

autumn leaves falling.....



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VEGETABLES

Sow outside

Sow broad beans now for an early spring crop. Sow winter hardy varieties of lettuce, e.g. winter density, and some oriental greens, e.g. mizuna, pak choi, green-in-snow, giant red mustard, mibuna.

Plant outside

Plant spring cabbage, garlic, onion sets (overwintering or 'japanese' varieties), kale var. hungry gap.

FRUIT

- * Lift and divide old rhubarb crowns.
- * Prune summer-fruiting raspberries. Cut down canes which have just fruited, and tie the best unfruited canes to supports.
- * Prune blackcurrants by removing diseased or crowded canes and those more than 2 years old.
- * Prune gooseberries, redcurrants and white currants at leaf fall.
- * Prepare the ground for fruit bushes and trees before it becomes too wet to dig. Plant later during winter months.
- * Propagate black, red and white currants and gooseberries. Remove a 30 cm shoot just above a bud on the parent plant. Discard the top 5 cm. Plant the cutting to two thirds its depth.
- * Fix grease bands to apple, pear, plum and cherry trees to prevent pests e.g. winter moth, from crawling up the trunks.
- * Order new fruit trees.
- * Pick nuts (hazelnuts, cobnuts and filberts) when the husks begin to yellow, but before they start to drop from the tree.

Vegetable Harvest

Jerusalem artichokes, aubergine, sweet potato, french beans, runner beans, swiss chard, beetroot, calabrese broccoli, brussels sprouts, summer cabbage, red cabbage, savoy cabbage, peppers, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chicory (non-forcing), cucumber, endive, kohlrabi, leeks (early), lettuce, squash, courgettes, pumpkins, peas, potatoes (main), radish, salsify, scorzonera, spinach, swede, tomatoes, turnips.

Fruit Harvest

Apples, pears, autumn-fruiting raspberries, melons, grapes.

The cost of a perfect pineapple?

We have come to expect a year-round stock of unblemished pineapples in our supermarkets. But at what cost does this come? Three-quarter of the pineapples sold in European supermarkets are grown in tropical monocultures in Costa Rica with two US-based multi-nationals, Dole and Del Monte, dominating the trade. In The Guardian this weekend Felicity Lawrence describes how growing pineapples in this way requires large quantities of pesticides. The soil is sterilised, biodiversity eliminated and four to sixteen different types of chemicals are typically needed. Although the chemicals used are legal in Costa Rica they include some of the most controversial in the world and some are banned for use in Europe. In recent tests on pineapples imported from Costa Rica, the UK governments's Pesticide Residues Committee found that 94% of samples contained residues of the fungicide triadimefon, a reproductive toxin and hormone disruptor. Although none of the samples was above legal limits many believe that exposure to such chemicals should be eliminated if possible.

The main burden of agrochemical use on the pineapple crop, however, does not fall on European consumers but on Costa Ricans. Lawrence investigates regions of Costa Rica next to pineapple plantations where drinking water sources have become polluted causing serious health problems for the local population. And such contamination is not the only problem. Price wars in Western supermarkets over pineapple sales have led to slashed wages for pineapple plantation workers. Wages are often so low that many jobs are filled by migrant workers from Nicaragua who may lack proper papers and struggle to assert their rights. For more information see the article on the website. A video is also available at www.guardian.co.uk/video

Felicity Lawrence, Bitter fruit: The truth about supermarket pineapple, The Guardian 2 October 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/oct/02/truth-about-pineapple-production>

GENERAL TASKS

- * Lift maincrop potatoes two weeks after the tops have died or been cut down. Make sure the potatoes are dry before storage.
- * Earth up celery to blanch the stems making them more tender.
- * Save seed from open-pollinated varieties.
- * Vacant ground should be dug over and covered with a mulch. Green manure crops planted at the end of summer can be dug into the soil. In milder parts of the country it may still be possible to plant an over-wintering green manure.
- * Prepare a container for making leaf mould. Hammer four wooden posts into the ground to make four corners of a 2ftx2ft square. Wrap chicken wire around the sides attaching it to the posts. Fallen leaves can be stored in this container. After 18 months or two years they will have broken down to give an excellent supplement for the soil.
- * Cover compost bins to keep the rain out and heat in.
- * Reduce ventilation in the greenhouse.
- * Insulate the greenhouse and worm bin ... try bubble wrap.
- * Place water butts to collect rain water from roofs of sheds.
- * Remove yellowing leaves from winter brassicas. These are not useful to the plant and will encourage Botrytis to develop.
- * Beds you plan to plant in early spring can be covered with plastic sheeting. This keeps rain off allowing earlier digging.
- * Finish planting spring flowering bulbs.



Winter moth

Winter moths (*Operophtera brumata*) are unspectacular in appearance. The males are grayish brown and about 10 mm long with 25 mm wingspans. The females have almost no wings. They survive through the summer and autumn as pupae in the soil with adult moths emerging between November and January. The wingless females climb up the trunk of fruit trees (and other deciduous trees) to mate and lay eggs. These hatch into caterpillars which grow up to 25mm in length and are pale green with paler lines running lengthwise along their bodies. They move with a characteristic looping action due to the fact that they only have two pairs of clasping legs on their abdomen. From late March the caterpillars feed off tree leaves, completing their feeding by early June when they drop down to the soil to pupate.

Damaged tree leaves initially have small holes and are loosely bound with silk threads. Damage becomes more noticeable in mid-summer when the leaves are fully expanded and the holes have enlarged due to leaf growth. Blossom and developing fruitlets can also be damaged. At least two other moths, the mottled umber moth (*Erannis defoliaria*), and the March moth (*Alsophila aescularia*) have wingless females with a similar lifestyle but the winter moth is most significant as a garden pest.

Although significant commercial losses have been recorded trees can tolerate some leaf loss. In fact, established trees can lose up to 25% of their leaves and still bounce back. However, it is important to protect young trees.

Winter moth damage can be reduced.

- ◆ Place grease bands around the trunks of fruit trees before the adults begin to emerge in November (place them around tree stakes too). They should be about 45cm (18in) above soil level and will trap the females as they climb. Winter moth activity declines after January but some moths with wingless females are active until April, so grease may need to be reapplied from time to time. Ready-prepared sticky papers can be used on smooth-barked trees while a ring of grease can be applied directly to trees with rough bark. Both are available from many garden centres or companies such as The Organic Gardening Catalogue (0845 130 1304), Agralan (01285 860015) and Growing Success Organics Ltd (01722 337744).
- ◆ In evenings from November through January you may find the wingless females with a cloud of male moths around them. Remove any you find.
- ◆ Look inside buds and leaf clusters for eggs or caterpillars and crush any you find.



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

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