



# J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift  
and Garden Center

620 North 500 West Bountiful, Utah 292-0421

The Gardening Newsletter

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## Summer Gardening

*"My Lawn And Some Of My Flowers Are Dying!"* exclaims a frustrated gardener.

*"How Often Are You Watering?"* asks an experienced nurseryman.

*"Oh, I Water Every Day,"* comes the diligent gardener's reply.

*"That is the most likely problem: You are killing your plants with Kindness; you are watering them too much"* explains the horticulturist.

The Silence is deafening as the confused gardener ponders this new information.

Most gardening problems can be attributed to one single factor; WATER. - Too Much or Too Little? How much is enough and when is it too much? That is the million dollar question.

Too much water is just as bad for plants as not enough. Plants that are watered often do not establish strong, healthy roots. When a problem comes along the weak rooted plants are going to die before the strong rooted plants die. Plants that are always kept wet cannot absorb enough oxygen from the soil so the roots start to rot and die. The symptoms of over watering are very similar to those caused by the lack of water. - **The plant wilts and dies.** The reason the plant wilts is that many of the roots have died and the remaining roots cannot absorb water from the soil fast enough to support the leaves and flowers. A simple test to check for 'over or under' water is to watch a wilted plant. If you water a wilted plant and it recovers within a short period of time the plant needed more water. If the wilted plant does not recover it is probably dying from too much water.

A simple gardening fact is **More plants die from too much water than die from the lack of water.**

## Rose Care

Fertilize roses every six to eight weeks from mid-April through mid-August with **Systemic Rose and Flower Care**. This rose fertilizer helps stimulate new blossom development and helps kill unwanted insect pests. Do not fertilize roses after mid-August.

Roses are thirsty plants. Although roses will survive with skimpy watering, they'll bloom their best when their roots are kept moist, not wet, during the growing season, espe-

cially during their blooming season. Water them once or twice a week during the hot weather but do not sprinkle them. If water gets on the blossoms, the flowers will fade and fall off prematurely. Watch for powdery mildew and black spot on the new leaves and stems. Spray regularly with either **Ortho Funginex** or **Greenlight Rose Defense** if you see any signs of these diseases.

## Summer Lawn Care

Fertilize your lawn every six to eight weeks during the spring, early-summer, and fall. Do not fertilize during July or early-August unless you absolutely have to. Your lawn should slow down during the heat of summer. Fertilizer stimulates growth, which is not good for the grass when it is hot. Fertilizer also makes the lawn require more water to keep it growing during the heat. Wait until Labor Day to fertilize your lawn this fall.

**Lawn Fertilizer Tip:** Do not fertilize your lawn at all this fall if the weather is extremely hot **and** if the water will be shut off early. The normal shutoff date for Weber Water is October 15 but the shutoff date may change depending on the water supply and the weather conditions this summer. If the water is shut off early, wait until it starts to snow, in October or November, before applying any fall fertilizer. Put your fall or winter fertilizer right on top of the snow this winter.

A lawn usually needs 1" of water per week during the spring. During the early-summer the lawn needs 1 1/2" of water per week. During the hot summer weather water your lawn 2" per week. Reduce the amount of water to 1 1/2" per week as soon as the weather starts to cool in the late-summer and 1" of water per week in the fall.

How do you know how much 1" of water is? How long does it take to apply 1" of water? Good Questions!

**A rule of thumb is to apply 1/2" of water each time you water your lawn.** During the spring water your lawn 2 times a week to give it 1" of water. Water your lawn 3 times a week in the early-summer to give it 1 1/2" of water. Water your lawn 4 times a week during the hot weather to give it 2" of water. As you can see you do not need to water your lawn longer during the summer, water it more often.

Each lawn has a different sprinkler sys-

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tem; even in the front and back lawns of the same yard. One lawn may need to be watered 10 or 15 minutes. Another lawn may need to be watered 45 to 60 minutes. You need to find out how long it takes your sprinklers to apply 1/2" of water to your lawn.

Set out several (10 or 15) cans in different locations throughout your lawn to measure the amount of water applied. Be sure to set a can in any suspiciously dry spot. Turn on the sprinklers until you have an average of 1/2" of water in all the cans. If you have very little water in one can while you have a lot of water in another can you have a sprinkler system problem. Take time to add a new sprinkler head or two if you have an uneven distribution system. **Do not water the entire lawn long enough to get 1/2" of water in each can!**

## Lawn Weeds

Crabgrass is the name used by everyone to describe almost every grassy weed in their lawn. Fortunately, true crabgrass dies each winter giving you a chance to kill its seed before the next summer. Crabgrass can be controlled without any weed killers if the lawn is well-fed, watered correctly, and is mowed at the proper height. For those of us who have a patch of crabgrass even though we did everything we were supposed to do, there is still one more option left. **Fertilome Crabgrass Killer** is a spray you can apply during July and August to kill any young crabgrass plants (and many other annual grass weeds in the lawn) that are just starting to grow. Don't wait too long, **Fertilome Crabgrass killer** will not work once the weed reaches a certain stage of growth. When the crabgrass starts to produce seeds it is usually too late to kill the plant, then you will have to pull it. You may have to spray two or three times to control crabgrass completely. Spray the edges of the lawn and other areas where you have these unwanted grasses.

