The Sandy Post

Home & Garden

What's cooking?

Strawberry pie timely, tasty

by SARA SEWELL

Sunny Chicken Casserole

1 and one-third cups water
½ cup chopped celery
½ tsp. salt
Three-fourths cup chopped cooked chicken or turkey or 1 can (6½ ounces) chunk chicken
Two-thirds cup uncooked regular rice
1 tsp. instant minced onion
1 can (10½ ounces) condensed cream of celery soup, undiluted
¼ cup milk
1 tbsp. lemon juice
2 tbsp. fine, dry bread crumbs
4 tsp. paprika
1 jar (2 ounce) chopped pimento
8 hard-cooked eggs, wedged
2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
Parsley sprigs for garnish, optional

In a large saucepan, bring water, rice, celery, onion and salt to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until water is absorbed, about 15 to 20 minutes. Stir in soup, chicken, milk, pimento and lemon juice. Add eggs and toss gently to mix. Turn into a greased 1½ quart casserole.

Combine crumbs, cheese and paprika. Sprinkle over casserole. Bake in preheated 350-degree oven until bubbly hot, about 20 minutes. Garnish with parsley sprigs.

Serves 4 to 6. From the files of Ausie Smothers, Albertville, Ala.

Strawberry Pie

1 cup sugar
1 cup water
2 tbsp. cornstarch
1 package (3 ounce) strawberry gelatin
1 pint or more fresh strawberries, sliced

Mix the first three ingredients and cook over medium heat until clear, stirring constantly. Then stir in package of gelatin allowing it to dissolve completely. Cool. Add to this mixture a pint or more of sliced berries. Allow to set in refrigerator until partially congealed. Pour into cooked pie shell. Cover with whipped topping. Chill and serve.

Serves 6. From the files of Ausie Smothers, Albertville, Ala.

Blox of Fudge

4 envelopes unflavored gelatin
½ cup sugar
1½ cups boiling water
1 package (12 ounces) semi-sweet chocolate chips

In a medium saucepan, mix unflavored gelatin with sugar. Add boiling water and stir until gelatin is completely dissolved. Add chocolate chips; stir with wire whip over low heat until chocolate is melted and thoroughly blended, about five minutes. Pour into an 8 or 9-inch square pan and chill until firm.

To serve, cut into 1-inch squares. Other variations: Rocky Road Blox, stir in ½ cup each chopped nuts and marshmallow cream before pouring into pan; for Cherry Fudge Blox, stir in ½ cup chopped Maraschino cherries. Store in covered container in refrigerator.

Makes 60 to 80 squares. From the files of Lynne Kelly, Santa Barbara, Cal.

Worms damaging to fruit

Biting into a freshly-picked apple, cherry or pear only to find a worm burrowing through it can be an appetite-killing experience.

The best way to keep worms from taking up residence in peaches, cherries and apples is to start a spraying program for home fruit trees now.

Early control of the codling moth and cherry fruit fly will help keep the fruit free of worm infestations. The cherry fruit fly emerges in early June and begins laying eggs under the skin of developing cherries. The eggs hatch in five to seven days and maggots mature in 14 to 20 days.

Once eggs have been deposited in cherries, nothing can be done to prevent wormy cherries. Control is directed to killing the flies during the interval between their emergence and the time they deposit eggs, a period of about 10 days.

Methoxychlor, Sevin and diazinon are recommended for use on the cherry fruit fly. Apply the sprays beginning in early June with additional applications every seven to 10 days until harvest.

The flies rest on foliage other than that of cherry trees, so spray nearby trees and shrubs if possible.

The codling moth is the adult stage of the worm that infests apples and pears. The adults lay eggs throughout the summer, making control difficult.

Several insecticides are available that provide excellent control. Diazinon and methoxychlor should be applied to apple and pear trees now and repeated at three week intervals through the summer.

Gardeners should be sure to follow all label directions on any sprays used.

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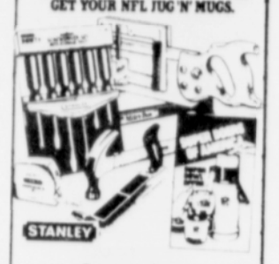

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Insect damage probable

Organic gardening challenging task

Growing vegetables organicly can be a challenging experience; it requires extra gardening effort in the form of resourcefulness, time and patience.

Potential organic gardeners should be aware of the problems they will face and be willing to accept the fact that at least some of the vegetables they grow will suffer insect damage.

All gardeners should use compost and manure as much as possible. The use of organic matter in garden soil improves its water-holding capacity and its ability to supply nutrients.

However, organic materials alone won't produce fertile garden soil in a single gardening season. It takes time. During the first year, only 50 percent or so of the nutrients in manure are available to plants. The rate differs with plant and manure types. Generally, the nutrients in poultry manure are more readily available to plants than nutrients in other types of manure.

Gardeners should not count on just one type of fertilizer to supply all the nutrients that vegetable plants need. The three primary nutrients plants need, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, are seldom all contained in one type of commercial organic fertilizer. These fertilizers include blood meal, rock phosphate and wood ashes.

There are several cultural practices organic gardeners can use to control insects, although none are foolproof. All require extra labor and, if practiced diligently, can pay off with a good harvest.

Crops that are especially susceptible to insect attack should be avoided by organic gardeners. Organic gardening is difficult for cole crops, such as radishes, cauliflower, cabbage, broccoli and turnips, and for root crops, such as potatoes and carrots.

Vegetable crops such as beans, peas, chard, spinach, squash and cucumbers are more insect-tolerant.

Insect infestations can be isolated and insect damage reduced by interplanting several crops in the same row, rather than having a solid block of the same crop. Insects can be handpicked and destroyed in small gardens.

Some insects can be temporarily washed off garden plants with a strong stream of water from a garden hose.

Placing collars of stiff paper around the stems of tomato plants will help protect them against tomato cutworms. The collar should extend one inch below and two inches above the soil surface.

Square pieces of heavy cardboard placed on the ground around the bases of cabbage plants help protect them against root maggots.

Cloth or papers hoods can be placed over young plants to ward off early insect attacks. They will also preserve heat and prevent wind and hail damage to the plants.

Good sanitation may be the most important aspect of organic gardening. Keeping the garden clear of debris helps prevent both insect infestations and outbreaks of fungus diseases which affect plants.

Many garden insects overwinter in plant debris. Spade under old plants, such as spinach, lettuce and cabbage, during the summer, or add them to the compost pile.

Dispose of discarded vegetables immediately because insect pests will continue to breed in them.

As soon as a garden plant is no longer producing, spade it under or put it in the compost pile. Remove weeds and other unwanted plants from the garden whenever they appear. The often harbor many insect pests, particularly aphids.

There are a number of naturally-derived insecticides which are available.

Control of cabbage worms can be aided through use of the bacterial insecticide, bacillus thuringiensis, which is not harmful to humans, wildlife or other insects. Trade names include Dipel and Thuricide.

Pyrethin and rotenone are two other effective natural insecticides. Both can be used safely just before harvesting the crop and neither is toxic to warm-blooded animals.

Rotenone kills a wide range of insects, such as caterpillars, aphids and certain beetles. It is considered the best general purpose insecticide available to organic gardeners.

Biological controls are limited in effectiveness. Ladybugs and praying mantises may do some good, but not for an extended period of time. Light traps kill both good and bad insects and may attract more than they kill.