

AUGUST IS HARVEST TIME!

Many vegetables will be ripening this month! Keep picking vegetables so they will produce more. If you don't, the plant will slow down or even stop as it thinks it's job is done. Some plants produce a limited amount of fruits or vegetables and some keep producing till a hard freeze. Try to keep up with harvesting to keep the plants producing. Be sure to take time to enjoy your garden as well as working hard in it.

TIME TO PLANT A FALL GARDEN!

I haven't even harvested some vegetables yet and here it is time to start a fall garden if you want one. You can plant the same crops you planted in early spring right now and still get a fall harvest. Crops like beets, carrots, kale, chard, peas, Asian greens, and lettuces can all be planted in Early-mid August. Don't lose this opportunity to grow some great crops for fall.

PROBLEMS TO LOOK OUT FOR ON DIFFERENT VEGETABLES

HAIL DAMAGE

Hail can be a big problem shredding many vegetables in a short period of time. Many will come back but some will not if the center of the plant is demolished. I cover mine with row cover and save many crops. Have some close by to throw over your plants or even do it in the morning before work if bad weather is forecasted. If you do sustain damage:
-spray with fungicide like copper spray to help them out. Hail damage can make them vulnerable to fungal diseases.

POWDERY MILDEW

All squash, pumpkins, cucumbers and melons are prone to powdery mildew when the monsoons are here. I use Green Cure which is available at All Seasons Gardens. It works great. Some people use baking soda, which is Sodium Bicarbonate but it is not as effective as Green Cure, which is Potassium Bicarbonate and works better.

HEAT PROBLEMS-WILTING

-Consider breaking up your watering schedule into two different times, ie 10 minutes in the am and 10 minutes in the afternoon instead of all at once or add more time in a heat spell.
-Mulch with straw to help hold in moisture except around squash. Squash bugs will hide under the straw. So for squash, put row cover over the plant.

APHIDS

-Spray a hard stream of water on the plant
-Use organic NEEM or AZAMAX in the evening AFTER the bees go away and when it is cooler. Do not spray on a warm day or it may burn your plants.

PILLBUGS

Also known as Roly Pollies, potato bugs or armadillo bugs. They live in moist places, under debris or straw. Roly-pollies sometimes feed on leaves and seedlings, as well as fruits and vegetables touching the ground like tomatoes. Use organic Sluggo PLUS to control them on newly sprouted seedlings or when planting seeds

TOMATO PROBLEMS BUT NOT DISEASES

BLOSSOM END ROT-CALCIUM DEFICIENCY

Hard brown or black leathery patches on the bottom of the tomato of ripening tomatoes indicate blossom-end rot. This is generally caused by a calcium deficiency at fruit set or uneven watering and is prevented by planting tomatoes in compost-enriched soil and the plants mulched with straw

to keep moisture levels more constant. I put a tablespoon or two of dry milk in the bottom of each hole when first planting tomatoes in spring. Sometimes in mid-summer when we get a lot of rain, it shows up. In the fall dig in some gypsum, which is a good source of calcium without raising the pH of the soil.

TOMATOES CRACKING-If we get a lot of rain, the tomatoes take in more water than the skins can handle and the skins crack even on green ones. The cracks will heal but will leave scars although they are fine to eat.. You should water a lot when they are growing but cut back when you are getting ready to harvest. But don't stop watering, they still need water, just not as much.

LEAF ROLL-cause of tomato plant leaf curling, also known as leaf roll, is attributed to physiologic conditions. While its exact cause may be unknown, it's believed to be a sort of self-defense mechanism. It does not necessarily represent a disease.

TOMATO DISEASES-EARLY BLIGHT

Early Blight is a fungal disease that attacks tomato plants starting on the bottom leaves of the plant and works it's way upwards. It usually shows up with the monsoon season. The leaves start turning yellow and get blotchy. If left unchecked, it can take over your plant killing it although it won't die immediately. It comes from water splashing soil up onto the lower leaves. The culprit is a bad soil fungal spores. You always see it start on the bottom leaves. It comes from water splashing soil up onto the lower leaves, allowing the fungal spores to colonize on the leaves. Early Blight should not be confused with Late Blight, which is prevalent in the northeast. There are several things you can immediately do to help with this disease if you get this.

1. The first thing you do is trim off the affected branches where the leaves are yellow. Trim all lower branches off tomato plants whose leaves are yellowing. I'd much rather deal with Early Blight than Curly top virus (which is always fatal and not much we can do about it). At least you can somewhat control Early Blight. Keep trimming up your plant as needed.
2. When you trim, make sure branches they don't touch the ground and disinfect your trimmers in a 10% bleach solution after you trim a plant so you don't spread it to another tomato plant.
3. Stake or tie up any branches that might touch the ground.
4. Mulch with straw underneath the plant so the soil can't splash up on plant when it rains or if you water overhead.
4. And if you get it, use 'Serenade', an organic biological fungicide, which provides protection. Spray it on when the leaves are dry. It is **rainproof, non-toxic for bees** and other beneficial insects. Re-spray any affected plant every 7 days. Spray all parts of the plant-both on top and underneath till dripping. Don't wait till you get the disease-**it works best as a preventative** but you can control many fungal diseases with it.

CURLY TOP VIRUS-Curly top virus is transmitted by a bug called the Beet Leafhopper. The beet leafhopper is most likely gone by now with all this rain, but it takes a while for the symptoms to show up. Signs of it are the plant leaves start to curl and the plant looks sick, looks like it needs water, and eventually the leaves veins turn purple and the leaves die. Pull the plant but not before you are sure because some tomatoes get leaf roll but are fine, they are just stressed.