

Commercial Plant Food Use Pays Off With Superior Quality, Fast Growth

By producing more vegetables from the same area, and encouraging fast growth with superior quality, commercial plant food will easily pay its way. It is one of the few things which has risen little in cost, since pre-war days.

It saves labor, too, especially in the vegetable plot, which may be reduced in area if the crops are well fed. Of course, if plenty of animal manure is available, less commercial plant food will be needed, but the amateur who has the former is rare.

Precision Sowing Of Garden Helps At Harvest Time

While seed sowing is not a precision job—especially when nature does it—gardeners soon learn that much can be saved if it is done with some skill and judgment.

If sown too thinly, there may be vacant spaces in the row, caused by local mishaps such as drowning, or washing out, or an attack of fungus. If sown too thickly, seedlings will come up crowded, and there will be extra work in thinning out the excess plant.

Some seeds are often sown so thickly that 90 per cent of the plants must be sacrificed, in order to give the remainder room enough to mature. This is waste of both seed and labor. Then what will serve as a guide to follow?

As a general rule, not more than 15 seeds to an inch should be needed, when seed is of standard germination, and the soil is fairly porous. Start with that rule, and then make these exceptions:

Double Rate
If seed is of sub-standard germination, or known to be old, double that rate. Carrot seedlings are feeble, and often have difficulty breaking through the soil if it is at all inclined to crust. Use twice as much carrot seed if you have doubts about your soil being porous enough. In the case of large seeds, such as beet, swiss chard, and peas, which can be spaced precisely, sow them an inch apart.

Bush beans usually are allowed to grow four inches apart in the row. If you wish to avoid vacant spaces, a good way is to sow beans in pairs, spaced four inches apart. Seldom will both seeds fail to grow. If both grow, one can easily be pulled up, or let them both develop, since twin plants will do as well as singles.

Rules Given
The best way to apply commercial plant food depends somewhat on the acidity of the soil.

1. On soils which are acid, testing below pH6, plant food should be concentrated in bands or pockets, not touching plant roots but within each reach.

2. On sweet soils, test in g above pH6, spread plant food thoroughly into the soil, evenly and deeply.

If you are in doubt about the acidity of your garden soil, use the first method, especially if the soil contains considerable clay. To apply, stretch the line to mark the row in which seeds are to be planted. Then not less than two inches away on either side, make a furrow four inches deep. Four plant food into each furrow at the rate of one pound (or pint) for 50 feet, and cover it with earth. Then make the drill into which seeds are to be sown and proceed with planting as usual.

The standard application of a balanced plant food is 4 pounds per 100 square feet (a space 10x10 feet square). You may figure one pound per pint, so an area 10 by 10 feet requires two quarts. One quart will feed 50 square feet and one pint 25 square feet.

Amounts
Where smaller quantities are required use a rounded table spoon per square foot. For convenience, here is a table showing some common areas and the standard balanced plant food application for each:

5'x5' equals 25 sq. ft.—requires 1 lb. (or 1 pint).
5'x10' equals 50 sq. ft.—requires 2 lbs. (or 1 quart).
10'x10' equals 100 sq. ft.—requires 4 lbs. (or 2 quarts).
20'x30' equals 600 sq. ft.—requires 24 lbs.
25'x100' equals 2,500 sq. ft.—requires 100 lbs.

Time Saved When Garden Rows Are Straight, Even

When vegetables or flowers are grown in rows, every five minutes you spend in making the rows straight, parallel, and the whole layout square and precise will save an hour in the work of caring for the garden later on.

Payment in pride will be even greater, since an orderly garden is pleasant to work in, and to show your neighbors. An exception to the rule for straight rows may be made in hilly country, where the wash of soil may be checked by contour planting. Here rows should run at right angles to the slope, but they should still be parallel, though on rounded slopes they will be curved.

Double Work
Serpentine slanting or uneven rows will double the work of cultivation, and give an appearance of incompetence to the garden.

Rows are spaced with varying distances between them, depending on two factors: The needs of the crop, and the convenience of cultivation. In rich soil vegetables may be spaced more closely than in poor, but when spaced too close together, it is difficult to cultivate between the rows.

For crops growing 12 inches tall or less, rows may be spaced 10 inches to a foot apart and cultivated with hand tools. For cultivation with a wheel hoe, 18 inches is likely to be found a minimum distance, since it is necessary to avoid disturbing the roots of the vegetables, whatever tool is used.

Taller vegetables and those that make vines, large bushes, or have a sprawling habit, must be given more distance between rows. In small gardens, 4 feet will usually be the maximum distance, given only for such crops as bush squash and cucumbers.

Decide on Crops
First, decide on the crops you will grow, which should be those that your family likes, or ought to like. Next, determine the quantity of each which you will try to produce, which should be the amount you will eat in the fresh state, plus what you will put up for next winter.

In the case of the short-harvest crops, plan for several plantings of each, spaced so that one harvest will follow another throughout the season.