Do not spray the entire lawn with any of the **broadleaf weed killers** (Weedit II, Weed B Gon, Weedout, etc) during the heat of summer. Wait until the temperature will stay below 85 degrees for 24 hours before spraying with these types of chemicals. Broadleaf weed killers volatilize (evaporate) when the temperature is too warm and will then drift on to other plants and either damage them or kill them. If you are very careful you can spot treat certain areas of the lawn but do it during the cool part of the day.

Fall is the best time to kill clover, oxalis, morning glory, and many other broadleaf weeds. Until the temperature starts to cool down this fall pull all the weeds you can and spot treat small areas - during cool weather. Oxalis is probably the hardest of these weeds to kill because its goes dormant early in the fall. Watch the weather close and start treating broadleaf weeds as soon as the temperature will stay below 85 degrees for 24 hours. Wait until after a light frost to control clover and morning glory this fall.

## Summer Pruning

Except for the heavy pruning of fruit trees and roses, you can trim nearly all ornamental shrubs and trees anytime during the year. Hedges benefit from several light prunings during the summer. Any deciduous tree or shrub that needs shaping can be pruned lightly during the summer. You can prune entire branches on pine trees but do not just prune the tips of pine trees and most spruce trees during the summer.

Besides pruning shrubs and trees, petunias, marigolds, geraniums, and most flowers can also benefit from a light summer pruning. Don't be afraid to give your flowers a little haircut during the summer to make them more bushy and to stimulate more flowers. After trimming your flowers be sure to give them a little extra fertilizer to make them flower again quickly. Fertilize them with **Fertilome Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer**. This fertilizer contains all the right ingredients to make most flowers bloom again very fast. This fertilizer also helps many "hard-to-bloom" flowers such as Martha Washington Geraniums, Gerbera Daisy, and hanging basket flowers, produce more blossoms.

## Summer Fertilizer

Don't give up fertilizing your vegetable and flower gardens during the heat of the summer. They need regular fertilization to grow and bloom properly. Fertilize every six to eight weeks with **J&L 16-16-8 Multipurpose Fertilizer**. This fertilizer provides a long lasting fertilizer. Stop fertilizing roses and perennial flowers mid-August.

If your flowers need a little extra boost, to make them bloom even a little better for a special occasion, fertilize them with **Fertilome Blooming and Rooting Plant Food**. Fertilize your flowers at least a week or two before that special occasion. This fertilizer is fast acting but needs to be re-applied frequently.

## Protect Trees From Borers

Borers are among the most serious insect pests of shade trees and fruit trees. They often kill trees before you notice a visible problem in the tree. Many borers attack trees that are injured or under stress, and will usually leave healthy trees alone. Once a tree is affected by borers, the borers will often return to that same tree year after year. Borers leave pheromones (hormones) within the tree that attract the female during the egg laying season. You may have only one peach tree in your entire yard that has a borer problem, all the other peach trees may never have a borer problem. The primary defense against borers is not always spraying; sometimes it is just keeping trees healthy. Many borers are difficult to control because you must time the sprays to coincide with the time of egg

laying. Once the borer is inside the tree the larvae are protected from sprays until they mature and leave the tree. For example, some birch tree borers will live inside a tree three or four years before they mature and leave the tree.

Controls must be aimed at the hatching eggs on the trunk of the tree. Insecticides applied at this stage will reduce both the number of adults laying eggs, and the insect pests as they hatch. Spray the tree trunk including all rough bark, large pruned areas, wounds, cankers, or callous growth, thoroughly with **Dursban Borer Spray**. Do not spray dursban on leaves, it is too strong and will often burn the leaves. Each species of borer needs to be sprayed at specific times of the year, so you need to know which borer you are trying to control to treat it effectively.

## Peach Tree Borer

Spray your peach trees for the peach tree borer about the Fourth of July. Spray all stone fruit trees (peach, nectarine, apricot, cherry, plum, almond, etc.) every three to four weeks through September. You only need to spray the lower trunk and soil to control this borer. Do not spray the leaves or fruit.

## Vacation Preparation

If you take a few steps to prepare your plants, hanging baskets, or flower gardens before you leave on your vacation, you can have a nice looking yard when you get home. The best way to take care of your yard while you are gone is to have a friend check and water your plants regularly. Since this is not always practical preventative steps can be beneficial.

