

"Damping Off" Caused By Many Plant Organisms

"Damping-off," as many gardeners know it, refers to the failure of some seed to germinate and to the collapse of seedling plants at the soil line, due to attack by fungi in the soil.

Dr. J. W. Heuberger, extension plant pathologist at the University of Delaware, says there are many organisms that can cause damping-off. There are the pre-emergence types which attack the seedling before it emerges from the soil. Many species of soil fungi are included in this category.

Second, there are the post-emergence kinds that attack

the seedling after it emerges from the soil.

A third classification includes organisms that are carried under the seed coat, especially in tomato, cabbage and cauliflower seed. These organisms can permanently injure the stems.

Many other pathogens also cause damping-off under certain conditions. In fact, nearly 40 different organisms have been identified as causing this situation, Dr. Heuberger says.

Several control measures can be used to stop the spread of fungus growth. Seed and soil treatment, along with sanitation and protection of the seedlings, will go far in keeping problems to a minimum, he explains.

The easiest and most effective control measure is to

(Continued from Page 9) ter of a cookie lightly with your finger to test for doneness. Cookies are done when

use treated seed or to treat the seed and spray the seedlings and soil surface at frequent intervals with a safe fungicide, such as Ferbam or Zineb or Captan, Dr. Heuberger advises.

The air and surface of the soil should be kept dry, too, because moisture favors damping-off organisms. Watering should be done in the morning and preferably on bright days, since many fungi do not grow well in bright light. Sunlight raises the temperature and evaporates moisture from the surface of the soil. The plants will also develop faster, outgrowing the stage when the disease is most destructive.

cookies are lightly browned. For variety, flatten unbaked drop cookies with the bottom of a glass that you have dipped in granulated sugar.

If the dough is stiff, mold into balls, then flatten with a glass or the tines of a fork.

Drop cookies stay fresh tasting when you keep them in a container with a tight-fitting cover.

(Continued from Page 10)

placed insects in each dish and observed feeding for 8 hours.

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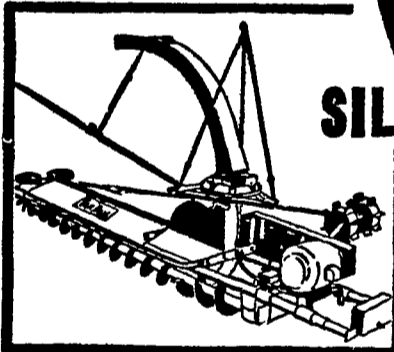
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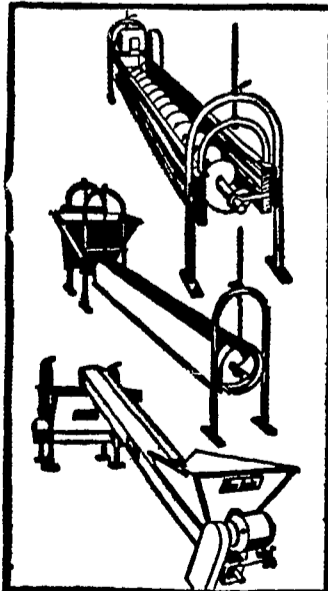


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