

Organic gardeners face special growing needs

Organic gardeners must deal with many limits on the types of materials they will use in the garden. Fertilizer is a good example.

Since synthetic materials are out, sources of plant nutrients for the organic garden are compost, manure and some commercial organic fertilizer.

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.

Use a packaged potting soil or composted soil available at local garden centers. These soils make

for excellent container gardening because they are light-weight, sterile and drain well. A mixture containing one part each of perlite or peat moss, sterile garden soil and sand can be made at home.

Plant vegetable seeds according to the instructions on the seed package. After planting, soak the soil with water, taking care not to wash out the seeds.

Vegetables grown in containers need fertilizer application regularly because the soil will leach the nutrients out more quickly than regular garden soil. A soluble, all-purpose fertilizer that can be mixed before-

hand in water is the easiest type to use with container plants.

This type of fertilizer should be applied every second or third day. Dry fertilizers sprinkled on top of the soil offer an alternative. If they are used, they should be applied every three weeks.

Proper watering is also essential. The soil in containers can dry out quickly, especially on a concrete patio in full sun. Daily watering is not unusual.

Water when the soil feels dry and continue watering until the water runs out the drain holes. However, do not let the soil become soggy and avoid leaving water standing on top of the soil.

Plants may need protection from extreme heat caused by light reflection from pavement or walls. This is especially true with white plastic and metal containers. Simply move containers exposed to extreme heat to a cooler spot during the hottest

part of the day.

Plants also may need to be sheltered during severe rain or wind storms.

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

Don't count on one source of fertilizer to supply all the nutrients that vegetable plants need. The three primary nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) that plants need are seldom all contained in one type of commercial organic fertilizer (such as blood meal, rock phosphate or wood ashes).

Don't forget the "commons"

Don't forget soda, vinegar and ammonia!

A tablespoon of baking soda to a quart of warm water is great for cleaning the inside of refrigerators and freezers, vacuum bottles and corks, coffee makers that are not made of aluminum and glass cookware with burned-on food.

Washing soda cleans drains and traps, gas burners and greasy pots and pans. It also softens water.

Vinegar cuts grease and removes cloudy film on windows.

A solution of suds, vinegar and ammonia will cut soil buildup behind the range and refrigerator.



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Garden weed wars are on the rise

For home gardeners, the spring and summer weed wars are just now beginning in earnest.

Weeds are a serious threat to vegetable gardens and unless gardeners wage a constant campaign to eliminate them they will compete with and eventually destroy garden vegetable plants.

Don't depend on chemical sprays to control weeds. The use of herbicides on such a small scale isn't practical.

There aren't any all-purpose herbicides available for use on the many different kinds of weeds that grow in gardens.

You may find a chemical that will control some of the weeds but if it's good at killing weeds it will probably be effective on vegetable plants as well.

The most efficient way to destroy weeds is through use of a hoe. Shallow cultivation is recommended in the garden, especially when the garden plants are young. Try to cut

the weeds off just below ground level with the hoe.

Perennial weeds such as morning glory and quackgrass should be removed every week. A light scraping action with a hoe works best.

If a rototiller is used to remove weeds, keep the blades as near the surface of the soil as possible to avoid damaging the root systems of the garden crops.

To keep the garden clear of weeds, cultivate regularly and preferably by hand.

Bonding between babies, parents begins at young age

A remarkable relationship is developed between parents and infants during the early months of life. No one is exactly sure about the mysteries of bonding, but in the hours after birth, mothers, fathers and newborns start falling madly in love with one another. Some hospitals place newborns in moth-

er's arms, next to her skin, breasts, and the sound of her beating heart. Fathers hold and caress their newborn. All these things only enhance that bonding.

Although baby's attachment to parents does not instantly occur, observers report some infants show preferences for parents voices as early as the third day. It is believed that the soothing effects of handling, feeding and care of baby promotes attachment to them.

Attachment is a special relationship between a child and adult that endures through time. They need a continuously responsive adult who meets their need for positive interactions and responds to distresses of hunger and discomfort. Infants need to be constantly reassured that the world is a good place in

which to live. That assurance comes from dependable caregivers who may be a parent or an adoptive parent. Parents of ailing babies should be encouraged to handle their infants in the nursery as much as possible so bonding will occur.

