Horticulture 2013 Newsletter
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Video of the Week:  Poison Ivy

VEGETABLES

Fertilizing Cole Crops

If you planted cole crops such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower a couple of weeks ago, it is almost time for a fertilizer boost. These plants need to mature before summer heat arrives, so they must grow quickly while the weather is cool. A sidedressing of fertilizer about 3 weeks after transplanting helps plants continue to grow rapidly.

Use fertilizers high in nitrogen for sidedressing, such as nitrate of soda or blood meal at the rate of 2 pounds per 100 feet of row. You can also use lawn fertilizers that have close to 30 percent nitrogen such as a 30-3-4 or 29-5-4, but cut the rate in half to 1 pound per 100 feet of row. Do not use lawn fertilizers that contain weed killers or preventers. Fertilizer must be watered in if timely rains don't do that job for you.

Recommendations on how to sidedress specific vegetable crops can be found at: http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/doc1991.ashx  (Ward Upham)

TURFGRASS

Keep Mower Blades Sharp

Lawn-mowing season is here. Remember that dull blades give the lawn a whitish cast. A dull blade does not cut cleanly but rather shreds the ends of the leaf blades. The shredded ends dry out, giving the lawn that whitish look. A sharp mower blade is even more important when the turf starts putting up seed heads in a month or so. The seed head stems are much tougher than the grass blades and more likely to shred. Under normal use, mower blades should be sharpened about every 10 hours of use. (Ward Upham)
Transplant Solutions and Sidedressing

Transplant solutions are mild fertilizer solutions that are applied to newly transplanted vegetables and flowers. Transplant solutions are also called starter solutions or root stimulators. Plants not given a transplant solution often develop a purplish tinge to the leaves caused by a phosphorus deficiency. Surprisingly, the soil may have plenty of phosphorus but plants often have difficulty taking up nutrients in cool soils. The starter solution places soluble nutrients near the roots so the plants get off to a good, strong start.

Transplant solutions (root stimulators) are available for sale but it is also possible to make your own transplant solution from a fertilizer that contains more phosphorus than nitrogen or potassium such as a 5-10-5, 10-20-10 or 11-15-11. Mix 2 to 3 tablespoons of one of the above fertilizers in a gallon of water several hours before use. The fertilizer won't completely dissolve but enough will go into solution to get plants off to a good start. Use about 1 cup of transplant solution for each transplant.

Sidedressing is a fertilization done after the plants are established. A fertilizer containing primarily nitrogen is used to keep plants growing and productive. Nitrate of soda (16-0-0) is often used at the rate of 2 pounds fertilizer per 100 feet of row. More commonly available lawn fertilizers such as a 30-3-3, 29-5-4 or something similar can also be used but cut the rate in half. Be sure any lawn fertilizer used does not contain weed preventers or weed killers. Note that most fertilizers weigh about 1 pound per pint of product.

We have a sidedressing sheet available that lists crops, rate of fertilizer application and timing of application(s) for many common vegetables as well as annual flowers. The sheet can be viewed at [http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/doc1991.ashx](http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/doc1991.ashx) (Ward Upham)

Use a String Line and Planting Board

Two simple tools can make planting a vegetable garden easier. A string line is used to insure straight rows and a planting board can make spacing vegetables within a row easier.

Most gardeners make their own string line. A very simple one can be made with a tent peg, a 12" piece of 1 x 2 lumber and some string. String is wound on the 1 x 2. Either notch each end of the board or drive a nail near each end to hold the string as it is wound. The end of the string is tied to the nail driven into the board. The other end of the string is tied to the tent peg.
When marking out a row, drive the tent peg into the ground where you want the row to start. Mark the end of the row with a second tent peg and unwind enough string to stretch between them. Actually you will want the string line offset where the plants will go by a couple of inches so that it isn’t in your way. In other words, you will make your row next to the string; not under it. You now have the means of making a straight row.

So what is a planting board? A planting board is a 1 x 4 board that is four feet long. Relatively deep notches are cut every foot with shallow notches at 6 inches from each deep notch. Some gardeners also bevel the side opposite the notches so they can work the beveled end into the soil to make a shallow trench for seed.

When planting, lay the planting board near your tent peg and align it with the string. It is now easy to place plants or seeds at the recommended spacing. Move the planting board with you as you progress down the row. (Ward Upham)

**Poison Ivy Identification and Control**

Learning to identify poison ivy is vital if you wish to avoid the rash that accompanies exposure. Unfortunately, poison ivy can make identification difficult because it occurs in three forms: an erect woody shrub, a groundcover that creeps along the ground, and a woody vine that will climb trees. When poison ivy climbs, it forms numerous aerial roots that give the vine the appearance of a fuzzy rope. The leaves of poison ivy also vary. Though the compound leaf always has three leaflets, the leaf margins may be toothed, incised, lobed or smooth. The size of the leaves also can vary, although usually the middle leaflet is larger than the other two. Also, the middle leaflet is the only one with a long stalk; the other two are closely attached to the petiole (leaf stem). The number of leaves gives rise to the saying: "Leaves of three, let it be!" Poison ivy is often confused with Virginia creeper. Virginia creeper, however, has five leaflets rather than three.

There are three methods commonly used to eradicate poison ivy. These include pulling or grubbing out the plants by hand, cutting off the vine, and then treating the regrowth, and spraying the plants directly. The method used depends somewhat on the plant's growth form. If the plant is growing as a groundcover, direct spray or grubbing the plant out is often used. If grubbing, wear gloves and a long-sleeved shirt. The soil must be moist for grubbing to work well. Wash the clothes and yourself immediately after you finish. It might also be a good idea to rinse the washing machine. If the plant is in the shrub form, direct spray is the most common control method. If the plant is a woody vine that has climbed a tree, the preferred method is to cut the plant off at the base and treat the sprouts after they emerge. Some triclopyr herbicides also have instructions on treating a freshly cut stump directly.
Herbicides that can be used include glyphosate (Roundup, Killzall Weed and Grass Killer, Nutgrass, Poison Ivy and Vine Killer) or triclopyr (Brush-B-Gon Poison Ivy Killer, Brush Killer Stump Killer). Poison ivy is tough. Repeat applications may be necessary. (Ward Upham)

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