

● Plastic Tobacco
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with any differences in growth rates immediately evident. Mylin started planting tobacco on June 1st, this year, but said that plants in his plastic-covered beds were ready to go by May 30th. This reporter observed early this week that while leaves on Mylin's plants grown under muslin were the size of silver dollars, the plants were only a couple of inches tall. Tobacco grown under plastic, however, had leaves as big as dollar bills, and plants measured at least six inches in height.

THE WOMAN'S TOUCH

It has often been noted that when it comes to raising baby chicks, or other young stock, no one seems to do as good a job as a woman. Apparently the same thing applies to growing tobacco plants. At Mylin's, it's Robert's wife Mary who tends the seedbeds once they are planted.

There seems to be a bit more management involved in growing plants under plastic. Temperature control for instance, is critical. A thermometer hanging under the plastic dome gives Mrs. Mylin an indication of how to handle the ventilation. When the temperature hits 110 degrees she generally ventilates the beds by opening the plastic covering at the ends or by removing tape from one-foot-long air slits located either side of the plastic dome. A certain amount of judgment is necessary in hitting the right balance between ventilating properly and over-ventilating. The wind direction and velocity, and the outside

air temperature are all factors to be considered.

WATERING

One of the drawbacks Mrs. Mylin notes in caring for the plants under plastic is the difficulty in getting water distributed properly. Once the plants are well-started this is only a once-a-week job, but to get them going requires daily watering. This is done through the ventilation slits. Mrs. Mylin says she is still looking for a more efficient way to get this important job done.

TREATMENT

All three tobacco beds were seeded at Mylin's on April 3rd. This was nearly three weeks later than last year because of the poor weather conditions. The only fertilizer used on the beds was some ammonium nitrate when the plants were large enough to benefit from it.

About two weeks ago, when the weather was beginning to warm up, the plastic and muslin covers were removed permanently. For two weeks before that they were removed during the morning, covered at noon, and then, gradually, left off all night to harden the plants.

Mylin has stuck with the same varieties of tobacco for the past few years. He planted two beds of Pennbel-69 this year, one under plastic and one under muslin, and one bed of Hill Island.

Scientists Seek Ways To Destroy DDT In Soil

Anaerobic bacteria — micro-organisms that live without air — may provide a way to reduce DDT accumulations in the soil. The principle of anaerobic decomposition has been applied for many years by builders of septic tanks. The indication that it may also work on DDT suggests a solution to one of the most vexing problems concerning DDT — its persistence. Once released into the environ-

ment, DDT retains its toxic qualities for years, and it is almost sure to build up in the soils where it is used every year. Soil scientists W. D. Guenzi and chemist W. E. Beard at the ARS Nitrogen Laboratory, Ft. Collins, Colo., treated soil samples with DDT and incubated the samples in an airtight chamber to promote growth of anaerobic micro-organisms.

After four weeks in the incubated soil, less than half of the applied DDT remained in its original form. The scientists also applied DDT to soil samples that had been sterilized to free them of all micro-organisms. In these samples, DDT remained intact throughout the four-week test period.

Most of the DDT was converted directly to DDD, a less toxic material. The scientists pointed out, however, that their experiment is only one step toward decomposition of DDT. If they can decompose DDT anaerobically in the laboratory, their next step will be to develop ways of creating anaerobic conditions in the field. This might be done by flooding the land, thus sealing it off from

contact with air and permitting anaerobic populations to flourish.

In the tests, Guenzi and Beard added .1 milligram of DDT to each 10-gram soil sample. The soil samples were moistened and incubated at 30 degrees centigrade in an atmosphere of 20 percent carbon dioxide and 80 percent nitrogen. Radioactive DDT was added to the soil so that DDT and its decomposition products could be identified by a scintillation counter. After two weeks of incubation, 88 percent of the DDT remained in the soil samples; after four weeks, 34 percent.

● Farm Calendar

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- courthouse.
- June 13-7 p.m., Lancaster County 4th Annual Dairy Princess Pageant, at Host Town Motel, Lancaster.
- June 14-10 a.m., 4-H Strawberry Exhibit at Holiday Inn, Lancaster.
- June 16-7:30 p.m., 4-H Photography Club organizational meeting at Eric Stoner's, 1051 Eden Rd., Lancaster.



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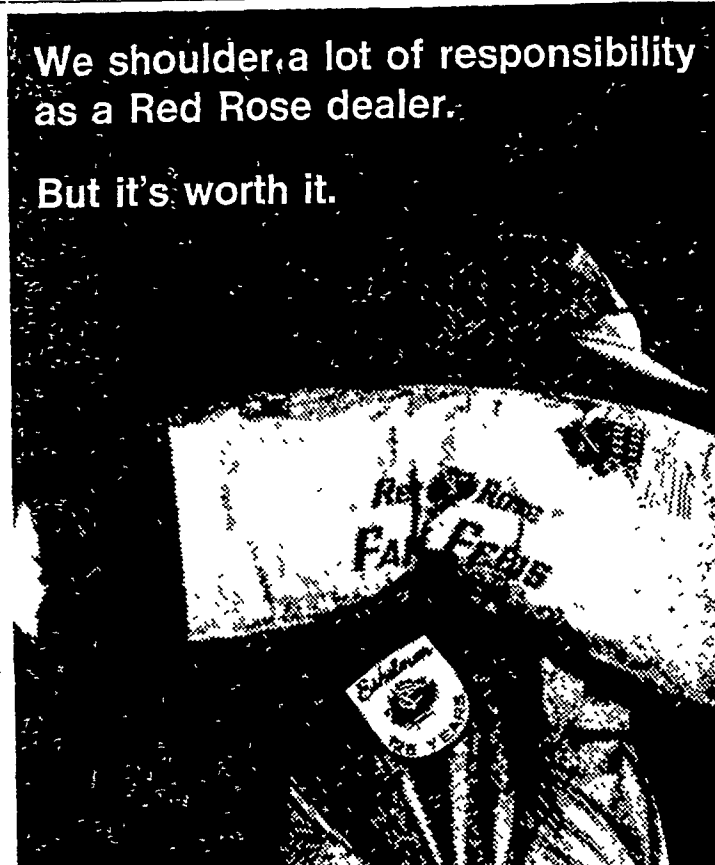
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