

MARYLAND Home & Garden

University of Maryland Extension ▪ Home and Garden Information Center
www.hgic.umd.edu ▪ growit.umd.edu ▪ 1-800-342-2507 ▪ May - June 2009

Grow It Eat It Update

by Maria Malloy, Certified Professional Horticulturalist

Do you remember how you felt the first time you saw Han Solo and Chewbacca go to light speed in Star Wars? Well, the **Grow It Eat It** (GIEI) campaign is feeling some G forces as it hurtles through the atmosphere on the Food Gardening rocket fueled by media attention and public interest.

On March 26, Jon Traunfeld brought national attention to DIY food gardening on The Martha Stewart Show. He showed



Martha and millions of viewers how to build the University of Maryland Salad Table™ and launched a new way to grow salad greens.

The GIEI campaign was officially launched on March 27 with a media event at the Master

Peace Garden in Riverdale. At launch time, over 500 Master Gardeners had been trained to teach the public the basic how-to's of food gardening. Harford County hosted a media kick-off at the Cal Ripken, Sr. Memorial Gardens at Ripken Stadium in Aberdeen. Did you know that Cal, Sr. was an avid gardener? He was especially fond of Better Boy and Early Girl tomatoes which will be prominently featured in the gardens at the stadium that will be tended by Harford County Master Gardeners, 4-H members of Harford County, and Boys and Girls Clubs of Harford County.

Since then, 15 counties and Baltimore City scheduled at least 120 basic gardening classes for the public to attend for free. Many have already been given to capacity groups, prompting additional classes to be added to the schedule.

On April 25, Maryland First Lady Katie O'Malley launched her own backyard food garden at Government House in Annapolis. Jon Traunfeld and Nick Place from University of Maryland Extension as well as Roger Richardson and Mary Ellen Setting of the Maryland Department of Agriculture were on hand for the media event. Anne Arundel County Master Gardeners and local

youth volunteered to help Mrs. O'Malley and Chef Medford Canby plan and plant the food garden. Governor Martin O'Malley stopped by to lend his support.



First Lady Katie O'Malley with the Grow It Eat It team at the Government House in Annapolis

The vision of the GIEI campaign is 1 million Marylanders growing their own healthy, affordable food in the next 2 years. As of the end of April, 235 people have registered their Maryland food gardens with the network. Add your garden to the count and register to win a University of Maryland Salad Box™. We will be giving away a UM Salad Box each month from May through September.

Thanks to our new bloggers, you can follow the campaign and share gardening experiences at groweat.blogspot.com. For example, Lisa Winters is Grow It Eat It team leader for Anne Arundel County and she'll blog this summer about the first Lady's new kitchen garden.

It's not too late to start your own garden! For more information, visit the Grow It Eat It website or call the Home and Garden Information Center's Certified Professional Horticulturalists. (In Maryland 800-342-2507, outside of Maryland 410-531-1757. Phone hours are 8 AM - 1 PM, Monday - Friday). Whether this is your first vegetable garden or your 50th, we're here to answer your questions.



WWW.GROWIT.UMD.EDU

Create a “Herp” Friendly Landscape

by Ray Bosmans, Professor Emeritus & President of the Mid-Atlantic Turtle and Tortoise Society

What is a Herp you may ask? Herp is short for Herptile which is a name that collectively includes reptiles and amphibians. These



American Green Frog

amazing animals are a modern day throw back to the age of dinosaurs. Reptiles and amphibians are remarkably successful to have survived essentially unchanged since the dawn of time. They are found in almost every part of the world and most have adapted to many challenges, the

biggest of which are the impacts (mostly harmful) of humans. These animals definitely deserve our respect.

The mid-Atlantic region has a rich diversity of turtles, snakes, lizards, salamanders, frogs and toads. Herptiles play a very significant role in nature. They eat pests such as rodents (primarily the snakes); others feed on harmful insects, slugs



Male eastern box turtle
(note the male's red eyes)

and other destructive plant pests; and many are also food for other animals. For example, the Bald Eagle that is making a comeback in Maryland loves to eat water snakes. Aside from their role in the balance of nature, they are an “indicator species” of environmental quality. Reptiles and amphibians are very sensitive to pollutants in the landscape.

Their presence in your backyard is a good indicator of a healthy environment.