1. Move planters into shady areas.
2. Stop fertilizing plants two or three weeks before you leave so the plants will not be growing fast; slow growing plants require less water than fast growing plants.
3. Apply a layer of mulch to help preserve water.
4. Prune some of the leaves and stems to reduce the amount of water the plant will need.
5. Water thoroughly as soon as your return. Do not fertilize plants for a few days after you return. With a little care and planning your yard will look as nice when you get home as it did when you left.

## Cucumbers

Cucumbers require consistent, not constant, watering. Cucumbers are usually trouble free, except for the occasional mildew problem. They tend to have a mildew problem in humid areas and in gardens that are sprinkled. If your plants have a mildew problem try to keep the leaves dry, especially at night. You can also spray with **Greenlight Powdery Mildew Spray** which is supposed to prevent and kill mildew, spider mites, and many other cucumber pests. The biggest complaint cucumber growers have is that the cucumber is bitter. The exact reason for the occasional bitter cucumber is not com-

pletely known but several factors can influence bitterness. **1. Inconsistent watering** (dryness). **2. Lack of adequate fertilizer**. **3. Heat stress**. **4. Over-ripe fruit**. **5. Variety**. The bitterness is found just under the skin. You can peel a bitter cucumber a little deeper and eat the rest of the fruit. Burpless, Straight Eight, Sweet Slice, and Sweet Success are excellent varieties and they are rarely bitter.

## Tomatoes

1. Water consistently but not constantly --- "**Blossom-end Rot**" is a common tomato problem that is usually caused by stress (keeping the plants too dry and/or too wet). Tomatoes prefer well-drained soil and deep irrigation.
2. Do not over-fertilize tomatoes during the summer. Tomatoes do not need much fertilizer after the first two or three months.
3. Tomatoes set fruit when night temperatures stay between 55 degrees and 75 degrees. Use **Tomato Set** if blossoms do not set fruit because of temperature problems.
4. Tomatoes do not like too much water, especially late in the season, as they start to ripen. Too much water will delay ripening. Let plants dry out a little when the tomatoes start to turn pink and mature.
5. If your tomatoes "always have blossom end rot" or they "just don't grow" in your garden, spread two tablespoons of Epsom Salts and four tablespoons of Gypsum around your tomato plants, you'll be pleased with the results.
6. Tomatoes are subject to several soil borne diseases. If you have one or more of these diseases in your garden soil your tomato plants may die just as the harvest season begins. It is a good idea to choose varieties that are resistant to these soil borne diseases. Make sure the variety has a "**V**" or "**F**" by its name, meaning it is resistant to Verticillium Wilt or Fusarium.

7. Tomatoes are susceptible to "**early blight**" and "**late blight**". These diseases do not appear every year. The weather influences when and how severe these diseases occur. These disease are stimulated by the right combination of both day and night temperatures. **Early blight**, as the name implies, starts to appear early in the ripening season. Small brown dots start to appear on the leaves that have yellow rings around them. The leaves die and the plant stops producing fruit. **Late blight** seems to appear suddenly late in the ripening season. Small brown spots appear on both the leaves and fruit. All the leaves turn brown and die. The fruit often rots before ripening.

## Peppers

Although peppers are closely related to tomato plants, peppers are more demanding than tomatoes. Peppers require warm temperatures, and they need consistent moisture conditions to grow and produce an abundant harvest.

Many insects like to live on pepper plants. Aphids, Cutworms, Flea Beetles, Leaf miners, and Mites are just a few of the insects you will need to control. Spray your plants regularly with either **Malathion** or **Diazinon** to control these pests. Be sure to read the label before harvesting; so you will wait the proper length of time before eating the fruit.

Peppers are sometimes affected by a disease known as **Anthracnose**. This disease can be prevented by keeping the plants healthy. Anthracnose creates dark spots on leaves and forms dark, sunken spots on fruit. Pinkish spores may appear in these dark spots. Spray your plants with **Maneb** or **Daconil** to control this disease. Be sure to wait the proper length of time after spraying before harvesting the fruit.

**Blossom end rot** is not a disease but it is a physical problem that affects peppers the same way it affects tomatoes. Blossom end rot causes a brown or black region on the blossom end of the fruit. Blossom end rot is caused by physical stress within the plant not by a disease. Prevent blossom end rot by watering plants consistently and mulching plants to help reduce extreme heat.

## Spiders - Good or Bad?

Most spiders in your yard are beneficial. They trap and kill many insects that would otherwise love to cause problems for your flowers, shrubs and trees. Spiders make a natural insect trap and as long as they stay outside it is to your benefit to leave them alone. Spiders may actually kill more insects than you can kill by spraying.

