

THE GRAPEVINE



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MOVING HOUSEPLANTS OUTSIDE FOR THE SUMMER

It is often helpful to set many houseplants outside for the summer so they can recover from the low light levels endured during the winter months. As soon as night temperatures stay consistently above 55 degrees F, houseplants can be moved to their summer home. Choose a spot that has dappled shade, is protected from the wind and is close to water. A porch or a spot that receives shade from trees or buildings will work well. Putting houseplants in full sun will cause the leaves to photo-oxidize or sunburn because the leaves have become adapted to low light levels inside the house. Where possible, sink the pots into the ground to help moderate root temperatures and reduce watering frequency. If you have a number of plants, dig a trench 6 to 8 inches deep (or deeper if you have larger pots) and long enough to accommodate all of your plants without crowding. Place peat moss under and around the pots. Peat moss holds water, helps keep the pots cool and reduces evaporation from clay pots. About every two weeks, rotate the pots a quarter turn to break off any roots that have penetrated the peat moss surrounding the pot and to equalize the light received on all sides of the pot. Water as needed. If the potting soil is dry a half-inch deep in the pot, it is time to water.

Cabbage Worms

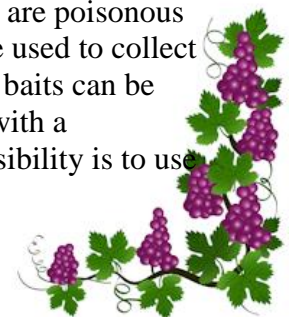
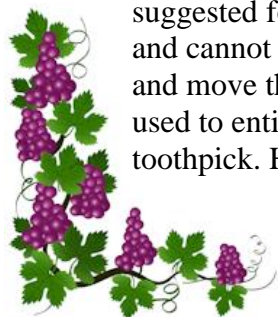
This is the time of year we normally start seeing damage from cabbage worms. The imported cabbage worm is usually the first cabbage worm species to appear and is a fuzzy, elongated green worm. Larvae come from eggs laid by the white butterfly often seen flitting around the plants.

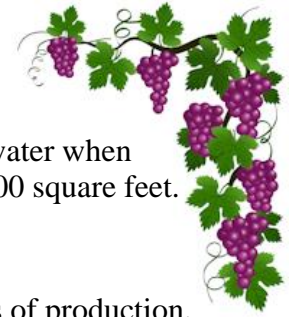
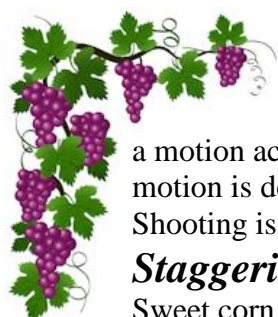
Early control is essential to reduce injury. BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) and spinosad (Monterey Garden Insect Spray, Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew) are effective organic products that are labeled for this pest. BT can be found in Dipel, Thuricide and other similar materials. Direct sunlight deactivates BT quickly so it is helpful to spray late in the day or on a cloudy day.

Conventional insecticides such as carbaryl (Sevin dust), malathion, permethrin and cyfluthrin are also effective but will kill natural enemies of these pests. Be sure to hit the underside of leaves where insects feed.

Rabbits in the Garden

Rabbits in gardens are a perennial problem because of the wide variety of plants they can feed on. This time of year, they gravitate to young vegetables and flowers. But there are some vegetables that are rarely bothered including potatoes, tomatoes, corn, squash, cucumbers, and some peppers. The question is how do you protect other, more susceptible plants? Fencing provides a quick and effective control method. The fence does not need to be tall; 2 feet is sufficient for cottontails. But the mesh must be sufficiently fine (1 inch or less) so young rabbits will not be able to go through it. Support for the fence can be supplied by a number of products, but electric fence posts work well. Often fencing is not an acceptable choice because it affects the aesthetics of the garden. Another type of barrier is a floating row cover. Though most often used to promote early growth by keeping plants warmer than normal, it can also help protect young plants from insects and wildlife. Other ways to control rabbits including repellents, trapping and shooting. Repellents are often suggested for control but often do not last long and require frequent reapplication. Also, many are poisonous and cannot be used on plants or plant parts destined for human consumption. Live traps can be used to collect and move the rabbits to a rural area several miles from where they were trapped. A number of baits can be used to entice the rabbit to enter the trap including a tightly rolled cabbage leaf held together with a toothpick. However, rabbits often avoid baits if other attractive food is available. Another possibility is to use





a motion activated sprinkler. These are attached to a garden hose and release a short burst of water when motion is detected. Contech, Orbit and Havahart are advertised as protecting up to at least 1,000 square feet. Shooting is another possibility when it is safe and legal to do so.

Staggering' Sweet Corn Planting

Sweet corn is one of those crops that is only "good" for a few days. If you want longer periods of production, consider staggering the planting. In other words, plant a small block, wait a period of time, and then plant the next block. Though it is tempting to follow a calendar schedule, such as planting a small block every week, it is better to use crop development as a trigger. If you plant on a calendar schedule, you may have noticed that later plantings often catch up with earlier ones. Instead, plant the next block of sweet corn when the previous one is ½ to one inch tall.

'Tip' Blackberries, Black Raspberries and Purple Raspberries

The growth and fruiting habits of blackberries and raspberries are the same. The root system is perennial, surviving many years, but canes are biennial and only live two years. First-year canes are called primocanes. They emerge from the soil and grow but with most varieties, the primocanes do not fruit. Primocanes become floricanes the second year. Floricanes fruit and then die. Each cane lives only two years. Pinching (tipping) the top 2 to 3 inches of the primocanes increases branching and fruiting the next year. Tipping can improve yield by 3 to 5 times and is vital if you wish to have good yields. The height and frequency of tipping varies with species and whether the variety fruits on primocanes or not. Those that do fruit on primocanes are often referred to as "everbearing." Those that only produce fruit the second year, we will call "traditional." Below is a listing of the different methods used.

Blackberries: Traditional - Tip at 4 feet

Blackberries: Everbearing - Tip at 25 to 30 inches high. Laterals are also tipped when they reach 25 to 30 inches.

Black Raspberries - Tip at 3 feet

Purple Raspberries - Tip at 36 to 40 inches

Red Raspberries - Do not tip.

Weekly Reminders

* Mound soil around potato plants to make sure tubers aren't exposed. Sunlight hitting tubers will cause them to turn green.

* Check houseplants and repot if rootbound.

* Check fruit trees for fruit. Multiple frost events this spring may have eliminated fruit on apricots, peaches, plums and even pears. Some apples may have made it through. If no fruit, sprays may not be needed except for the leaf disease on apples such as cedar-apple rust, apple scab and powdery mildew.

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