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VEGETABLES

Squash and Pumpkin Harvest



Summer and winter squash differ in how they grow and in what stage they are harvested. Summer squash tends to grow on compact, bushy plants and produce fruit that is harvested while immature. Zucchini, yellow straightneck or crookneck squash and bush scallop are examples of summer squash.

Winter squash such as Butternut, Turban, Acorn, and Hubbard, are produced on large, trailing vines. Pumpkins are also classified as winter squash and share the same basic characteristics. Winter squash

are harvested when mature and those that are eaten are peeled. You can tell that a winter squash (including pumpkins) is mature by using the thumbnail test. Mature fruit will have a hardened rind and will not be easily punctured with a thumbnail.

Pumpkins should be cured by placing them in a warm, dry location for about 10 days. Choose an area where the temperature will not drop below 50 degrees as cold temperatures can shorten storage life. Best curing is achieved at 80 to 85 degrees F and 80 to 85 percent relative humidity. However, such conditions are difficult for a homeowner to produce, so do the best you can. Butternut, Acorn, Turban, Hubbard and other squash types should be moved directly into storage without curing.

Acorn squash stores best at a temperature of 50 degrees F and 50 to 75 percent relative humidity. However, it has the shortest storage time of 5 to 8 weeks even if these recommendations are followed. These conditions are also best for Butternut and Turban squash as well as pumpkins but these are more stable and will last from 2 to 3 months. Hubbards are the storage kings (5 to 6 months) but prefer a range that is a bit warmer (50 to 55 degrees F) and more humid (70 to 75 percent) than other types. (WU)

FRUIT

Storing Apples



You can enjoy apples from January to June with the right conditions. Some apple cultivars can be stored for longer periods than others. Some cultivars will stay in firm, crisp condition for about 6 to 8 months with good storage conditions. The approximate length of time cultivars will keep well under refrigerated conditions are as follows:

Wealthy: 60 days
Paulared: 90 days
Gala: 120 days
Jonathan: 120 days
Grimes Golden: 120 days
Golden Delicious: 150 days
Empire: 150 days
Delicious: 160 days
Braeburn: 180 days
Idared: 200 days
Rome Beauty: 220 days
Winesap: 220 days
Fuji: 240 days
Granny Smith: 240 days
Arkansas Black: 240 days

The condition of the apples and how they are stored will strongly influence the storage period. Some guidelines to help assure good quality and maximum storage life of apples include:

- * Store only the best quality.
- * Pick as they are first maturing.
- * Avoid skin breaks, disease or insect damage, and bruises on individual fruit.
- * Store in a plastic bag to help retain moisture in the apples. The bag should have a few small holes for air exchange. The bags of apples may be stored in boxes to prevent bruising if they must be stacked or moved from time to time.
- * Refrigerate at about 35 degrees F. An extra refrigerator works well.
- * Sort about every 30 to 40 days to remove fruit that may be beginning to rot. (WU)

TURFGRASS

Power Raking and Core Aeration



September is the optimum time to power rake or core aerate tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass lawns. These grasses should be coming out of their summer doldrums and beginning to grow more vigorously. This is a good time to reconsider what we are trying to accomplish with these practices.

Power raking is primarily a thatch control operation. It can be excessively damaging to the turf if not done carefully. For lawns with one half inch of thatch or less, I don't recommend power

raking. For those who are unsure what thatch is, it is a springy layer of light brown organic matter that resembles peat moss and is located above the soil but below the grass foliage.

Core aeration is a much better practice for most lawns. By removing cores of soil, core aeration relieves compaction, hastens thatch decomposition, and improves water, nutrient, and oxygen movement into the soil profile. This operation should be performed when the soil is just moist enough so that it crumbles easily when worked between the fingers. Enough passes should be made so that the holes are spaced about 2 to 3 inches apart. Ideally, the holes should penetrate 2.5 to 3 inches deep. The cores can be left on the lawn to decompose naturally (a process that usually takes two or three weeks, depending on soil type), or they can be broken up with a vertical mower set just low enough to nick the cores, and then dragged with a section of chain link fence or a steel doormat. The intermingling of soil and thatch is beneficial to the lawn. (WU)

PESTS

Mimosa Webworm on Honeylocust



Honeylocust trees on the K State campus are browning due to mimosa webworm. Damage is caused by the larvae, which mat leaves together with webbing and use them as a nest. These nests are normally found on the tips of branches and appear as brown areas from a distance. Closer inspection reveals the white webbing. Mature larvae are 0.5 inches long, light green to dark brown and sport five longitudinal white stripes. The adults are silvery gray moths with small black spots on the wings. Mimosa webworm can severely

defoliate trees. However, if the damage occurs late (such as now), healthy trees are not

significantly harmed. Also, it's late enough in the season that spraying will not help the trees. If mimosa webworm is a yearly problem on your honeylocusts, apply an insecticide such as BT (Dipel or Thuricide) earlier in the year when you first notice webbing. (WU)

Euonymus Scale



Euonymus scales look like small white cottony spots on affected euonymus foliage. Leaves eventually turn yellow and die as feeding continues. Males are white and elongated, and females are brown and oval shaped and about 1/16 inch long. Large numbers congregate on the undersides of leaves, twigs, and stems. About 60 days are required to complete a generation. In Kansas, there are two generations per year. This is the time of the year for the second-generation crawlers to appear. Crawlers are quite small and

you may need a magnifying glass to see them.