Herps in our region are increasingly threatened by wide spread habitat destruction, pollution, and vehicles road kills.

What can you do in your landscape to attract and support a population of reptiles and amphibians ?

Here is a quick check list to help you:

- Limit the use of traditional insecticides, use them only when absolutely needed and only on the target plants. Whenever possible use bio-rational insecticides such as insecticidal soap, horticultural oil and biologicals. Plant native plants that are more insect and disease hardy than many imported plants.
- Do not over- use lawn weed killers. Keep your lawn mowed at the proper height of 2-3 inches for cool season grasses and weeds will be reduced. Hand dig or spot treat

weedy patches with a labeled weed killer. Do not spray the entire lawn if weeds are only patchy.

- Avoid mowing your lawn in the late evening or at night. Almost all species of reptiles and amphibians are actively moving through the lawn at night. Turtles are usually not very active at night except during the egg-laying season of early summer. Whether you mow with a push or riding mower always be on the look out for turtles, snakes and toads. Box turtles are the number one victims of lawn mower injuries.
- Install an aquatic garden; it does not need to be large. They are not too difficult to make, (except for the digging). Planted with beautiful water lilies an aquatic garden will bring you great enjoyment. It also will provide a refuge for frogs and toads to lay their eggs, a place for a box turtle to drink and wade. Be sure there are several easy places for a turtles to climb out, or else they will drown. To learn how to create your own back yard pond refer to HGIC publications #17 and 17A.
- Provide cover for reptiles and amphibians to hide. Convert some of your lawn into beautiful perennial flower beds, ground covers or shrubs. An open lawn does not provide the needed protection for these small animals to feel safe and secure. They are rather low on the food chain and need to hide a lot!
- Leave a place in your yard a little “wild”. The entire landscape does not need to be so manicured, an area that has a patch of wild growth, piles of leaves or branches provide places to hide and to hibernate over the winter.
- When driving be on the look out for turtles crossing the road. So many are killed by drivers who either do not see them or simply don't care. (some drivers even aim for them). It seems that a glass beer bottle has a better chance of surviving than a poor turtle simply trying to get across. If safe, pull over and move the turtle across the road in the direction it was headed. Although a box turtle is very cute, resist taking it home as a pet.
- Finally, take a little time to learn more about these fascinating creatures. Snakes are the least understood or appreciated reptile. Too many have fallen victim to the shovel. Fortunately today, less people kill them than years ago partly due to the many educational programs on TV and what children are now taught about reptiles in school.

Keep in mind that all native reptiles and amphibians are protected in Maryland and neighboring states. It is illegal to willfully kill a snake or any other reptile. If you find an injured turtle contact a licensed wildlife rehabber by visiting the website of the Mid-Atlantic Turtle and Tortoise Society at: Matts@turtle.org

To learn more about enhancing your backyard wildlife habitat see our website's Attracting Wildlife page and our Wildlife links section.

Hopefully, by making a few improvements you can create a landscape that sustains good environmental quality for Herps.

Four-lined Plant Bug

by Mary Kay Malinoski, Regional Specialist,
Entomology

Plant bugs are small sucking insects (2-9mm) that feed on the leaves of many herbaceous plants. The plant bugs feed by piercing the leaves with their tube-shaped mouthparts, injecting an enzyme into the leaf tissue and sucking up the partially digested fluid. Damage to leaves may appear as stipples (tiny white spots), small round holes and distorted leaves.



the damage by mid-summer. Inexpensive annuals that have sustained heavy damage can be replaced when the bugs have finished feeding.

The four-lined plant bug is a pest in the garden in May and June (one generation per year). The adults are 3/16 of an inch long and yellowish green with 4 black stripes down the back. The nymphs (immature bugs) are red with the yellow and black wing pads partially covering the body.

This bug feeds on over 250 herbaceous plants. Damage from this plant bug begins as yellow stipples or spots, eventually becoming brown to black necrotic spots. In large infestations, these spots coalesce and cause leaves to turn brown.

Four-lined plant bugs are quick and difficult to detect, and only a few can cause noticeable damage. Because they move so quickly, they are difficult to control with a contact insecticide such as insecticidal soap or horticultural oil. Many plants will outgrow

advantages for the home gardener. They are very efficient compared to overhead watering methods because 90%-95% of the water goes into the soil. Therefore less water is required to fully wet the root zone. Walkways stay dry allowing you to work in your garden at any time without worry about muddy shoes, and plant foliage remains dry preventing disease problems. And they can be easily and inexpensively controlled with automatic timers (mechanical or battery operated).

