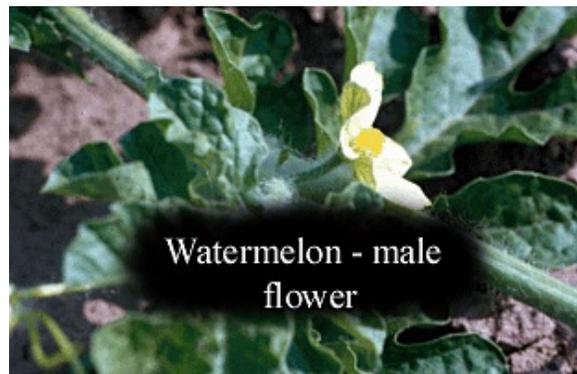
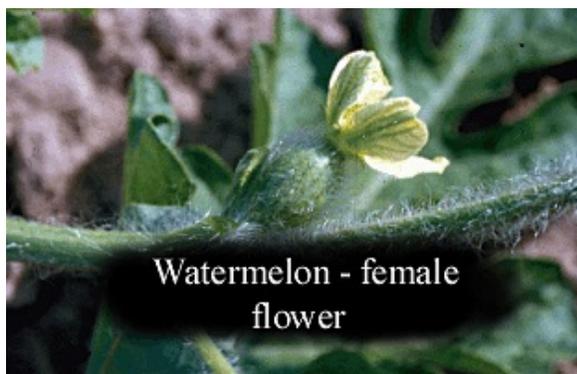


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VEGETABLES

Vegetables Producing Flowers But No Fruit?



If you have vegetables that are blooming but not setting fruit, you might have a pollination problem. Reasons vary, but one condition can affect several species: Too much nitrogen causes the plant to emphasize vegetative growth, often to the detriment of fruit production. Overfertilization can lead to a delay in flower production, as well as to a decrease in fruit set among the flowers that are produced.

Squash can have a couple of other problems. First, the early flowers on these plants are usually all male. The production of both male and female flowers becomes more balanced as time passes. You can easily tell the difference between the two because only the female flower has a tiny fruit behind the blossom. If you have both, haven't overfertilized and still have a problem, make sure you have pollinators. Look for the bees visiting the plants. If you don't see any, try hand-pollinating several flowers. Use a painter's brush to transfer pollen from the anther of the male flower to the stigma of the female. If you get fruit on only the flowers you pollinated, you need more pollinators. Make sure you aren't killing bees by overusing insecticides.

Tomatoes are wind-pollinated and not dependent on pollinators. However, they have another potential problem: temperature. Tomatoes normally won't set if the night temperature is below 50 degrees F due to sparse pollen production. They also won't set when night temperatures are above 75 degrees F and day temperatures are above 95 degrees F with dry, hot winds. (WU)

Tomato Leaf-Spot Diseases



This is the time of year that two common leaf-spot diseases appear on tomato plants. Septoria leaf spot and early blight are both characterized by brown spots on the leaves.

Septoria leaf spot usually appears earlier in the season than early blight and produces small dark spots. Spots made by early blight are much larger and often have a distorted “target” pattern of concentric circles. Heavily infected leaves will eventually turn yellow and drop. Older leaves are more susceptible than younger ones, so these diseases often start at the bottom of the plant and work upward.

Mulching and caging or staking help keep plants off the ground and less vulnerable because air circulation is better and foliage dries quicker than in plants allowed to sprawl. Mulching also helps prevent water splashing and carrying disease spores to the plant.

In some years, tomatoes will develop these diseases even when all the recommendations are followed. In such cases, fungicides are helpful. Be sure to cover both upper and lower leaf surfaces, and reapply fungicide if rainfall removes it. Plants usually become susceptible when the tomato fruit is about the size of a walnut. Chlorothalonil is a good choice for fruiting plants because it has a 0-day waiting period, meaning that fruit can be harvested once the spray is dry.

Chlorothalonil can be found in numerous products including Fertilome Broad-Spectrum Fungicide, Ortho Garden Disease Control, GardenTech Daconil and others. Be sure to start protecting plants when the disease is first seen. It is virtually impossible to stop it on heavily infected plants. (WU)

FRUIT

Cherry Leaf Spot

It is nearly time to control the fungus disease cherry leaf spot. This disease causes small, pinpoint dark lesions on the leaves. The black spots often fall out, resulting in a shot-hole appearance. Numerous lesions turn light green, then yellow,



and eventually the infected leaf will drop. Removing diseased leaves at the end of the season can help, but a fungicide at this time of year is also helpful. Try using chlorothalonil (Dacthal, Fertilome Broad-Spectrum Fungicide, Ortho Garden Disease Control, or others), captan (Fruit Tree Spray) or myclobutanil (Immunox). Reapply two weeks after the first application. (WU)



'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.

First-year canes are called primocanes. They emerge from the soil and grow but 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.

Blackberries not grown on a trellis are normally tipped when they reach 3 to 4 feet. Trellis-grown blackberries are tipped when primocanes are 10 to 12 inches above the top wire. Black or purple raspberries are tipped at 30 to 40 inches if trellised, and 24 to 30 inches if not supported. Red raspberries are not tipped. (WU)

ORNAMENTALS

Propagating Woody Plants from Softwood Cuttings



Now is a good time to start new trees and shrubs by taking cuttings from new spring growth. Though these softwood cuttings root relatively easily, they are susceptible to wilting and require close attention to watering and relative humidity.

It is best if cuttings are taken after a rain or several hours after the plant has been well watered to ensure the cuttings remain turgid. Stems should be mature enough that they snap rather than bend when placed under pressure. Cuttings should be about 6 inches

long with cuts made at an angle just below a node, the area where a leaf joins the stem. The angle provides a larger cut surface and more area for the cutting to callus and root.

Strip off the lower leaves and place the cutting in a moist rooting medium after it has been dipped in rooting powder. Several rooting media are suitable: sand with peat moss, sand with vermiculite, perlite with peat moss, and perlite with vermiculite. A suitable medium should provide good moisture-holding capacity and be open enough to provide good aeration to the roots. Though some plants can be rooted directly in water, roots formed in water do not adapt well to soil.

Rooting containers vary. Some gardeners prefer flats because the number of cuttings each will hold. Others prefer small, individual pots for each cutting so cuttings can be removed from the propagation environment as they root.

Keep relative humidity high by enclosing the container or containers in a plastic bag. Use wooden dowels or similar objects to keep the plastic off the top of the cuttings. Place the rooting container in bright, indirect light and check often for watering needs. When roots are about 1 inch long, cuttings can be removed from the propagation chamber and potted. (WU)

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