

Planting Vegetables for Fall

Though often overlooked by the acreage gardener, planting vegetables in July and August for fall production is an excellent practice. Late plantings of cool- and warm-season vegetables can extend the harvest long after spring-planted crops have ceased production. Most cool-season vegetables grow as well as or better than those planted in the spring as they mature during shorter, cooler days.

Flavors of vegetables maturing in the cool, crisp days of autumn are

often sweeter and milder than those grown during hot summer weather. This is especially true for cole crops such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower and kale. Plants such as lettuce and spinach which tend to bolt (develop flower stalks) in late spring, stay productive due to the shorter day lengths.

For those who love to garden, extending the harvest as long as possible helps ward off the dreariness of cloudy autumn days.

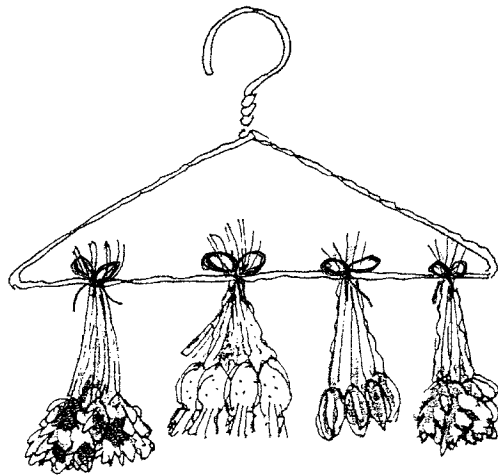
- **Semi-hardy vegetables (can stand light frost, 30–32 degrees F)** — Beets, Mustard, Chinese Cabbage, Radishes, Collards, Spinach, Potatoes, Swiss Chard, Bibb Lettuce, Green Onions, Leaf Lettuce
- **Hardy vegetables (can stand several frosts, but are killed when temperatures drop near 20 degrees F)** — Cabbage, Carrots, Broccoli, Turnips, Cauliflower, Rutabagas, Brussels Sprouts, Kale

Methods of Drying Flowers

Four methods commonly used for drying plants are air-drying, plant pressing, using a drying agent such as sand or silica gel and preserving with glycerine. The easiest methods to start with are air-drying and plant pressing.

Most people start preserving plants by putting a flower or leaf in a large book. This will work most of the time but you risk ruining the book if mold develops. A better method is to place the plants between several layers of newspaper and weigh it down with a heavy object such as a large book. You will need to check the plants periodically to make sure they are not starting to mold. With plants that have a lot of moisture, you may need to replace the newspaper if it becomes damp.

Air drying is also fairly easy. One of the simplest methods of air



drying plants is to hang them upside down and let the water evaporate. To prevent the growth of molds and other decay organisms, it is helpful to increase air movement around the plants. This can be done by using a

small fan or by opening a window. Warm, dry moving air is necessary for successful air drying.

To prevent colors from fading, dry them in the dark. Plants should be hung where they are out of the sunlight, or they can be covered with a cloth or black plastic with a few holes cut into the top and sides. Remember to provide good air circulation. Hanging covered plants over a heat vent or a fan can do this. Air circulation is even more important when the plants are covered.

If you would like information on using drying agents or glycerin, libraries have several good references available. Hobby and craft stores are good sources of information, as well as, for any supplies you may want to use in addition to the plants you dry yourself.

Caring for Animals When Gone

Livestock are a very serious responsibility. They are dependent upon you for their care. When you are gone for any extended period of time, they must still be cared for on a regular basis. Your animals should be looked in on daily to insure they are in good health. Automatic feeders and waterers can break. Daily proper nutrition is very important to the overall health of the animal.

Therefore, when you are away, get a reliable person you can trust to serve as relief chore person. Find a

person who is familiar with the care of livestock. This ensures your animals are getting the proper nutrition they require and are in good health. It also enables you to relax and not worry while you are gone.

Provide your relief chore person with phone numbers (i.e., police, fire and local veterinarian) in case of an emergency. Include a detailed description of what animals need, specific feed and other chores to be done.

There is much automation involved in many livestock buildings to-

day. It would be wise to have at least a minimal inventory of common repair parts. Add information on how to get help for any repair items needed while you are away. It's also a good idea to give your relief chore person the number where you can be reached.

Remember, your animals are dependent on you for food, shelter and health care even though you are away. Providing them with a reliable person helps ensure they will be healthy when you return.