Complete starter kits for an average backyard garden can be purchased for \$30-\$40. Check local garden centers and on-line companies, such as: Drip Works, The Drip Store, and Drip Depot. The drip tape that delivers the water directly to the soil can be re-used if care is taken and it is stored out of the sunlight and away from rodents. The filter, pressure regulator and connectors should last for many years.

Drip irrigation systems work off low water pressure, 8-10 psi. A simple filter, with a removable strainer, is first connected to the water bib followed by a pressure regulator. A header is laid along the top of each row or bed and individual drip lines or drip tape ("T-tape" is one particular brand) are connected to the header and deliver water from special pressure-compensating "zipper" emitters inside the flat tubing. A single drip line will irrigate a row of plants. For wide beds- drip lines are usually spaced 18-24 inches apart; 9-12 inches apart on coarse soils high in sand (these soils will drain more freely and are more difficult to wet thoroughly). The drip tape can be left on top of the soil (emitter side up) or buried. If left on top, it's a good practice to cover the drip tape with a mulch.

Drip systems deliver about 1/2 gallon of water per minute per 100' of drip tape. It can take as little as 2-3 hours and as long as 24 hours to thoroughly wet the root zone. It all depends on soil type, temperature, crop, and spacing of drip tape. Municipal water is fine to use but make sure you have some type of backflow check valve to prevent contamination of the water source. Voles love to chew on the plastic tubing so store drip irrigation kits indoors or outdoors in a metal container.

Think about the very dry summers we had in the past 10 years. Even when rainfall is close to normal during the growing season, your garden will be much more productive if you can irrigate on a regular basis.



Drip Irrigation for Vegetable Gardens

Don't let those plentiful April rains fool you. The Maryland growing season can get pretty dry, especially July through September when we expect to harvest those much anticipated tomatoes, peppers, and melons. Make a plan now for how you can get water to your vegetable and fruit plants when Mother Nature is not cooperating.

Drip irrigation- also known as trickle irrigation- has many

Ask the Experts

by Debbie Ricigliano, Certified Professional Horticulturalist

Question: The time has come to plant my tomato transplants for this season. I resisted the temptation of purchasing my plants too early. I remember my Dad used to plant his around Mother's Day. Do you have any planting tips? I want them to get off to a good start. Thanks.

Answer: Unless you have a way of warming the soil and protecting tomato transplants from unexpected cold weather it is best to wait until Mother's Day to plant. Of course, you can plant a little earlier on the Eastern shore and in Southern Maryland. Choose healthy, stocky plants without blooms, or pinch the blooms off. Tomatoes need full sun and should be planted in fertile well-drained soil. Dig a hole deep enough to bury the stem of the transplant up to the second set of true leaves (pinch off the leaves that will be buried in the soil). Prevent blossom end rot by mixing in about ¼ cup of ground limestone into the planting hole. Use a water soluble fertilizer to water in the transplants and then after the first fruits appear side-dress with a complete granular fertilizer. Deep regular watering will produce a better crop of tomatoes. For additional information read HG 56 IPM Series: Tomatoes.

Question: My lawn is being overrun by a weed that I cannot identify. It looks a lot like clover; the leaves are small with 3 heart-shaped leaflets. The big difference is the flower color. Instead of white flowers, this is covered with tiny yellow flowers. What is this weed and what can I do to control it?

Answer: Sounds like the weed is oxalis, which is also called, yellow wood sorrel. This weed is very problematic in lawns and ornamental beds. It is a common plant nursery weed and is often introduced into the home landscape from infested container plants. The best defense against controlling a tough weed such as this is to encourage a thick stand of turfgrass. There are two species of oxalis that invade Maryland lawns; common and creeping oxalis and not all herbicides will control both types. When selecting an herbicide look for the active ingredients 2, 4-D plus triclopyr or one that contains only triclopyr. Read and follow the label directions. For additional information on lawn weed read TT-49 Broadleaf Weed Control in Established Lawns.

