusion' the researchers wrote 'we were able to demonstrate that an organic diet provides a dramatic and immediate protective effect against exposure to organophosphate pesticides that are commonly used in agricultural production.'

Shop bought organic produce can be expensive and is not always easy to find. Home or allotment grown produce can be a valuable source of organic fruit and vegetables.

Organic Diets Significantly Lower Children's Dietary Exposure to Organophosphorus Pesticides, Chensheng Lu, Kathryn Toepel, Rene Irish, Richard A. Fenske, Dana B. Barr, and Roberto Bravo Environmental Health Perspectives online
<http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/docs/2005/8418/abstract.html>

- * Finish planting summer-fruiting strawberry plants and remove those more than 3 years old. Strawberry runners in inconvenient locations should be removed and replanted elsewhere or discarded. Cut leaves, and stalks of remaining strawberry plants to 1 inch from ground.
- * Support the weight of ripening melons with nets or old tights.
- * Prune away the side shoots of currants. Gooseberry shoots should be thinned.

GENERAL TASKS

- * Lift maincrop potatoes - remove haulms (the above ground parts) several weeks before lifting if they have blight.
- * Cut down asparagus foliage and mulch the ground well.
- * Keep on top of weeding and make sure no weeds go to seed.
- * Fertilise tomatoes weekly.
- * Earth up celery leaving just a little foliage visible. This will blanch the stems making them more tender.
- * Save seed from open-pollinated varieties.
- * Check the undersides of brassica leaves for the eggs or caterpillars of the cabbage white butterfly.
- * As ground becomes vacant it should be dug over and either manure incorporated or a green manure crop planted.
- * Support tall plants with stakes to protect from September winds.
- * Many bulbs can be planted now for flowering next spring, e.g. crocuses, daffodils, narcissi.
- * Sow grass to repair pathways.
- * Lay tomato plants down over straw and cover with cloches to speed ripening.
- * Remove any tomato foliage affected by blight and burn. Immediately wash hands and any tools that have been in contact with the affected foliage.

Blossom end rot

This disease most common affects tomatoes although it may also affect peppers. A sunken patch develops on the blossom end (away from the stem) of developing fruit. This patch becomes tough and then darkens as the cells inside collapse. This condition does not necessarily affect all fruit on a truss, or all trusses on a stem.

Blossom end rot is a disease caused by physiological problems arising from a deficiency in calcium. Calcium is a macronutrient required in relatively large amounts for normal cell growth. Insufficient calcium during growth will cause cells to collapse.

Calcium deficiency can arise for different reasons. Commonly it is due to inconsistent watering. Dry conditions around the plant roots prevent the plant taking up calcium and when this is followed by excessive watering blossom end rot often follows. Another cause of blossom end rot is a lack of available calcium in the soil. This may be due to a low ratio of calcium relative to some other competing nutrients such as potassium or nitrogen. Blossom end rot is more likely to develop in acidic soil conditions.

Although blossom end rot is not caused by an infectious organism microorganisms may subsequently grow in the rotting part of the fruit.

Blossom end rot can effectively be prevented by taking a few relatively easy precautions

- ◆ Ensure tomato plants are watered consistently and regularly
- ◆ Mulch soils to prevent water loss and encourage more consistent moisture levels
- ◆ If your soil is acidic add lime to increase the pH to around 6.5 to 7.0
- ◆ Grow varieties which produce small tomatoes as these are less affected

Green manure crops

Green manure crops can help your plot in many ways. They add organic carbon to the soil increasing its fertility. Nitrogen-fixing crops e.g. clover, vetch, will also add nitrogen to the soil.

Green manure crops also provide ground cover and their roots stabilise the soil. This reduces soil erosion during winter rains, particularly on hilly sites. Green manure crops with deep roots can also draw nutrients up to the surface from deep in the soil.

Clovers, rye grasses, winter tares, and fava beans can be sown in the autumn and grown over winter. They are then chopped down and incorporated into the soil in spring. The ground is left for 3 or 4 weeks to allow the incorporated plant material to rot before a new crop is planted. Green manure crops will rot quickly if the growth is still soft and not woody. If the crop is allowed to mature further and become woody, it can be composted in spring. Don't let any plants go to seed!

On plots with heavy ground which are difficult to dig in wet spring conditions it may be best to sow a quick-growing green manure crop such as fenugreek or buckwheat in late summer. These will be killed off by the first autumn/winter frosts and can be incorporated into soil during autumn cultivation.



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

To receive monthly gardening tips send email address to:

Roslyn McKendry
Pesticide Action Network UK
Eurolink Centre
49 Effra Road,
London SW2 1BZ, UK.
tel: +44 (0)20 7274 8895
fax: +44 (0)20 7274 9084
roslynmckendry@pan-uk.org
<http://www.pan-uk.org>