However, once a spider decides to invade your home it becomes a nuisance pest. Most nuisance pests are very hard to control such as boxelder bugs, flies, ants, millipedes. Spiders are no different, they are hard to control. The best control for these nuisance pests is persistence. Chemical insecticides will kill any insects that come in contact with the spray. However, there is usually not a very long residual effect to control these types of pests. If you can prevent these insects from entering your house the control is much simpler. Make sure your screens are in good condition. Caulk around doors and windows. Spray the outside foundation of your house in the fall; insects are looking for warmth and protection from the weather.

Once nuisance pests enter your house control is a little harder. Regular applications of an insecticide inside your house may help to control some nuisance pests. **Bonide Indoor Insect Fogger** is a fairly safe way to eliminate some unwanted pests inside your home. Vacuuming the unwanted pests is another safe way to eliminate them. Perhaps one of the best ways to control these nuisance pests is to use traps. You can make your own traps by putting an attractant on Duct Tape. Duct tape does not look very attractive but I have trapped many cockroaches on a single piece of duct tape. Several different traps can also be purchased that can be used safely inside the house such as **Fly Paper**, **Indoor Fly Traps**,

## Hornet & Wasp Traps, Pantry Pest Traps, Roach Traps, and Spider Traps.

Most spiders inside your home are not dangerous, they are a nuisance. Two spiders are dangerous. The Black Widow spider and the Aggressive House Spider (Hobo Spider) are two spiders that can cause serious injury. The **Hobo Spider Elimination Kit** (a spider Trap) traps and kills all different kinds of spiders; not just the bad ones. This kit contains five pre-baited cards that attracts and kills all types of spiders. You can put spider traps in several different areas of your house to catch spiders; it is an excellent way to control the unwanted spiders in your house.

## Summer Leaf Scorch

Many trees and shrubs may have leaves with brown tips or edges this fall. This browning is commonly called "**summer leaf scorch**". Leaf scorch is a problem that many trees and shrubs have during the summer. Many varieties of plants can not tolerate the extreme heat or the dry winds. Other plants (especially newly planted shrubs) can't absorb water fast enough to supply moisture to the leaves during the heat. Leaf scorch doesn't usually kill plants (except for newly planted ones) it just makes them look terrible for a while. The damaged leaves will not recover and the plant may not produce new leaves until the following year but the plant should be fine. Leaf scorch may affect one side of the tree and not affect the other side. Leaf scorch may also affect one plant but not bother another plant just two or three feet away. The best cure for leaf scorch is to soak your plants, with a slow trickle of water, every two or three weeks during the heat. Water needs to soak as deeply into the soil as possible. Don't drown your plants, just water them deeply once or twice a month during the summer and fall. Once the snow starts to fall mother nature usually takes care of them the rest of the winter. Remember: Newly planted shrubs need more frequent watering than older established shrubs.

## "Mighty Spidermites"

Spidermites can be a very troublesome pest to marigolds, lobelia, junipers, alberta spruce, etc. Spidermites are so tiny that they cannot be seen with the naked eye. The best way to test for spidermites is to place a white piece of paper under the leaves of the affected plant. Shake the plant vigorously and watch the dust that falls on the paper. If any of the dust starts to move you have spidermites.

Uncontrolled, spidermites can kill flowers, trees, and shrubs. Several methods of control are available. Washing plants regularly tends to discourage spidermite reproduction. Fertilizing helps plants outgrow any spidermite damage. Using **insecticidal soap** or **Neem oil spray** are organic ways to control spidermites. **Kelthane**, **Malathion**, and **Isotox** are

some of the chemicals that are also effective. Spidermites can become immune to any of these control methods, so use a combination of all the above methods to get the best control of the "mighty spidermites".

## Dividing Perennials

One of the joys of a perennial garden is watching the plants grow and fill the spaces allotted to them. However, perennial flowers can out grow their assigned areas quickly unless they are moved and divided periodically. Most perennial flowers do not know when to stop growing; you need to make that determination for them.

Dividing perennial flowers is not a bad thing for the plant. In fact, many plants are invigorated by dividing them regularly. Don't be afraid of breaking roots or plants as you divide them. This is a necessary evil when dealing with strong rooted plants. Don't be afraid of throwing away extra plants, or unwanted plants, or giving extra plants to neighbors. The hardy perennial flowers will take over and dominate the weaker varieties, if you don't do some refereeing.

Divide spring and summer blooming perennials in the fall, as soon as the temperatures begin to moderate. Divide fall blooming perennials either in the spring or after they finish blooming in the fall, if there is still several weeks of good weather before the ground freezes hard. Divide perennials as often as the plant overtakes its assigned area. You may need to divide your shasta daisy or coreopsis every two or three years. Phlox, Astilbe, and daylilies may only need to be divided every 5 to 6 years. Peonies only need to be divided every 10 to 15 years.