Question: We are ready to plant in an ornamental bed that we prepared last year which faces south. It receives hot, direct sunlight in the summer. Do you know of plants that will do well without having to be watered extensively throughout the summer? I am not able to do much supplemental watering. The plants should also provide color as long as possible. What suggestions do you have for me?

Answer: A combination of drought tolerant shrubs, ornamental grasses, perennials and annuals will provide the color you are looking for and use less water in the landscape. However, all plants need water, especially when they are young and becoming established. Watering is essential for at least the first two years. Before planting incorporate organic matter such as, compost, leaf mold or composted manure into the bed. This will improve the water-holding capacity of sandy soils; lighten clay soil and encourage the beneficial activity of soil microorganisms. Do not just amend individual planting holes, but incorporate the soil amendment throughout the potential root zone of the plants. Crape myrtle, potentilla, glossy abelia, juniper ssp. and osmanthus are shrubs that can handle full sun. Perennials and annuals include: euphorbia, black-eyed Susan, sedums, coreopsis, gaillardia, vinca, portulaca, Russian sage and pentas. Combining groupings of Russian sage and ornamental grasses such as feather reed grass, fountain grass or switch grass will create an attractive, low maintenance, drought tolerant bed that you will be able to enjoy in the summer for years to come. For additional suggestions refer to our publication on Xeriscaping.

2009 Spring Diseases

by David Clement, Regional Specialist, Plant Pathology

Introduction

With wet spring weather we have received many calls and e-mails on fungal leaf spots on shade trees. Most established shade trees and shrubs produce more leaves than they need for normal growth. Unless severe leaf defoliation takes place, enough leaves are usually left for healthy growth. On young trees or newly planted trees leaf loss is more detrimental. When a tree or shrub loses most of its leaves its food reserves are depleted which may cause dieback, decline, and/or death. The majority of leaf spotting diseases are favored by cool, wet, spring weather. There are numerous leaf spotting diseases that occur on shade trees and shrubs, but few are lethal. Leaf spots caused by fungi often can be distinguished by their fruiting structures and pattern of lesion development.



Management strategies: In most cases, leaf spots on mature trees will not be a major problem threatening the health of the tree. The best management practices for leaf spotting diseases involve pruning and removal of dead twigs during the winter or dry summer months. Mature trees can be thinned for better air circulation throughout the canopy. Rake and remove infected fallen leaves in the fall and plant resistant varieties when available.

It is generally not economical to spray large mature shade trees for leaf spot diseases nor is it effective once disease symptoms are noticeable. Young trees or newly planted trees may need fungicide sprays to prevent excessive leaf loss until they become established in the landscape.

Specific Diseases

Rusts of Ornamentals

The first landscape diseases in Maryland that many people see in the spring are the series of juniper (cedar) rust diseases. Cedar-Apple rust, Cedar-Quince rust and Cedar-Hawthorn rust are caused by fungi in the genus *gymnosporangium*. These rust fungi require two types of plants, a pomaceous plant and a cedar in which to complete their life cycle. Juniperus virginiana, the Eastern Red cedar, is the most common rust-susceptible cedar in Maryland.



Conspicuous symptoms are produced on both apples and cedars. Fungal spores produced on one type of host plant are carried by wind to infect the other. These rusts damage many popular ornamental plants. Colorful leaf spots, and twig and fruit malformations are produced on pomaceous plants. Peculiar round leaf galls, twig galls, cankers and twig dieback are produced on cedar hosts.



Highly susceptible, heavily infected pomaceous plants may be defoliated by mid-summer. Leaf spots are conspicuous and detract from ornamental value. The loss of leaf area due to spotting and defoliation reduces the vigor of trees, decreases yields, and makes the plants more susceptible to winter injury and other diseases.

Most infected fruit drops in June, while the remainder may be misshapen, cracked, and subject to secondary fruit rots. Quince rust galls on twigs may result in branch dieback and distorted growth. In moist spring weather, gelatinous masses of reddish-orange fungal spores are produced on infected twigs. On cedar hosts, galled leaves and twigs may die back resulting in distorted growth. Perennial rust cankers may cause witches' brooms and large swollen cankers.

Control:

1. Separate alternate hosts. Do not plant susceptible apples near susceptible junipers: a distance of 1 to 2 miles greatly reduces infection. (This is obviously not practical in areas where Eastern Red cedar is common.)

