

## Vegetable Specialist Gives Dry Weather Garden Tips

With much of the county still suffering effects of dry weather, there will probably be a rash of vegetable problems associated with drought conditions, according to James Dutt, extension vegetable specialist from the Pennsylvania State University.

One problem already showing up in some home gardens and tomato fields is blossom end rot. Dutt emphasized that the condition is not a disease caused by bacteria, fungus or virus. The dry, black rotten condition at the blossom end of the tomato fruit is a physiological breakdown caused by a calcium deficiency and induced by drought conditions.

About the only way to combat blossom end rot is to irrigate the crop before the soil becomes too dry. Mulching will sometimes help to prevent the soil drying out, but if the condition is showing up on the fruits, the only solution is plenty of moisture.

If irrigation is not practical, spraying with six pounds of Calcium Chloride per acre in 100 gallons of water will help prevent the condition but will not arrest it if it has already started, according to Ernest Bergman, plant nutrition expert at the University.

Some varieties are more susceptible than others, Bergman said, and of course the condition will show up quicker on light, shaley soils than on deep soils.

If irrigation is practical, either in the backyard garden or in the field, Dutt said, be sure enough water is applied to soak the ground to at least four inches. Too little water is worse than none at all since it pulls the roots to the surface where they dry out and die.

"Never put on less than a half inch of water," Dutt said, and it is better to irrigate in the morning than at night, so that foliage has a chance to dry off. Irrigation during the heat of the day results in the loss of too much water through evaporation.

A half inch of water means that approximately 700 gallons will need to be put on every 1,000 square feet of garden. "This is a plot about 30 by 30 feet," Dutt said.

Dutt said there are a few other things the home or market vegetable gardener can do to help beat the dry weather.

Cultivation should be held to a minimum and should be as shallow as possible to keep

ruin a complete crop of beans by cultivating too deep in dry weather," he said.

Ground should be prepared for late vegetables by disking rather than plowing, but the ground must be plowed, it should be worked down immediately to keep it from drying out.

It is a good idea to irrigate right after planting corn,

beans, or any fall vegetables, and plant food in the irrigation water will help the plants get off to a good start. Dutt suggested that the plants and ground be wet first, then the plant food sprayed through the irrigation line. "Be sure to wash all the fertilizer off the plant foliage," he said to pre-

vent burning the leaves. If sprinkler irrigation is not available in the home garden, Dutt said, ditch irrigation in a level garden is an acceptable method, and in sloping gardens, a porous hose can be used, but the important thing is, get the water on before the plants begin to dry up.

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## Pequea Valley 4-H Elects Two Posture Queens

The Pequea Valley 4-H Cooking and Sewing club elected two candidates for county posture queen at their Monday meeting in the Intercourse fire hall.

Karen Mellinger, Bird-In-Hand, will represent the cooking club and Doris Bauer, Intercourse, is the candidate from the sewing club. The competition will be held on July 18 at Long Park, Lancaster.

Evelyn Groff, Gordonville R2, is planning to give a demonstration called "Sally Lunn Bread" at County Demonstration Day, July 8 at Penn Manor High School. Evelyn also reported on her attendance at Club Congress at Penn State, June 18 to 21, and Carol Eby.

Next meeting of the club will be July 15 at 1 p.m. in the Intercourse fire hall.