



HOME & GARDEN

Home and Garden information center • 12005 Homewood Road • Ellicott City, MD 21042 • 1-800-342-2507

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Fruit Tips

Culture

- Weeds may be rampant in your fruit garden, remember that fruit plants have shallow root systems which are easily damaged by cultivation. Do not cultivate or dig into the soil around small fruits or tree fruits. Hand-pull the weeds and then apply organic mulches to control weeds.
- Strawberries need summer care. If you have your plants in hills, pick off all runners. If you planted a matted row, encourage the runners to root and grow until the row is 2 feet wide. Remove diseased plants.
- Japanese beetle adults are feeding on the foliage of bramble plants, grapes, and most fruit trees. Handpick where appropriate or sweep the adults off foliage and into a bucket of soapy water. Avoid using Japanese beetle traps because they may attract large numbers of beetles to your yard.
- When harvesting blueberries, allow berries to remain on the plants for three to five days after they turn blue. Waiting several days allows berries to reach their maximum sugar content. However, many songbirds especially cat birds will eat them as they ripen. Some gardeners use a bird netting to cover the plants, unfortunately birds and snakes often get tangled in the netting and die when trapped in the hot sun. So leave them uncovered or build a large cage covered with chicken wire over the plants.
- Keep thornless blackberry laterals pruned back to 18 inches. Keep red raspberry canes supported to facilitate air circulation and harvesting.
- Pick peaches when background color changes and before fruits become fully ripened to reduce the incidence of brown rot disease. Bring them indoors, submerge them in a 1:10 bleach to water solution and allow to ripen in the kitchen.

Insects

- Wilting and dieback of bramble canes accompanied by swellings along the canes indicates cane borers. Prune out below the visible damage.
- This month some of the brambles such as blackberries and raspberries will be coming into harvest, Harvest them frequently to discourage Japanese beetles or sap beetles from becoming troublesome. Both insects are especially attracted to ripe and overripe fruit.
- Sap oozing from the bark, twigs or fruits of stone fruit trees is normal and should not be confused with peach tree borer damage. Borers typically enter the lower trunk around the soil line and feed on the cambium. They kick out a mixture of frass (sawdust like material) and sap, which can be scraped away to expose the feeding tunnels. Many times the borers can be killed in their tunnels by poking them with a fine wire.

Disease

- Cover fungicide sprays for black rot of grapes should be continued on a 10-14 day schedule until grapes begin to color. The severity of black rot can be reduced somewhat by pruning out foliage around grape clusters.
- The excessive rain this year has caused brown rot on cherries and peaches to be a very widespread problem. Infected fruit should be quickly removed and discarded. Spraying stone fruits with a registered fungicide 2 weeks before harvest can minimize this problem.
- Practice good sanitation by removing and discarding all fallen leaves and fruits.

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