The second generation normally appears in late August to early September. Check to be sure crawlers are present before treating. Labeled insecticides include malathion and acephate (Hi-Yield Acephate or Ortho Systemic Insect Killer).

Control is probably impossible for euonymus that has been heavily attacked and is in very poor health. Therefore, complete removal and destruction of the infested plants (including roots) is suggested. (WU)

By Jiminy – What's With All of the Crickets?



It seems that every year, cricket activities attract attention in late summer and into fall. The most familiar crickets are the relatively large field crickets that are up to an inch long. Most are black, but some may appear lighter because of their coppery-colored wings. Field crickets seldom cause concern until weather turns cold and they begin seeking shelter indoors. Suddenly, what was once considered melodious night music, is regarded as an annoying distraction.

Striped ground crickets are causing a disturbance now. Reaching ½-inch in length, they are tiny compared to field crickets and brown to brownish-red in color. They are aptly named for their prominent body stripes.

The crickets visible now were hatched from eggs deposited last fall. Nymphs developed this summer primarily in moist environments such as poorly drained marsh and pasture areas, and grassy sites along streams, lakes and ponds. By the end of July, nymphs underwent a final molt

and became winged adults. Highly mobile adults are attracted to brightly lit areas, and large numbers can be found near storefront security lights. Homeowners are spared this onslaught because porch lights are not as attractive as security lights, but anyone making a late night trip to the gas pump is likely to encounter crickets. They can be a nuisance for business owners who must start the day by clearing sidewalks and entryways of dead crickets. Little can be done about cricket gatherings this time of year. Movement indoors is minimal until they seek warm quarters later in the fall. (BB)

FLOWERS

Dividing Daylilies



Daylilies need to be divided every three to four years to maintain vigor. Though they may be divided in early spring before growth starts, it is more common to divide them this time of year. Many gardeners cut back the tops to about half their original height to make plants easier to handle.

Daylilies have a very tough root system that can make them difficult to divide while in place.

Dividing in place is practical if it hasn't been long since the last division. In such cases, a spading fork can be used to peel fans from the existing clump. If the plants have been in place longer and are well grown together, it is more practical to divide them after the entire clump has been dug. Use a spade to lift the entire clump out of the ground. Although it is possible to cut the clump apart with a sharp spade, you'll save more roots by using two spading forks back to back to divide the clump into sections. Each section should be about the size of a head of cauliflower. An easier method involves using a stream of water from a garden hose to wash the soil from the clump, and then rolling the clump back and forth until the individual divisions separate.

Space divisions 24 to 30 inches apart, and set each at its original depth. The number of flowers will be reduced the first year after division but will return to normal until the plants need to be divided again. (WU)

MISCELLANEOUS

Sunflowers – Harvesting and Roasting Seeds

Sunflowers are usually ready to be harvested beginning in mid September and running into October. Though seed heads can be allowed to ripen on the plant, they will need protection from birds. Try covering the heads with a paper sack or cheesecloth once the petals start turning brown. A



twist tie or rubber band can be used to secure the covering. This will not only help keep birds out but will prevent ripened seeds from dropping out of the head.

Check for maturity by looking for the following signs:

- Florets in the center of the flower disk (the brown center) should be shriveled.
- Heads should have turned down.
- The backside of the head should be a lemon yellow color.

The ultimate check, of course, is to pull a few seeds to see if they have turned the traditional black with white stripes. Empty shells usually indicate a lack of pollination earlier in the year.

If heads are to remain uncovered, harvest when a few seeds start turning the traditional color. The flavor will not be as high as with seed allowed to ripen on the plants but less seed will be lost. Cut the heads and place in a paper sack. Some people prefer to cut the heads with about a foot of stem attached and then hang them upside down in a dry, well ventilated area. A paper bag or cheesecloth can be placed over the heads to prevent seed from dropping during the drying process. Seeds can easily be removed from dry heads with a gentle rubbing action.

Roasting Seeds

Raw, mature seeds may easily be prepared at home by covering unshelled seeds with salted water (2 qts. of water to 1/4 to 2 cup salt). Bring to a boil and simmer 2 hours or soak in the salt solution overnight. Drain and dry on absorbent paper.

Put sunflower seeds in a shallow pan in a 300 degree F oven for 30 to 40 minutes or until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Take out of the oven and add 1 teaspoon of melted butter or margarine, or cooking oil per 1 cup of seeds. Stir to coat. Put on an absorbent towel. Salt to taste. (WU)

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