## Enjoy The Fruits Of Your Labors

Besides gardening in the fall, it is time to enjoy the fruits of your labors. Many insects are also enjoying your fruits and vegetables. Be careful when you spray your plants with insecticides that you use the correct sprays and that you wait the proper length of time after spraying before you harvest. Chemical insecticides are safe to use if you apply them correctly and follow the warnings on the label. Each bottle will tell you how long you must wait after applying it until you may safely eat the food.

## Harvest Tips

**Carrots.** Carrots are easy to harvest. Just pull them whenever you want them. Carrots are edible at all sizes; even the ones you remove as you thin them. The tops can be tossed in a salad. If carrots aren't all pulled before winter, cover them with sufficient mulch to keep the ground from freezing and harvest them as you need them. Cold temperatures make carrots sweeter.

**Cucumbers.** Harvest cucumbers when they are plump and are an edible size; but not too large. Large cucumbers can become bitter. Check plants daily because they can grow rapidly. Except for lemon cucumbers, don't let cucumbers turn

yellow or the fruit will be tuff and will have hard seeds. The plant will also stop producing new fruit.

**Eggplant.** Eggplant fruit is ripe when the skin is shiny and a slight depression remains when you press gently with a finger. Harvest before the skin turns dull.

**Melons.** Different melons show ripeness in different ways. A cantaloupe will have prominent ribs and the netting will turn beige. The fruit should be sweet and juicy. Some melons will change color: a crenshaw will change from green to yellow; a honeydew will turn silvery-green with a flush of yellow. Another test to see if a melon is ripe is to smell it. Many ripe melons are extremely fragrant. Try pressing on the stem, next to the fruit. If the stem separates easily from the fruit, it is probably ripe.

**Potatoes.** As soon as potato plants are through flowering, in early summer, you can dig some as small "new potatoes." Leave the rest of them in the ground until late summer when the plants have died back. After the plants die, dig the potatoes and let them harden off for a few days before putting them in storage. If the winter is mild and you have well-drained soil, you can leave potatoes in the ground, under a layer of mulch, and dig them as needed.

**Summer Squash.** Zucchini squash is perhaps the most prolific summer squash. They grow and ripen fast. They can be eaten at any stage of development. Check plants daily and harvest the fruit when it is small: do not let the fruit grow large and let the seeds mature. Seed development stops the formation of new fruit. If you have too many squash all at once, it's better to throw away a few small zucchinis, as well as the huge ones, to keep new ones coming on all summer. Crookneck and other summer squash are not as prolific as zucchini squash but should be treated in a similar manner.

**Winter Squash and Pumpkins.** Many winter squash can be harvested and eaten as soon as they reach a desirable size during the late-summer; similar to summer squash. If you plan to store your squash leave the fruit on the vine until they reach a good size, have deep well-developed color, and the rind is hard enough to resist scratching by a fingernail. Leave a two-inch piece of stem on the fruit when harvesting, to help prevent rotting from the stem end. Wipe each fruit with a 10 percent bleach solution before storing, to kill mold and mildew spores. Store in a cool and dry place.

**Tomatoes.** Nobody needs to be told when tomatoes are ripe. They turn red (or yellow, orange, purple, or white, depending on the variety) when they are ready. Many tomatoes ripen over a long period of time so pick regularly. You must harvest tomatoes before they freeze.

Tomatoes can also be picked at the 'ripe-green' stage: The inside will have well-formed seeds embedded in a jelly-like substance. Once they have reached this stage, tomatoes will continue ripening after being harvested. Tomatoes harvested before they reach this stage will not ripen. Let green tomatoes continue to ripen indoors by laying them out, without touching each other, in a well-ventilated area between 60 to 70 degrees F. Do not put them on a sunny window sill, because tissue damage results from sunburn and excessive heat.

**Peppers.** Harvest sweet peppers anytime they are a good size. The skins should be firm and shiny. Peppers can be harvested green (immature) or they can be left to ripen on the plant (yellow, red, or purple). The older the pepper, the thicker the

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skin will be. Sweet peppers always remain mild, even when they are completely ripe and mature. Extreme hot and dry conditions may cause the pepper to have a stronger flavor than usual, but they will be not turn hot.

Harvest hot peppers when they reach a good size. Hot peppers may be harvested before they are completely ripe. Hot peppers do not get hotter if they stay on the plant to maturity. Many hot peppers have oils that will irritate and burn eyes and skin. Use rubber gloves while harvesting and preparing hot peppers. Do not touch your eyes or skin with the rubber gloves. Hot pepper stems, skins, seeds, and meat all contain the hot oils. Be careful.