Having prepared your production schedule, make a simple plan of your garden and proceed to lay it out accurately before beginning to sow. This plan should be kept through the season, to guide you in second plantings, and enable you to note upon it errors in planning you may have committed, and which can be corrected another year.

Symptoms Of Little Known Illness Told

Dr. A. Erin Merkel, county health officer, said today that five cases of infectious mononucleosis have been reported in the county the past week. In describing the little known disease, Dr. Merkel said it is an acute infectious disease frequently confused with upper respiratory infections. Symptoms usually follow the line of headache, sore throat, fever, and weakness and exhaustion. Diagnosis is confirmed by a blood test which determines whether there is a disturbance among the components of the white corpuscles in the blood stream.

Dr. Merkel said the incidence of fatality from the disease is "practically nil." Last year, he said, from 12 to 14 cases were reported in the county. It is not definitely known if the disease is contagious though there appears to be some aspects of communicability present. It is most common among children and young adults.

Convalescence sometimes drags on from six weeks to three months, according to Dr. Merkel.

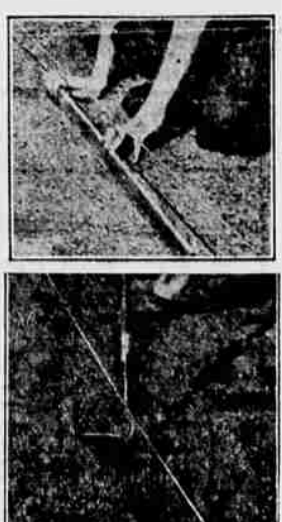
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PROPER SEEDING METHODS AID PRODUCTION—Graphically shown in the pictures above are methods which will aid the home gardener in achieving good yields. At top, hoe handle is used as a drill for medium sized seeds. In small pictures at top, the edge of a board pressed into the ground is used for small seeds, and the corner of a hoe makes a deeper trench for large seeds. In the middle is shown how beans should be sown in pairs, properly spaced, for a good stand. At bottom is demonstrated the proper way of covering seeds with a special porous mixture for use in heavy soils to prevent crusting.

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Shallow Planting Favored In Modern Garden Practice

Modern practice in sowing seeds favors shallow planting. Just how deep to place them is not too important, provided they are not too deep. And the maximum depth in the vegetable garden may be considered to be one to two inches.

Don't bother to measure the depth you plant exactly, as some beginners have been known to do. A good way is to have three depths of "drill," that being the gardeners' word for the shallow trench into which the seed is dropped. The shallowest drill is made by pressing the edge of a narrow board into the soil. This takes the smallest seeds, which are barely covered with soil. The middle depth drill is made with the hoe handle, and is about half an inch deep. The deepest drill is made with the corner of the hoe blade, and runs one to two inches.

Old Rule Good
The old rule that seeds should

be sown at a depth equal to four times their diameter is a fairly good one, though impractical to apply with accuracy of course. It does convey the idea that the larger the seed, the deeper it should be. To some extent the depth of the larger seeds will depend upon the nature of the soil.

In sandy loam they may go a little deeper than in heavy clay; and in hot weather they should be at least twice as deep as in the moist spring weather.

Keep Straight
Above all, in making a drill, keep it straight. Some gardeners use a narrow plank as a ruler. A heavy cord or reels are handy, but any stout cord stretched between two stakes will serve.

But use the line as a guide, and never press the hoe against it, for it will bend, and your garden row may turn out to be serpentine. If this happens, fill up the drill and try it over again.

Zinnia Favorite In U. S. Gardens

Among the flowers which amateurs grow from seed the zinnia stands first in this country. It is a native American which thrives in our hot, dry summers. The seed germinates in a few days, and plants produce their flowers in six weeks.

But they could be more so if gardeners in general knew what a variety of colors and forms the zinnia family includes. Too many grow only the giant double kinds—lovely, it is true—but lovelier when accompanied by those of smaller size, which bloom even more freely and make a better effect in the border.

So many colors, sizes and shapes are found in the long list of zinnias, that an entire garden could be planted with them with excellent effect. They have all the colors except blue, in size their blossoms range from half an inch to six inches across; in height plants grow from six inches to four feet.

One of the most decorative forms is the fantasy type, in which the petals depart wholly from the formal regularity of other doubles, to twist and curl, something like a cactus dahlia. They are charming in flower arrangements, and a group of them in the garden makes a pleasing contrast to neighbors of more sedate behavior.

Zinnias may be started indoors or outdoors, in seed boxes or sown direct in the garden.

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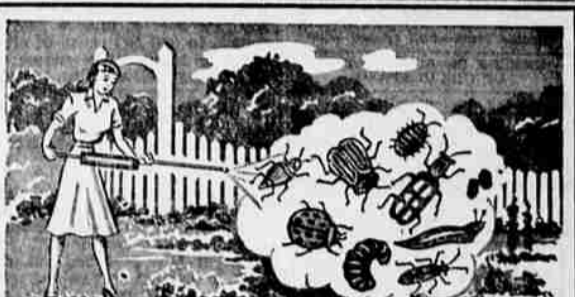
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