

Children's Vegetable Garden Program - Fall 2014 Session October 18, 2014

AGENDA 9

Special Note: We will be hosting the State Master Gardener Vegetable Specialist Training here at the Botanical Garden from November 4 – November 6. We will be showcasing the Children's Vegetable Garden Program to guests from all over the state so let's make it shine! Thanks in advance for your efforts!

Section Special Projects:

Special projects are everyone's responsibility to maintain and keep the beauty of the entire garden. They are also an opportunity to learn an array of different gardening skills. All section representatives, please check with Miss Mary on today's assignments. Please check again before leaving the garden and ask yourself if there are other chores to be done.

Friendly Reminders for Children, Parents and Volunteers:

- ❖ The garden looks really nice!
- ❖ Make sure all children, parents and volunteers **sign in and out** every week. Is everyone on time?
- ❖ Remember to bring your harvest bag with you to the garden. Reusable grocery bags that are washed weekly, paper bags or cardboard boxes are ideal. Do not bring plastic bags since condensation can form in them and cause vegetables to spoil.
- ❖ Harvest any fruit or vegetables *at the end of the day* to avoid spoilage.
- ❖ **Handle your plants gently!** When removing damaged leaves, checking for insects, tying up stems and harvesting, *handle your plants gently at all times.*
- ❖ Check with Miss Mary on reseeding lettuce or any other crops today.
- ❖ Today's Junior Master Gardener activity is "Garden Folk". You will be building a scarecrow during class. Remember to bring old clothes and maybe a hat to dress your scarecrow.
- ❖ Children: are you keeping a gardening journal and folder? Are you doing some gardening at home?
- ❖ **Please: don't return any dirty tools to the tool shed. It is everyone's responsibility to keep that area clean!**

Homework: Now that you know what is being grown this season throughout your plot and garden, start finding some recipes and uses for your future harvests. Here is a good start, <http://healthyliving.tamu.edu/>+

How Are Your Plant's Growing?

'Tycoon' and BHN 968 Cherry Tomatoes:

- Carefully tie up any of your tomato stems that have gotten out of their cages. Remove any broken or discolored leaves or stems from your plants.
- Be very observant throughout your tomato plants and dispose of any bad insects. Be especially watchful for immature leaf footed stinkbugs.
- Harvest ALL the cherry tomatoes that have pink or red color in the fruit.

'Sweet Slice' Cucumber:

- Carefully remove and dispose of any leaves that are yellow or brown in appearance or severely damaged.
- Dispose of ALL insects feeding on your plants like cucumber or Colorado potato beetles by grabbing and smashing them (you might need to do this a few times during the morning). Every Section will give a count to Miss Mary at the end of the day on how many bad beetles they destroyed. Also, let your instructor know if your cucumber still has a bad aphid infestation.
- If your cucumber plant is growing into the carrot section, gently untangle tendrils and redirect them onto the trellis. You may need to utilize the large green stakes behind the brown fenced area. Only remove leaves from your cucumber plants that are shading the developing carrot plants as a last resort.

Truth is stranger than fiction!

Ants are very fond of bugs that produce large amounts of sugar. Aphid-herding ants will actually care for their adopted aphids, carrying them from plant to plant and "milking" them for honeydew. In exchange for the sweet treats, they provide the aphids with protection from predators. Some ants even take the aphids home to their nest during the winter months, keeping them safe until spring.

<http://insects.about.com/od/truebugs/fl/10-Fascinating-Facts-About-Aphids.htm>



Leaf-footed immature eggs



Cluster of leaf-footed



Adult leaf-footed bug

□ Did everyone harvest a few cucumbers last week? If not, let's see about today's harvest. Don't let the fruit get overgrown from one week to the next.

Bunching Onions:

□ Remove any brown or damaged leaves from the plants.
□ Plot 22 onions are a prime example to look at today and use as a future guideline for harvesting and resetting your plot. Every part of the onion is edible. When pulling a whole bunch of onions, replant a small clump of 2 or 3 onions to help rejuvenate them and continue the process of multiplication.

