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June Gardening Tips

by Eldon Everhart, ISU Extension Field Specialist/Horticulture
Phone: 712-755-3104 - e-mail: x1everha@exnet.iastate.edu

Vegetable Garden - Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a very important cultural practice even in a small garden. It is highly recommended that gardeners walk through the rows every day scouting for insects, diseases, and any unusual symptoms. It may be necessary to just pick off the eggs of certain insects or spray high-pressure water to wash off soft-bodied insects, or perhaps do nothing.

If damage done is large or pests have already fed and gone, there is little or no reason to use insecticides. If a large number of insect pests are present and it appears as though they will damage the plants severely, the use of insecticides may be justified as a rescue treatment. Be sure to read the label carefully before application of any pesticide.

Tomatoes, especially indeterminate types that keep growing all summer, will need staking or caging at this time. Plants can be staked with a single or multiple poles. If a single stake is used, place it 4-6 inches away from the plant and tie the trunk of the plant to the stake with strips of nylon or twist-ems and remove all side shoots. If two or more stakes are used, select a branch for each stake, tie it, and then remove all shoots and side branches.

Wooden or metal cages can also be used. Build a cage with scrap lumber to hold the plant so stems and leaves are above ground. When metal is used, the cages should be painted white to avoid absorbing heat. When cages are used, branches and side shoots are not removed allowing the plant to produce more but smaller fruit and not as good quality as staked plants.

Watering is very important during hot weather. When tomato roots are kept consistently moist, blossom-end rot, a physiological disease, is prevented. All garden plants should be watered deeply and infrequently at the root system. Try to avoid watering the foliage of plants and especially late in the evening.

Mulches are an asset in the garden and should be used in every vegetable garden. Two kinds of mulches may be used — organic and synthetic. Organic mulches such as straw, grass clippings, wood chips, and newspapers not only conserve moisture and control weeds, but also add nutrients to the soil. Synthetic mulches are plastics and fabrics that conserve moisture, control weeds, and warm up the soil for an earlier harvest. Even though there are

many types of plastics on the market, black plastic is the most practical for the home gardener.

Continue to make many successive plantings of corn, beans, summer squash, and cucumbers for continuous harvest. By spreading out the planting season of some crops, it may be possible to miss the damage of certain pests. Making several plantings of summer squash can prevent squash borer damage by missing the life cycle. Sanitation is also highly recommended to beat the life cycle and avoid infestation. Turning over the compost pile at least once a week will also help when the residue of the garden is used.

Flower Garden - Keep pinching back chrysanthemums in order to form bushier and stronger plants. In addition, there will be more compact plants and more flower production. Leave foliage on spring flowering bulbs such as tulips and daffodils until they turn yellow. If removed when green, the plant will not be able to manufacture food for next year.

The flower garden will need particular attention, especially in weed control and deadheading. Pulling weeds before they go to seed is a safe and natural way to control annual weeds and the spreading of perennial weeds. Preemergence herbicide can also be used on transplants and perennials, but be cautious when using on seeded beds as the chemical will prevent seed germination. Many fabrics and synthetic mulches are available at the garden center.

Deadheading is the removal of faded flowers from both annuals and perennials. Most plants benefit from this procedure because it gives them an opportunity to concentrate their energies on new flower production and not on seeds. If, however, seed production is an object, leave them to mature. Many flowers that are not hybrids, especially perennials such as purple cone flowers and shasta daisies, can be left to mature and collected in the fall.

For more details, obtain copies of the publications *Growing and Using Annuals and Bulbs*, NCR-399; *Growing Garden Peonies*, Pm-1313; and *Hostas*, Pm-1594.

Prune Raspberries - Proper pruning of raspberries in spring and summer will help control diseases, increase yields, and improve quality. Fruiting characteristics of the plants determines the pruning methods recommended for red, black, and purple raspberries.

However, for all raspberries, after the last harvest promptly remove the old fruiting canes at the soil surface and destroy them. This permits more light to reach the new shoots and allows better air circulation. This in turn helps to control diseases and produces higher yields.

When new shoots of black and purple raspberries reach a height of 36-48 inches, pinch or cut off the shoot tips. Remove about 3-4 inches. Pinching encourages the development of lateral shoot and that, in turn, increases the fruiting surface.

Small fruits such as raspberries consume quite a bit of moisture and as a result will need mulches as well as a good soaking during dry periods. Signs of wilting may be lack of moisture due to soil type, winter damage, and even root galls.

For more details, obtain copies of the ISU Extension publications entitled *Growing Raspberries at Home*, Pm-214 and *Home Fruit Pest Management*, Pm-175.

Thin Apple Fruit - Apples often drop immature fruit in early June. This is known as "June drop." Fallen apples are about 1/2-1 inch in diameter.

Competition among the fruit for food, water, and nutrients causes June drop. This natural thinning removes excess fruit and allows the remaining fruit to properly develop. Hot, dry weather in late spring will increase the number of fruits that drop in June.

Even though the number of fruit that fall to the ground in June may seem quite high, additional thinning may be necessary. Trees with a heavy fruit load may need additional hand thinning. The goals of thinning are to obtain large, high quality fruit; prevent limb breakage; allow flower buds to develop for next year's crop; and prevent alternate bearing.