Measuring Distance

A few hundred years ago, the French desired to establish a worldwide standard for all measurements. The purpose was to facilitate trade and price. One such measurement was for distance, the meter, on which the metric system was based. The meter was defined as one ten-millionth (1/10,000,000) the distance from the North Pole to the Equator as measured in Europe. Even though Napoleon later rejected this system, it finally became the standard for much of the world. Thomas Jefferson wanted to use it for the American standard as well; but this idea failed, primarily because the English standard had already become established among most all the people of the "New World."

Some of the origins and history about distance measures are quite interesting:

- A cubit is the distance from the fingertips to the elbow. Noah's Ark was 300 cubits long.
- A rod or pole, used to drive oxen, was about 16 feet long and was handy for measuring land since it was the longest, usable tool commonly available to a farmer. The length later became an official 16 ½ feet when the British Empire decreed it to be the combined lengths of the left feet of the first 13 men exiting a certain English church on a designated day.
- A foot was the length derived from the end of the toe to the rear of the heel of the foot. It probably fell to kings or tribal leaders to declare the standards.
- The mile originated from having Roman soldiers march with a step of 2 ½ feet. One mile was declared to be 1,000 paces (2 steps/pace) or 5,000 feet.
- The furlong was defined as the length of one side of a square ten-acre field, or 660 feet. In the 17th century, Queen Elizabeth decreed one mile equal to eight furlongs or 5280 feet or 320 poles. Regardless of the units of measurement—be they English, Metric or other—all distance measurements associated with travel and area determinations must be made on a horizontal plane.

(Source: *Alabama's Treasured Forests, Summer 2003*)

Spider Mites Common Problem on Trees, Other Plants

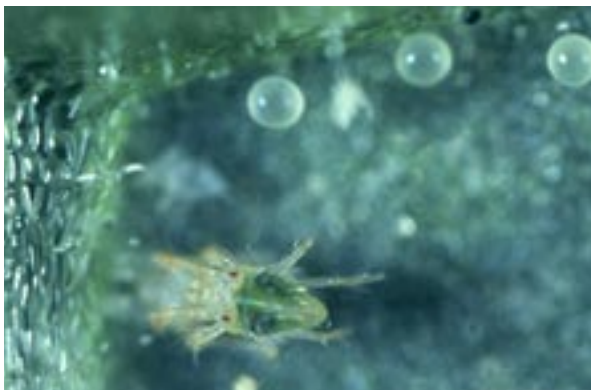
Spider mites are not insects, but are more closely related to ticks and spiders. These tiny pests are less than one millimeter long and vary in color from yellow to red to green. They are a common problem on both deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs including spruce, pine, juniper, honeylocust, linden, elm and many others. In fact, under the right conditions, spider mites can attack almost every plant in the landscape including flowers, vegetables and grass.

They overwinter as eggs on the effected plants and produce many generations each year. Mites feed by sucking sap from the plant's leaves and stems and generally occur in the highest numbers on the undersides of leaves.

Heavily infested leaves

may be covered with very fine, irregular webs in which mites, eggs and shed skins are suspended. Overall, it gives the impression of heavy dust particles on the plant. Except in the most severe cases, these webs are very small and do not stretch from leaf to leaf. Rather, they are almost invisible but can be seen only under very close inspection stringing across the leaf's midrib or underside of the leaf.

Warm, dry weather tends to favor rapid mite development and reproduction, enabling them to complete a generation in as little as five to seven days. Infestations are usually most severe in late



Adult twospotted spider mite with eggs nearby.

summer and early fall. However, the spruce spider mite, or "cool-season" mite is most active during the cooler weather of early spring and late fall.

Damage symptoms progress from stippling to yellowing, wilting, browning, and eventually to death of the leaves or whole plant. In addition to crawling, spider

mites can be spread by wind currents and by people or animals moving through the landscape. To check for spider mites, place a white piece of paper beneath the branch or leaves and tap several times. The mites will appear as very small, bits of dust crawling across the page!

Controlling spider mites is difficult because they reproduce so rapidly. One method to try involves spraying the plant with a strong jet of water once or twice a day to dislodge some of the insects and to create an environment that is cooler, more humid and less favorable for spider mite reproduction. Several days or even weeks of this treatment will be required

to make a noticeable difference in spider mite populations.

Horticultural and dormant oils are also useful on plants with a history of spider mite problems. Horticultural oils can be sprayed on landscape plants during the summer, although some leaf discoloration or phytotoxicity may occur on some plants. Make sure your plant is listed on the label before spraying to prevent damaging the plant and follow the label directions for use of the product. Dormant oil is used during the winter or very early spring prior to bud break. It is useful in killing overwintering mite eggs and can help suppress mites populations.

In cases of very severe infestations, use of a chemical miticide may be necessary.