**Watermelons.** It is very hard to tell when a watermelon is ripe. Check the fruit for bee stings. If the bees are starting to enjoy the watermelon it is probably ripe. Tap the watermelon with your knuckle. If it has a dull thud it is still immature. If it has a hollow sound it is probably ripe. (It may take some seasons of thumping before you can discern the perfect pitch.) Finally, check the underbelly of the melon. In seeded varieties, the underbelly will appear creamy-white when ripe; in seedless varieties, a golden-yellow color indicates ripeness. Check the tendril located at the point where the fruit is attached to the vine. If the tendril has turned brown and shriveled it is probably ripe.

## Fairy Ring

The dark-green circles and toad stools in the lawn are called fairy rings. Where do they come from and how do you get rid of them?

No one is sure how fairy ring gets started or where it comes from. It's believed that gasses released from decaying material underground stimulates fungus spores to grow. When conditions are right, the toadstools, show up. Over a period of years, the dark-green rings continue to grow larger in diameter and may eventually disappear all by themselves. Sometimes the grass in the center of the ring may die while other times it may just turn a lighter shade of green. And, some years the fairy ring may just stay dormant.

If you dig near the outer edge of the ring you may notice white threads growing in the soil and a musty smell. The soil in this area will also stay quite dry, even after watering it. That is the fungus at work.

Chemical fungicides such as **Consan** may help eradicate fairy rings a little quicker than by letting them disappear on their own but don't count on a quick fix for this disease. You can disguise or suppress fairy rings so they're not as noticeable. To treat spots or rings where the centers are not dying, you can green-up the surrounding grass so everything matches better just by applying a nitrogen fertilizer more frequently.

If the area has brown patches in the center of the ring, your best bet is to aerate the entire area - poke lots of holes in the area to help release the gasses faster. Use either a spading fork or pitchfork as long as you can poke the tines in at least 6 inches. Aerate an area at least a foot wider on both sides of the green ring with holes spaced no more than 4 inches apart.

Saturate the ground with a solution of 3 tablespoons of a

mild soap to 1 gallon of water. Make sure the soap doesn't contain chlorine bleach or borax. Fill the holes until they won't take any more of the solution. For the next month keep the area saturated with plain water. If the area is not kept wet, the ring can begin to re-form. This treatment doesn't always eradicate the rings completely, but at it usually suppresses them for a season. Repeat this process as often as you spot new fairy rings begin to appear.

Clean all tools that you use near fairy rings with a 1:10 solution of chlorine bleach and water to prevent spreading them to other areas.

## Safe Manure Handling

Fresh Manure can carry pathogens that can make people sick. Old, composted manure should be safe to use and free from harmful pathogens.

Follow these tips when using fresh manure:

Never use fresh or raw manure on or near a food gardens. Certified-organic farmers are required to wait 120 days after spreading manure before they can harvest.

Never add the droppings of cats, dogs, or other meat eating animals to a garden or compost pile.

Play it safe and limit fresh manure use to your ornamental beds and other non edible gardens.

Wear gloves and always wash your hands after working in the garden.

Wash produce before eating it.

Keep children away from fresh manure.

## Potentilla

Potentilla shrubs can look leggy and a little rough if not pruned properly. To keep potentilla shrubs looking their best prune them lightly once or twice a summer. It is also good to prune them heavily once in a while in the winter or early-spring, while the plants are dormant. By pruning, you'll increase the flower production and you will make the plants more compact.

The easiest pruning method is to cut the plant back the same way you would a perennial. Cut all of the stems down to within a foot of the ground. Don't worry about where you make each cut. New growth will start all along the stems and the plant will quickly rejuvenate and start blooming by early summer. Pruning it in this manner will keep your plants small. If you want a large plant, just don't cut it back as far. Or, you can do a hard pruning every other year, allowing it to grow back the second year after cutting.

## Recycled drywall

**Can I use scraps of drywall gypsum in my garden?**

Yes, you can. However, it's best to peel away the paper covering, break up the scraps into small chunks and add them to your compost pile first. When it's time to work the compost into your garden, all the pieces of gypsum will have

# J&L's Coupon of the Month

**Free  
One Indoor  
Cactus  
in a 2" pot**

**Your Choice of Variety**

**Bonus Buy**  
Buy More Cactus Plants  
in 2" pots for only  
**\$ .99 each**

regularly \$1.49 each

*Free Cactus Care Sheet. Please stop by and pick one up.  
Coupon Expires September 30, 2001 Limited to supply in stock.*

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crumbled and can be mixed in the soil with the compost.

Gypsum is technically known as calcium sulfate and adds both calcium and sulfur to the garden. It can help lower a high pH or help raise a low one. In other words, it's a pH neutralizer. Gypsum also helps improve soil texture by allowing air and water to move between the clay soil particles easier. Gypsum helps leach, or flush out, harmful salts from the soil. Gypsum also helps release nutrients already in the soil so that plants can utilize them easily.