2. Hand pick and destroy cedar galls by April 1, before the spore-producing tendrils are formed. Cedar galls are most conspicuous and easy to see in wet weather when the orange spore tendrils are extruded.
3. Select resistant varieties of pomaceous plants.
4. Other rust diseases that usually occur less frequently in Maryland include ash rust, birch rust, azalea rust, and rust on Bradford pear.

Anthracnose Leaf Diseases

These diseases are characterized by discrete lesions that are usually found along leaf veins. In severe cases these lesions may run together and kill the entire leaf. Young leaves may become distorted as healthy tissue continues to grow around dead areas. Under optimum disease conditions the entire tree may be defoliated in the spring or early summer. Infection may proceed from the leaf blade down the petiole (leaf stem) into the small twigs at the tips of the tree branches. The pathogen may over winter in the twigs until the infection cycle starts over the next spring. Common examples are oak anthracnose, maple anthracnose and sycamore anthracnose.

Management strategies: In most cases as mentioned above anthracnose leaf diseases on mature trees will not be a major problem threatening the health of the tree. The best management practices involve pruning and removal of dead twigs during the winter or dry summer months. Mature trees can be thinned for better air circulation throughout the canopy. Rake and remove infected fallen leaves in the fall and plant resistant varieties when available.

It is generally not economical to spray large mature shade trees for anthracnose diseases nor is it effective once disease symptoms are noticeable. Young trees or newly planted trees may need fungicide sprays to prevent excessive leaf loss until they become established in the landscape.

Apple Scab

Apple scab is a significant fungal disease of crabapple trees. A similar disease affects pears. Apple scab appears on expanding leaves in the spring as olive-green spots without distinct borders. These lesions grow and darken to a greenish-black color and develop black borders. Leaves may then turn brown and drop. Fruits develop brown, scab-like lesions, are often deformed and may drop off before maturing.



The disease is favored by cool, wet springs and overwinters on fallen leaves. Numerous disease cycles occur each year so controlling this disease early in the spring will lessen disease symptoms through the season.

Prevention and control strategies include:

- Plant resistant varieties, such as Ames White, Autumn Glory, Baskatong, Beauty, Coral Cascade, Gibb's Golden

Gage, Gwendolyn, Harvest Gold, Henningi, Molten Lava, Naragansett, Prof. Sprenger, Red Snow, Sparkler. Check nursery catalogs and local garden centers, as there are many other resistant varieties.

- Rake up and discarding all infected and fallen leaves.
- Prune trees to promote good air circulation.

Dogwood Anthracnose

Dogwood anthracnose caused by the fungus (*Discula destructiva*) is the most serious disease of dogwoods in the landscape and our forests. The fungus involved causes dieback or even death of infected trees. The early symptoms begin in mid to late May as leaf spots with tan or purple borders. In wet weather these spots can rapidly enlarge and kill the entire leaf. These blighted, drooping leaves will remain hanging on the branches in wet weather. The disease



will then spread from the infected leaves into the twigs and branches and cause dieback of the limbs. If the dieback reaches the main trunk the entire tree can be killed. To distinguish this disease from other leaf spots (Elsinoe leaf spot), examine the underside of the leaves for numerous small tan to brown dots, about the size of a printed period, scattered within the blighted tissue. These dots are the source of spores that will be washed by rain or dew and spread by insects to healthy leaves and neighboring trees. Under severe disease conditions the flower bracts can become spotted.

Management strategies: Both cultural and chemical control strategies are necessary. Prune out all dead or dying twigs and limbs during dry weather. All water sprouts or suckers on trunks and branches should also be removed at this time. In the fall, leaves should be raked up and removed. Remove any dead leaves still attached to the branches. Avoid over application of fertilizer that results in succulent new growth with greater susceptibility to disease. Avoid digging native trees from the woods and transplanting them into landscapes. This practice can introduce the disease into a neighborhood community that was previously disease free.

- In areas with severe disease, consider planting resistant dogwood species such as kousa dogwood, (*Cornus kousa*), or hybrids between kousa and flowering dogwood such as: ‘Celestial’, ‘Milky Way’, ‘Stardust’, ‘Steeple’, ‘Stellar Pink’ and others.

- When disease pressure is severe fungicides can be utilized on trees in landscapes in the spring at bud break, followed by additional sprays every 10-14 days until leaves are fully expanded. Trees should also be sprayed once in the fall after the leaves have changed color, but before leaf drop. For a list of labeled fungicides and other control options, see HG12, IPM Series: Dogwood.