To accomplish these goals, you will need to hand thin your trees within six weeks after they are in full bloom. Leave the largest apple in each cluster unless it has a blemish. Thin apples to about 8 to 10 inches apart on each branch.

If thinning is not done, apple trees will tend to produce many small apples every other year, with little or no fruit during the off-years.

Get More Help - You can get copies of ISU Extension publications from your local county ISU Extension office or from the Extension Distribution Center on the ISU campus in Ames. Minimal fees are charged for some publications.

It's easy to order publications from the ISU Extension Distribution Center. The address is 119 Printing and Publications Building, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-3171; telephone number (515) 294-5247; fax number (515) 294-2945, and email at pubdist@exnet.iastate.edu. Some publications are available on the web at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu>.

Look for your local county extension's telephone number in the phone book under extension. The friendly people there are always willing to help you and have most publications on hand or they can order copies for you. All local county extension offices also have access to the internet and can often locate specific resources for you.



Water Safety: Preserving the Tranquil Setting of your Farm Pond

by Charles Schwab, Associate Professor Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, ISU Campus - Phone: 515-294-6360 - e-mail: cvschwab@iastate.edu

Farm ponds help produce a tranquil setting on your farm. It is easy to see why. The water element adds an extraordinary value to our living environment. We enjoy hearing the motion of water from brooks, waterfalls, and fountains. We also enjoy seeing beautiful sunsets, the full moon at midnight, and other reflected images on the smooth water surfaces.

Farm ponds also provide a site for various water sports. A long time angler or a beginner can spend hours trying to hook that legendary bass. During the hot months, the farm pond could serve as swimming hole.

Nothing will mar the tranquil setting you have set out to create on your acreage like a drowning in your farm pond. The National Safety Council has identified drowning as the fourth leading cause of uninten-

tional death for all ages. There are about 4,000 people that drown every year. Prevention is the best way to avoid a tragic event this summer.

We are approaching the peak period in year where the number of drownings double. June and July are the months with the highest number of drownings. If you have a farm pond, consider the following:

Never allow anyone to swim alone -A person should never swim alone, even if that individual is considered an experienced swimmer. An important rule to follow is to use the "buddy" system and swim with someone. Those who swim in farm ponds should enroll in an accredited program that teaches basic swimming skills. The American Red Cross and other swimming instruction programs teach these classes.

Supervise children closely - Children that are 1 and 2 years old have twice as many drowning deaths as any other age group. A young child's curiosity, short attention span, and inability to follow rules poses a hazardous condition around water. Close adult supervision contributes to safer water activities. In some cases it is recommended that ponds be fenced and posted to keep out unwanted persons. Restrict entry to your pond to keep out uninvited guests and unsupervised children.

Place a rescue device near your pond - Farm ponds used for swimming should have a rescue post. The post should be firmly embedded in the ground and visible from anywhere around the pond. Locate your rescue post near the water's edge. The rescue post contains a rescue pole, life buoy with line, and emergency information. A lightweight 12-14 foot pole should be attached to the rescue post. This enables a person standing on the bank to pull a victim to shore. The life buoy with line is used when a victim is out of reach of the pole. A nylon rope long enough to reach across the pond must be attached to a life buoy or ring and the other end of the rope to a wood block. Hang this rescue device on the post. Finally, the location of the nearest telephone and emergency numbers should be placed on a sign and attached to the top of the post.

Have personal flotation devices available - When boats are used on farm ponds, insist all passengers wear Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) or flotation garments. Most



drowning victims would be alive today if they had worn PFD. Boat owners should participate in a boating safety class. If you have a boat, be sure it's ready for the water and never overload it.

Remove submerged objects and other hazards - Objects hidden below the water surface are not seen by swimmers until too late. Swimmers that dive under water have encountered large or jagged rocks, tree stumps, broken bottles, and even discarded machinery. These objects diminish the swimmer's abilities to swim safely. You must eliminate all physical hazards from the swimming area to make your farm pond safe for you and others to use.

Test for contamination - Farm ponds can have many sources of contamination. If the water is cloudy, has a foul odor or an overabundance of algae, it may contain infectious agents or be contaminated by agricultural chemicals, livestock wastes, or other pollutants. Not all farm ponds may be suitable for swimming. Ponds used for swimming should be analyzed to determine water quality.

These important tips about farm pond safety are essential for acreage owners. Safety does not happen by itself. It is a series of choices we make everyday. We have enjoyed water sports since the ancient Greeks and Romans swam for fun and as part of their regular physical conditioning, so choose to make water on your farm safer.

Acreage Living is published monthly. For more information, contact your local county ISU Extension office.

Editor:
Shawn Shouse
ISU Extension FS/Ag Engineering
SW Area Extension
53020 Hitchcock Avenue
Lewis, Iowa 51544
PH: 712-769-2600

Layout & Design:
Paulette Cambridge
Office Assistant
SW Area Extension
53020 Hitchcock Avenue
Lewis, Iowa 51544
PH: 712-769-2600

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