## Be Careful

When an insect pest or fungal disease strikes a plant, beginning gardeners may grab any pesticide from the shelf and start spraying indiscriminately. More experienced gardeners know that a product must be selected to address a specific problem and used wisely.

**"Protectants"** prevent insects and disease-causing agents from infecting a plant in the first place.

**"Eradicants"** eliminate pathogens after an infection has occurred.

**"Systemic"** systemic fungicides and insecticides are products that spread inside a plant to kill insects and diseases.

**"Contact"** insecticides and fungicides are those that must land on an insect or disease to kill it. Use these products only when problems exist.

Good gardeners never forget that pesticides designed to kill insects can be dangerous for people, as well. That's why it's **SO** important to select garden chemicals carefully, apply them sparingly, and always read and follow all instructions to the letter.

**True or False?** Any pesticide that is organic is completely safe to use.

An old garden myth is that all organic insecticides are toxic to insects and harmless to human beings. Nothing could be further from the truth. Pyrethrum and rotenone, although low in toxicity to mammals, are still toxic to humans if swallowed or inhaled. They are both highly toxic to fish. Both Malathion and Sevin (chemical pesticides) are much safer to use than Nicotine (organic pesticide).

Some of the common organic insecticides that are beneficial if used properly are: Pyrethrum, Rotenone, Eight, and Delta methrum. Other non-toxic organic insecticides are: Hot Pepper Wax (this product also repels many rodents and animals), Insecticidal Soap, Neem Oil, Dormant Oil, Diatomaceous Earth, Boric Acid, and BT (bacillus thuringiensis). These insecticides will not control all insect problems but they can help some.

Other organic methods to control pests are: **Fly Paper, Indoor Fly Traps, Hornet & Wasp Traps, Snail Traps, Pantry Pest Traps, Roach Traps, and Spider Traps.**

## Mosquitoes

Summer garden parties can turn into a disaster if the dreaded mosquitoes are not kept in check. Several sprays are effective to prevent and control mosquitoes, both chemically and organically. You can spray your entire yard, including the lawn, with **Malathion** several days before your party. **Malathion** is a relatively safe chemical that effectively kills mosquitoes and many other flying insects. It does not have a long residual and will dissipate within three or four days. Do not spray Malathion the day of your party because it does have an unpleasant odor that may last a day or two. **Eight** is an organic chemical that is listed to control many flying insects, including mosquitoes. **Eight**, like Malathion, has a short residual and should give some relief if you spray it a day or two before your party.

You can also spray your yard an hour or two before the

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# The Gardening Newsletter

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party begins with **Bonide Yard & Patio Fogger**. This aerosol spray kills flying insects for several hours and does not leave an unpleasant odor to bother your guests.

Light Citronella candles an hour before your party begins. Place several candles on tables or counters to help repel many insect pests.

Use yellow light bulbs instead of white lights. Many insects are attracted to white lights but not to yellow lights. However, mosquitoes don't care what color light you use, they will still find you anyway.

## Attracting dragonflies

**Q** I think dragon flies are beautiful. How can I attract them to my garden?

**A** Dragonflies are beautiful and they're beneficial, as well. You may have to build a pond to get these insects to take up residence in your garden. If you live near a lake or slow-moving stream, that's ideal. They prefer a large area and like to stay low to the ground. A birdbath or water saucer won't be enough: they need lots of space to swoop over the water as they catch their food.

Dragonflies feed on other insects and tiny critters. They lay their eggs in the water in late spring or early summer. *Nymphs*, wormlike immature dragonflies, hatch in about a week and will feed all summer, fall and winter on mosquito larvae, tiny hatchlings of fish and other water insects.

## Gardening in a cat box?

Neighborhood cats are using my garden as a litter box. For the safety of my family, I destroyed all my vegetables and berry vines. I would like to grow my own vegetables and fruit again. Is it safe to plant in my garden?

Like so many soft and cuddly small animals in our lives and gardens, cats do have their undesirable side. They love to dig up freshly cultivated (and probably just-seeded) soil and bury their feces.

Cat and dog feces are not a good thing in the garden because they can carry diseases that are ultimately communicable to humans. The good news is that if people wear gloves while gardening, always wash their hands well after gardening, and thoroughly wash garden vegetables before eating them, then any risk becomes infinitesimally small.

The only way vegetables, berries, and other fruit would be contaminated is if they fell on the ground and then weren't washed before being eaten. None of the bad stuff "burrows" inside plants; it just sits on the outside and gets carried along if the products aren't washed.

When disposing of cat feces, be sure to wear gloves or use a shovel, to avoid touching it.