Bacterial Diseases

Last year was an extremely severe year for the bacterial disease called fire blight and if this spring continues with wet weather we may see additional outbreaks, especially on Bradford pears. Fireblight is serious bacterial disease of plants in the rose family. The most commonly damaged plants in the landscape are apple, cotoneaster, firethorn, hawthorn, mountain ash, quince, and pear. However the list of susceptible plants includes over 130 plant species. Additional plants that can be infected include chokeberry, Kerria, photinia, serviceberry and spirea. The first symptoms usually start on the blossoms as they quickly droop, shrivel or turn brown. The disease progresses from the blossoms into the twigs and branches. The very tips of the branches often droop or characteristically curl over to give a hooked appearance. The affected leaves turn a dark brown to black and remain attached to the branch. This gives the appearance of scorching as if by fire.

With few exceptions, the disease moves more slowly in woody tissue, and often moves down to the base of a branch where it forms a lesion or canker. The color of the infected wood beneath the bark is often a reddish brown. The most damaging cankers are those formed on the main stem or base of the plant since they often girdle and kill the plant. During wet weather droplets of bacterial ooze form on the surface of cankers and can be spread by wind, rain, birds, humans or insects to other plants. The most common insects that spread the disease are pollinators such as bees and flies. The disease causing bacteria overwinter at the margins of cankers and become active again in the spring.

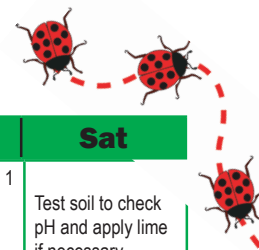
Management: Disease management often involves selecting resistant plant varieties. Avoid cultural practices, such as over fertilizing, that induce excessive succulent growth, which is more susceptible to infection. Control insect populations with appropriate insecticides. Fungicides that contain copper can be applied at bloom to slow down infections. Infected branches should be pruned 8-12 inches below any visible symptoms. Don't prune infected shoots back to a healthy branch. Leave a 4-5 inch stub that can be pruned off over the winter when the disease is dormant.

Do you have a plant or insect pest question?

Call our Certified Professional Horticulturalists at 800-342-2507 (8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday - Friday), or submit your question via our website.

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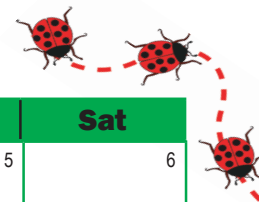
MAY 2009



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Do you have a plant or insect pest question? Call the Home and Garden Information Center 800-342-2507 visit our websites: www.hgic.umd.edu and www.growit.umd.edu</p>					1	<p>Test soil to check pH and apply lime if necessary ▶ HG 110</p>
3	4 Water all new fruit plants thoroughly	5	6 Harden off tender transplants	7	8 Sow watermelon & pumpkin seeds	9
10 Annuals can be safely planted in the garden	11	12 Plant tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant ▶ HG 16	13	14 Continue cover sprays on fruit trees	15	16 Control slugs on flowers and vegetables ▶ HG 92
17	18 Plant pole beans, 3-4 per hill and provide trellis for climbing	19	20 Fertilize house plants and repot if necessary	21	22	23
24	25	26 Thin fruits of apple trees 3 weeks after petal fall, spacing fruits 6" apart	27	28 Turn compost piles	29	30
31						

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JUNE 2009



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Exclude wildlife from vegetable gardens with fencing ▶ HG 90	2	3 Mulch vegetables and ornamentals	4	5 Fertilize roses during the growing season	6
7	8	9 Control bagworms with B.t. ▶ HG 32	10	11	12	13 Hand-pull or dig out actively growing broadleaf weeds HG ▶ 101
14	15 Strawberry beds in decline can be renovated after harvest EB 125	16	17 Pinch out flower buds of mums & asters to prevent early flowering	18	19 Keep an eye out for emerald ash borers	20
21 Sow a late crop of squash to prevent squash vine bore	22	23	24	25 Keep young and obviously stressed trees watered during dry periods	26	27 Hand-pick Japanese beetles into a bucket of soapy water ▶ HG 78
28	29	30 Stake plants that cannot support themselves when fully grown				



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