



Before starting this column, I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you a Happy New Year. I especially hope that your New Year will include a garden. You may not know that the ancient Persian word for garden was "pairadaeza". We now translate this as paradise; and both Andrea and I hope that you will find a little bit of pairadaeza in 1992. For some unknown reason, the mail did not deliver my December column to the editor so this gives me a bit of a holiday as I resubmit it for January. I hope you find the following tidbits of interest.

The last column of the year is a good excuse to clean out the files and throw a lot of unrelated stuff at my faithful readers. What follows is a Christmas feast of gardening goodies.

University of Massachusetts researchers report that corn plots infested with weeds had 40% corn borer damage while weed free plots only suffered 20% damage. No insecticides were applied to the crop at any time.

Anyone trying to grow peaches would be well advised to spray buds with dormant oil spray as Utah State researchers found that this delayed the bud blooming by a few days and made the flower bud more cold resistant. It may have similar effects on other trees suggest the researchers.

Another Massachusetts grower (it must be silly season in Massachusetts) reports that he grows his tomatoes upside down. He drills a large hole in a flower pot, inserts the tomato upside down in this hole and then hangs the pot up in his garden. Water is applied to the top of the pot and the tomatoes were reported to fruit well. The advantage seemed to be that he could bring his tomatoes inside before frost to continue the harvest.

University of Tennessee researchers report that mulching just after planting with straw increases the numbers of beneficial spiders. These spiders eat bugs that create problems for your crops.

Worms are important in the garden. A British field trial actually killed all the worms in a field for 20 years in a row.

Compared to the control plot, the wormless experimental plot had greater accumulations of leaf litter on top of the soil, greater soil compaction, lower soil moisture, lower soil nitrogen and lower organic matter. Let's hear it for worms!

Storing tomatoes for long periods of time can be accomplished by this technique, according to UNICEF publications. You can keep the fruit for up to three months by: lining a cardboard box with paper. A 1 1/2 inch thick lining of wood ashes is then applied to the paper (use cool ashes please). Place freshly picked, but not over ripe tomatoes, stem end down in layers with ashes between the layers. Cover the top row with ashes, put on a top and seal with tape. The tomato skins may wrinkle but they will remain edible.

A source list of historic seeds and plants is available from Scott Kunst at Old House Gardens, 536 Third St., Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. Send \$1.00 and a self addressed envelope.

Kentucky Living magazine reports that cutting up orange peels and scattering the chunks where you do not want cats in your garden will keep the felines at bay. Let me know on this one.

Sharpen your lawnmower blade. According to English laboratory experiments (journal of Agriculture Engineering Research) dull mower blades use three times as much energy as sharp ones. This could translate into quite a bit of fuel over a few years.

According to the Journal of the National Cancer Institute, dogs that frequent grass that has been sprayed with 2-4-D are twice likely to develop lymphatic cancer. This form of cancer is quite common in dogs, afflicting one dog in seven. (Reported in Garden Supply Retailer October 1991). The suggestion is that you should be careful with your dog and perhaps yourself. This does contradict other research that show no effects from long term exposure to 2-4-D. You pay your money and you make your choice.

Dried yeast ensures an adequate supply of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium for greenhouse grown potted plants over a period of two months following application. This according to researchers in Germany should make it easy for local indoor enthusiasts to help their gardens grow. A bit of yeast should get a rise out of any plant.

If you walk through pesticides, see 2-4-D above, then do not wear these

shoes into the house. Dust obtained from carpets in San Antonio, Texas was found to contain chlordane, heptachlor, dieldrin and DDT with high concentrations near door ways. Farmers are you listening. No outdoor shoes in the house please.

Grimo Nut Nursery in RR#3 Lakeshore Road, Niagara on the Lake, is offering a nut harvesting machine. For only \$200.00 you can have a walk behind machine that picks up nuts for you.

USDA researchers are suggesting that home gardeners try using cooking oil to combat aphids, whiteflies and spider mites.

Add one tablespoon of liquid detergent to one cup of oil; then add 2 and 1/2 teaspoons of this mix to one cup of water. Spray directly on plants every ten days. USDA researchers claim good effectiveness for this home remedy.

We enough is enough. The file is hardly touched but I am running out of space. Perhaps I'll add a few more in the spring just to keep you well informed about the gardening world around us.

Do have a safe holiday season and a very Merry Christmas. God Bless.

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