Some techniques to make your garden area unattractive to the felines are: Lay fruit tree netting or chicken wire across the area. Cats don't like to get their feet tangled. Use citrus rinds as mulch or in the compost that is dug into the area: cats don't like the smell. Other repellents will also discourage cats.

# Storing Vegetables

What are you supposed to do with all the fruit and vegetables you grew this summer besides eat it and give it to your neighbors? Many fruits and vegetables will store well and give you fresh fruit all winter, if you do it correctly. The extension service has a booklet called **“Home storage of fruits and vegetables”** that gives a detailed description about storing fruit. Listed below are just a few of the more common fruits and vegetables with a brief description of storing them. Stop by the extension service for the more detailed booklet.

Harvest **winter squash** and **pumpkins**, for storage, when the vines begin to die in the fall. You can harvest and eat most winter squash any time during the summer and fall when the squash have turned to their mature color. For storage, the skin should be hard and impervious to scratching. Test by scratching the skin with your fingernail. Leave one inch of the stem on each fruit and let the fruit cure for ten days in a warm, dry place before putting them in storage. Use any soft, blemished, or damaged fruit first. Store squash in fifty to fifty-five degrees.

Pick **tomatoes** before they freeze. Store green or slightly pink tomatoes in a closet or other dark area until they ripen. Cover your tomatoes with a newspaper to help maintain their moisture. Tomatoes stored at 65 - 70 degrees will ripen in about two weeks; at 55 degrees they ripen in three to four weeks; below 50 degrees they will spoil before they ripen. Check them regularly.

The **onions** that store best are usually grown from seed rather than sets. Harvest onions when the tops turn brown and die, before the ground freezes. Do not store bruised onions with thick necks; eat these first. Do not break or crush the leaves to make the tops die down faster. Breaking the leaves encourages “neck rot” and make weeks until the skins are papery and the roots are completely shriveled. When cured, store the onions in mesh bags or open crates in a cool, dark, well ventilated place at 32 degrees.

**Late potato** varieties store better than early ripening varieties. Harvest after the vines die in the fall. Do not store any bruised potatoes. Allow the potatoes to dry for ten to fourteen days in a shady or dark area between 45 - 60 degrees before storing them for the winter. Store potatoes at 40 degrees. Lower temperatures turn the starch into sugar and sprouting will occur.

**Apples** like to be stored at 30 - 32 degrees with a 90% humidity. Professional storage sheds remove all the oxygen from the shed and replace it with nitrogen; to keep the apples from rotting prematurely. You can buy fresh apples all winter long from these storage sheds. Apples stored at 40 degrees ripen twice as fast as those stored at 32 degrees. Store apples in cardboard boxes lined with a plastic bag. Perforate the plastic bag to allow air circulation but still maintain the right amount of moisture. Wrapping each apple in newspaper helps prevent one bad apple from spoiling all the surrounding apples.

**Carrots** may be covered with six to twelve inches of straw and left in the garden to be harvested all winter. If you dig your carrots for storage, carefully dry and remove the excess dirt. Cut the stem close to the carrot. Store carrots in fresh sawdust or clean straw in a cool, moist area. Keep them as close to 32 degrees as possible

## Rose Trivia

Did you know that the **“Peace” Rose** is still one of the most popular rose varieties in America. “Peace” has maintained one of the highest ratings given to a rose variety by the American Rose Society since it was first introduced in 1945. Some interesting facts about the “Peace” rose are:

1. Francis Meilland developed a new rose strain identified as “3-35-40” in France (1930's).

2. The original "Peace" rose budwood was smuggled into America from France during the occupation of Europe by the Nazis.

3. Francis Meilland suggested that if the world survives WWII this rose should be named ‘Peace’.

4. “Peace” was officially named the day Berlin fell.

5. “Peace” was given the American Rose Society Rose of the Year award the day the war with Japan ended.

6. The American Rose society gave “Peace” its gold medal the day the Japanese Peace Treaty was signed.

## Pruning tomatoes

There are a number of reasons for pruning tomatoes. Pruning removes foliage from the plant, which can help balance the plant’s resources for production of fruit or vine and foliage. Pruning can give you earlier and larger tomatoes, but not more total yield. Removing the lower foliage and suckers also reduces the surface area on the bottom of the plant that can have soil splashed up on it, which can lead to early blight and other leaf diseases.

The smaller the plant, the less you will want to prune. Compact determinate varieties like 'Patio', 'Husker Red' or 'Husky Gold' need all the foliage they can grow to support the fruit load. Vigorous determinate varieties and most indeterminate varieties have lots of leaf area so they can afford to give up some foliage, which will allow them to put that energy into fruit production. At a minimum, most folks should remove all the suckers up to the large one right below the first fruit cluster. Then, once it has fruited, the plant will balance itself between fruit and foliage.