The skills of mothering and fathering do not require special knowledge or social graces. They do require awareness and a decision on the part of parents to give a child the best start they can. Smiles, gentle pats, kisses and hugs give baby a different message than frowns, impatient handling and little touching. Your manner of attention tells infants how worthwhile they are. Infants' responses are limited at first. But sometime in the second month, don't be surprised if baby stops in the middle of feeding

to look lovingly at you. In later months, you will notice that your infant, who has had steady, gentle attention to cries and is picked up and handled frequently, will fuss less and be more alert than those who haven't had this advantage. Some things seem to go together—attention from parents and trusting, confident children.

During the first year a sense of trust or mistrust of the world and people develops. Infants whose needs are promptly met, are played with and talked to, get the idea that the world is a safe place, and people are helpful and dependable.

How do parents build attachment and trust?

- * Respond promptly to baby's cries.
- * Talk to babies, all the time telling them what you're doing.
- * Hold babies securely while bathing as you let them feel the warm water around them.

* Play with baby's toes, fingers, hair, cheeks and legs.

* Cuddle baby closely while feeding and relaxing together.

* Concentrate on smiling at baby's face when dressing or diapering.

Will all this attention spoil infants? No. Catering to infants in the first year usually results in a happier, more alert one-year-old. Infants act to satisfy their needs of the moment. The more adequately needs are met, the more satisfied they become. Crying is normal, waking at night is normal and curiosity is natural and desirable.

Infants have a hard time if parents expect them to understand directions and obey rules before they are able. Lots of child abuse occurs to children under two. Parents become angered when infants do not remember or behave according to adult expectations that are beyond baby's capability.

Weight loss combines several components

Before choosing a weight control program consider how other dieters rate different methods of losing weight and maintaining that weight loss.

In a recent survey a wide range of individuals were asked their opinions on the most successful method of achieving weight loss. Thirteen percent of the men and women surveyed preferred calorie restriction only, while four percent preferred exercise only.

The majority of those surveyed, 58 percent, said calorie restriction plus exercise was the most successful method, notes Margaret Lewis, Oregon State University Extension nutrition specialist. None of those surveyed said that formula diets or pills were the most successful.

Results were similar when survey group members were asked what method they believed most

successful in maintaining weight loss. This study and others indicates that the help of a support group increases the probability that the weight loss will be maintained.

The best weight control program is one that includes several components. These include moderate calorie restriction, increased exercise, and weight loss goal of one to two pounds per week. Also, access to information on behavior change and someone to give you support in your efforts will increase your chances for success.

To be successful the goals of a weight control program should be realistic for you. Don't expect to "diet away pounds" and then return to your regular behavior patterns and stay at the lower weight. The name of the diet game is change, a permanent change in the way you eat and exercise.

Thin vegetable plants

Garden vegetables need room to grow. The gardener must provide this living space by thinning the vegetable plants.

Many gardeners plant too much seed and then become so proud of how their garden is growing that they don't thin out the plantings enough.

Rows of plantings that are crowded, with individual plants too close together, will yield stunted, poorly developed vegetables, or no

vegetables at all. Most seed packets indicate the proper spacing between plants. Follow these seed packet instructions carefully.

Onions, carrots and beets need space to grow both above and beneath the ground surface. The leaves of these plants are essential for gathering the sunlight the plant needs to manufacture the carbohydrates stored in the edible root or bulb.

Communicate openly with aging parents

Adults often find an aged parent needs support at a time when their own lives and responsibilities are the most complicated. If you are in your 30s, 40s or 50s you may feel pulled in several directions—raising your children, being supportive to a spouse, helping aged parents and or working—all at the same time. It's not unusual to wonder "Why me?" or to ask yourself, "What about my life?"

You may be adjusting to your own age-related changes—retirement, reduced income, widowhood, or decreased health—and may not be able to provide the assistance your parent needs.

It is essential to communicate openly. Open, honest communication helps build and maintain effective relationships. Often times, family members are not honest or direct

enough with each other. Adult sons daughters don't always tell the truth; sometimes they say only what they think their parents want to hear or what they think won't upset their parents. This tends to create mistrust and wastes energy as family members "walk on ice" with each other.

"I" messages promote communication. With "I" messages, the individual speaks from personal feelings and identifies both the specific behavior or situation or concern and its effect on him or her. An example of an "I" message is, "Mom, because of your recent fall, I'm concerned about your safety living in this house alone; I'm afraid you'll fall again and not be found for several hours—or even days." Mother is much more likely to be willingly to discuss the situation if

you communicate feelings directly instead of with a "You" message (You must move, mom; this home just isn't safe for you.)