Note: Take out the two middle bunches of onions to make room for your scarecrow.

'Cheers' Head Cabbage, 'Snow Crown' Cauliflower, 'Green Magic' Broccoli, and White "Eder" Kohlrabi:

Note: These are all considered 'Cole Crops'.

□ Are there any holes in these plants? If so, gently rub off any eggs or small caterpillars from the backside of the **ALL** plant's leaves. When doing this, be observant of the soil adjacent to the plants, just in case you have knocked off a caterpillar or two. Remove any leaves that are damaged or yellow at the crown portion of the plants.

□ Some of your broccoli plant leaves are impeding the growth of your carrot plants. If so, try to gently move the broccoli leaves away from the carrot plants by utilizing a bamboo stake. The last resort would be to cut the leaves off, but we really want to minimize this step.

□ Instructors will drench **ALL** four groupings of plants at the very end of the day after everything has been watered with liquid Spinosad to help with the control of cabbage looper caterpillars. Start by drenching at the middle of the plants and swirling around the plant to the very outer leaves when you are applying this product. The plant only needs to be lightly coated.

Purple Bush Beans:

□ How do your plants look? Are there any insect problems? Gently remove any brown or yellow leaves from the inside of your plants. Check to see if your plants are growing straight. If they need to be moved away from the pathway or the zinnia plants then gently redirect them or string them higher on the stakes.

'Nelson' Carrots:

□ Familiarize yourself with what carrot seedlings look like vs. unwanted weeds that need to be removed. When removing a weed, be careful not to root up any carrot seedlings. If this happens, then gently tamp in the plantlet.

□ Gently water in this area with your water can.

'Crawford' Lettuce:

□ How many of your plantlets have come up yet? Do you know what a plantlet is vs. a weed? When removing a weed, be careful not to root up any seedlings. If this happens, then gently tamp in the plantlet.

‘Dreamland’ Fall Zinnias:

□ Pinch off any discolored or unsightly looking leaves or blooms from your plants. This helps your plants produce more blooms.

□ All the plants in the front and back of the plots need to be hand watered real good today, since the irrigation on most of the plots can’t reach those areas.

Beets and Turnips:

□ Discard any debris or weeds in the area.

□ In the **turnip planting** area, most of you have more than 20 plantlets per row. You need to thin them by gently removing the overcrowded planting to one plantlet every inch apart. The remaining plantlets don’t have to be straight in each row, as long as they have room to grow in that area. If you’re very careful, you can replant some of these plantlets in bare areas throughout your planting zone. Otherwise, wrap these micro-greens in a moist paper towel and use them tonight in a salad.

Note: You can have more than 20 plantlets in each designated row or within that vicinity of the row, but give them the space now to size up.

□ Gently and slowly water in all three rows a couple of times.

□ Without getting anyone wet, water planting area with low pressure for about 10 to 15 minutes. Make sure that every orifice in the irrigation line is unclogged with a paper clip. Due to the water pressure in the garden, **no more than two sections should be watering at any given time frame. Hand water wherever your plot isn’t getting watered thoroughly.**

□ **Do not** flood plots or walk-ways. If the plots start flooding, let them drain a little, then proceed in watering again. **DO NOT RELY ON THE SYSTEM TO WATER NEWLY PLANTED PLANTINGS.** If the Irrigation System is not working let your Instructor know and see if it can be fixed, if not, your Instructor will flag it and provide **Miss Mary** with the section number and problem.

□ At the end of the day, your **Instructor** will drench **any fire ant trails or mounds** as well as the four ‘Cole Crops’ with *liquid Spinosad insecticide*.
Instructors: mix liquid *Spinosad insecticide* at a rate of four tablespoons (2 oz.) per one gallon of water.

DO NOT LEAVE ANY FIRE ANT FLAGS AFTER PLANTS HAVE BEEN TREATED

It is a great fall!

Thanks Everyone!

David Rodriguez