

End of season.....



To receive *Gardening Tips* send your email address to roslynmckendry@pan-uk.org. These can also be downloaded free from our website at www.pan-uk.org/gardening.htm

VEGETABLES

Sow outside

- * lettuce (sow hardy variety e.g. winter density or valor, for next spring)
- * parsley
- * spinach

Plant outside

- * spring cabbage
- * onion sets (plant 'japanese' or overwintering onions for a June harvest)
- * garlic

FRUIT

- * Prune mature plum trees after fruiting. Remove any branches infected by silver leaf fungus. Burn prunings. Cut out broken or overcrowded branches.
- * Apple and pear trees can still be summer pruned.
- * Prune summer-fruiting raspberries. Cut down canes which have fruited, and tie up the best unfruited canes. Autumn-fruiting varieties are pruned in February.
- * Finish planting summer-fruiting strawberry plants and remove those more than 3 years old. Remove strawberry runners in inconvenient locations should - can be replanted elsewhere. Cut back strawberry plants to 1 inch from ground.
- * Support ripening melons with nets or old tights.
- * Prune side shoots of currants. Thin gooseberry shoots.

Vegetable Harvest

Globe artichokes, aubergine, broad beans, french beans, runner beans, swiss chard, beetroot, calabrese broccoli, summer cabbage, red cabbage, peppers, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, endive, kohlrabi, lettuce, courgettes, squash, pumpkins, onions, shallots, peas, mangetout, potatoes (maincrop), radish, spinach, sweet corn, tomatoes, turnips.

Fruit Harvest

Apples, pears, plums, peaches, nectarines, figs, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, early melons, grapes.

Can organic cotton feed Africa?

As the world's population expands many people question whether we will be able to produce enough food in the coming decades. The situation seems most stark in Africa, and yet, Europeans and other Westerners import large quantities of produce from Africa. This raises questions for the ethical consumer

- should people in the West buy food from poor producers in developing countries?
- should people in the West buy cotton from Africa, even if it is organic? ... wouldn't it be better to encourage African farmers to grow more food for themselves rather than growing cotton and other crops for export?

PAN UK has been examining the issues with a little help from some farmers in Benin, West Africa. A new leaflet sets out the issues and presents views from Beninese farmers keen to maintain their access to export markets. The profits they make from exporting their produce improves their family's livelihood. Download the leaflet from <http://www.pan-uk.org/publications/can-organic-cotton-feed-africa>



GENERAL TASKS

- * Lift maincrop potatoes - remove haulms (the above ground parts) several weeks before lifting if they have blight.
- * Cut down asparagus foliage and mulch the ground well.
- * Keep on top of weeding and make sure no weeds go to seed.
- * Fertilise tomatoes weekly.
- * Earth up celery to blanch the stems making them more tender.
- * Save seed from open-pollinated varieties.
- * Check the undersides of brassica leaves for the eggs or caterpillars of the cabbage white butterfly.
- * As ground becomes vacant it should be dug over and either manure incorporated or a green manure crop planted.
- * Support tall plants with stakes to protect from September winds.
- * Many bulbs can be planted now for flowering next spring, e.g. crocuses, daffodils, narcissi.
- * Sow grass to repair pathways.
- * Lay tomato plants down over straw and cover with cloches to speed ripening.
- * Remove any tomato foliage affected by blight and burn.



Blossom end rot

This disease most common affects tomatoes although it may also affect peppers. A sunken patch develops on the blossom end (away from the stem) of developing fruit. This patch becomes tough and then darkens as the cells inside collapse. This condition does not necessarily affect all fruit on a truss, or all trusses on a stem.

Blossom end rot is a disease caused by physiological problems arising from a deficiency in calcium. Calcium is a macronutrient required in relatively large amounts for normal cell growth. Insufficient calcium during growth will cause cells to collapse.

Calcium deficiency can arise for different reasons. Commonly it is due to inconsistent watering. Dry conditions around the plant roots prevent the plant taking up calcium and when this is followed by excessive watering blossom end rot often follows. Another cause of blossom end rot is a lack of available calcium in the soil. This may be due to a low ratio of calcium relative to some other competing nutrients such as potassium or nitrogen. Blossom end rot is more likely to develop in acidic soil conditions.

Although blossom end rot is not caused by an infectious organism microorganisms may subsequently grow in the rotting part of the fruit.

Blossom end rot can effectively be prevented by taking a few relatively easy precautions

- ◆ Ensure tomato plants are watered consistently and regularly
- ◆ Mulch soils to prevent water loss and encourage consistent moisture levels
- ◆ If your soil is acidic add lime to increase the pH to around 6.5 to 7.0
- ◆ Grow varieties which produce small tomatoes as these are less affected

Green manure crops

Green manure crops can help your plot in many ways. They add organic carbon to the soil increasing its fertility. Nitrogen-fixing crops e.g. clover, vetch, will also add nitrogen to the soil.

Green manure crops also provide ground cover and their roots stabilise the soil. This reduces soil erosion during winter rains, particularly on hilly sites. Green manure crops with deep roots can also draw nutrients up to the surface from deep in the soil.

Clovers, rye grasses, winter tares, and fava beans can be sown in the autumn and grown over winter. They are then chopped down and incorporated into the soil in spring. The ground is left for 3 or 4 weeks to allow the incorporated plant material to rot before a new crop is planted. Green manure crops will rot quickly if the growth is still soft and not woody. If the crop is allowed to mature further and become woody, it can be composted in spring. Don't let any plants go to seed!

On plots with heavy ground which are difficult to dig in wet spring conditions it may be best to sow a quick-growing green manure crop such as fenugreek or buckwheat in late summer. These will be killed off by the first autumn/winter frosts and can be incorporated into soil during autumn cultivation.



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

To receive monthly gardening tips send email address to:

Roslyn McKendry
Pesticide Action Network UK
56-64 Leonard Street,
London EC2A 4LT, UK.
tel: +44 (0)20 7065 0905
fax: +44 (0)20 7065 0907
roslynmckendry@pan-uk.org
http: //www.pan-uk.org