Adequately expressing your thoughts and feelings to another person is only a part of effective communication. You also need to actively listen and emphasize—sense and understand the feelings and emotional needs of another. The worst thing to say to a person is "You shouldn't feel..." or "There's no reason for you to feel..."

If you listen actively, the person to whom you are listening feels your care and concern. When older parents experience changes and losses, they may experience many feelings—fear, anger, grief, helplessness and frustration. Having an adult son or daughter who is willing to listen and understand such

feelings makes it easier for parents to talk openly about their situation, concerns and feelings. An example of an active listening response is, "I sense you're feeling angry and disappointed because neither Bob or I came to visit you last week."

The acceptance that you give through active listening may help to break down old barriers and allow a new relationship to develop.

Inaccurate interpretation of messages often causes needless misunderstandings and conflict between parents and adult sons and daughters. If you receive unclear or conflicting messages, request clarification using statements such as, "I'm not sure what you mean by..." or "Is my understanding of what you said... correct?"

How to make delicious sugarless jams

There's nothing quite like pulling homemade jam from the freezer in the dead of winter. And, it's simple to make lower-calorie jams. Here's how.

To prepare fruit for jam, sort and wash fully ripe fruit. Remove

stems, caps and pits. Peel fruits such as peaches and apricots.

Jams contain fruit pulp, or pieces, which tend to stick to the kettle during cooking. Stir constantly to prevent scorching.

The cooking time for the pectin recipes is one minute at a full boil. The full boil is reached when bubbles form over the entire surface of the mixture.

Jams can be made without pectin by the long-boil method. In place of sugar, you can substitute artificial sweetener. Use two tablespoons liquid sweetener for each cup of sugar.

Cook the crushed fruit with the liquid sweetener until the product has thickened slightly. The jam will thicken more upon cooling, but these jams will be thinner than jams made with sugar.

Sugarless Peach Jam with Pectin (Makes one pint)

- 4 cups peeled peaches
- 3 to 4 teaspoons liquid artificial sweetener
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid

1 ½-ounce package powdered fruit pectin

Crush peaches in saucepan. Stir in sweetener, fruit pectin, lemon juice and ascorbic acid. Bring to a boil; boil one minute. Remove from heat. Continue to stir two minutes. Pour into freezer containers, leaving ½-inch head space. Cover. Store in freezer or refrigerator.

One tablespoon equals 10 calories.

Hoe, hoe, hoe those weeds!

As garden vegetable plants begin to grow, don't forget to use your hoe—on the weeds.

It's worth repeating that one of the most important garden chores at this time of the growing season is the removal of weeds that compete with vegetable plants in the home garden.

And, don't forget that the hoe is the preferred instrument for getting rid of garden weeds.

Using chemical sprays to elimi-

nate weeds in a home garden just isn't practical. Hoeing out the weeds may be a more physical task than spraying, but hoeing is more effective and efficient.

With a hoe, you take out the specific plants that are unwanted. Chemical sprays may be good at eliminating undesirable plants, but the chemical may kill some, or all, of the wanted plants as well.

So don't be afraid to do a little garden hoeing. Your garden will appreciate it.

Cutworms could be working

The disappearance of foliage and stems from plants in the home garden is a good indication that cutworms are at work. The cutworm active in the spring is the stem-cutter type. It feeds on young seedlings as they emerge from the soil.

When full grown, cutworms are about one inch long. They vary in color, but are usually gray, brown or black.

Cutworms have good appetites and can do a lot of damage in home gardens. Dark green droppings around the plants are a sign of their activity. Cutworms curl into a e-shape when disturbed.

These pests can be controlled in small gardens by handpicking them from the plant while they are feeding at night. During the day, cutworms can be found in the soil around the base of the plant. Slightly scraping the soil with the fingers

usually uncovers them. Methoxychlor, used according to label directions, is an effective control agent, especially for young cutworms.

Another control measure is to cut 1 quart milk cartons into thirds and place each third around young plants. These should be placed about 1 to 1½ inches into the soil.

Buying your own telephone saves \$

If you're still renting a telephone, you're paying from \$20 to \$40 a year for the privilege. Better to buy once and pocket savings from then on. Quality phones range from \$40 to a basic desk model to over \$100 for designer or high-tech models.