

Plant lovers' corner

All-American winners evaluated

DOVER, Del. - Every Spring in advance of the growing season the new All-American selections of flowers and vegetables for the current year are put out with glowing reports of their potentials for gardeners everywhere.

This time of year, gardeners who have tried these new creations are forming their own opinions. The future of these newcomers in relation to old standbys will rise or fall with their popularity with gardeners.

A real credit to the All-American selections committee is that they do a thorough job of screening and testing the candidates. Varieties receiving All-American awards have some real merits. Whether or not they can displace existing varieties in next year's seed orders depends on many things, according to experts from University of Delaware's extension horticulturists.

Plants don't perform the same in every garden for a number of reasons, but here are some observations on this year's winners.

Two vegetables stand out - the cabbage Savoy Ace and spinach Melody. Savoy Ace performed extremely well in a demonstration planting at the University of Delaware this Summer, forming excellent heads well into hot weather. Heads were solid and of good flavor. The Melody spinach was very productive, a good cooked spinach and an excellent gree in salads. It was slow to bolt and lasted well into hot weather also.

The Scallopini squash, the third of the 1977 All-American vegetable releases, was a disappointment. According to the horticulturist it lacked the productivity of zucchini and was inferior in flavor and texture.

The two marigolds, Primrose Lady and Yellow Galore, both have merit. They are early bloomers. Plants are compact and free flowering. Both are better for bedding than for cut flowers, however. Primrose Lady is a soft yellow and Yellow Galore is a bright, lively yellow.

Petunia Blushing Maid flowered extremely well and the flowers were a beautiful soft pink. But one expert says that everywhere he has seen this variety growing, the foliage color has been poor and sickly, detracting from the plant's general appearance.

Geranium Show Girl is just coming into bloom from a late planting in the demonstration plot. Flowers are bright rose pink and plants are compact. It looks very good and is a nice change from bright red geraniums, note the horticulturists.

White flies ornamental problem

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA.—White flies are beginning to be noticed on zinnias, chrysanthemums, azaleas, and other ornamental plants. As their name suggests, they are very tiny white flies that take flight in large numbers when the leaves of infected plants are disturbed. White flies are hard to control, particularly during the Summer

months. Their life cycle at this time is about three weeks and the population increases very rapidly. The immature or young, found on the lower surfaces of leaves, are covered with a waxy coating which makes them unaffected by many conventional insecticides. It is important to begin a control program when white flies are first noticed on plants, say Extension members at Penn State University. Many of the systemic insecticides such as Orthene, dimethoate (Cygon or DeFend) or Meta-Systox-R can be applied for control on a variety of ornamental plants. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions.

Hornets, wasps aid farmers

DOVER, Del.—Hornets and wasps are reaching peak numbers now. Extension entomologists at the University of Delaware have been getting many calls lately requesting information on these insects.

Most people don't know that hornets and wasps are beneficial insects. They kill destructive insects such as corn earworms, armyworms and many other crop destroying larvae. In addition, yellow jackets feed their young on house flies, blow flies, and caterpillars of a variety of moths. Unfortunately, when provoked, hornets and wasps may also attack people.

When a wasp stings, it injects a poisonous fluid under the skin. This venom affects each person differently and may cause anything from a painful swelling that lasts several days to severe illness or death.

If the victim has hay fever, asthma or other allergies, one should call a doctor immediately, advises entomologists. Otherwise, instructions in a first aid manual for treatment of wasp stings should be followed.

Wasps normally abandon their nests in late fall and will construct new ones the following spring and summer. Only the mud-dauber and cicada killer overwinter as larvae.

Unless wasps have built their nests too close to a home or in areas where children play, experts advise that their nests be left alone. These insects help reduce many harmful pest populations.

If control is necessary, spraying the nests with one of the commercial "Wasp and Hornet" aerosols is suggested. These are designed to spray a thin stream about nine feet. If more distance from the nest, is desired masking tape can be used to hold the aerosol container to a long pole so that it reaches the nest, the valve should be taped open so that it sprays continuously.

One should thoroughly wet the nest and entrance hole, treating in the evening. If allergic to stings one should never attempt to do this job but call in a qualified pest control operator.

Sevin controls cabbage looper

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa.—The cabbage looper, a worm that feeds on broccoli, cauliflower and turnips—the crucifer family—will be found in home gardens from now until October. The moths of the looper fly at night, laying eggs singly on the underleaf surface of plants. The worm which hatches from this egg in a few days will feed on the under leaf surface, scarring the leaf. The pale-green worm goes through four or five moults, gradually growing one to one and a half inches in length. The larger worms eat holes in the leaves. The larvae then go into a cocoon stage and produce another moth, with the whole cycle taking two to three weeks. The danger from loopers is that they chew into the heads, defoliating them and leaving holes all through the heads. When the worms get into broccoli, for example, they are impossible to get out, and render the crop inedible. Home gardeners can expect a bad bout with loopers in August and September. Because the larvae are on the underleaf, spray doesn't normally reach them. Effective control of cabbage loopers depends on spraying the underleaf. Carbaryl (Sevin) 50 per cent wettable powder can be used in a mixture of two tablespoons in a gallon of water. Spray at weekly intervals. Do not apply Carbaryl closer to harvest than seven days.

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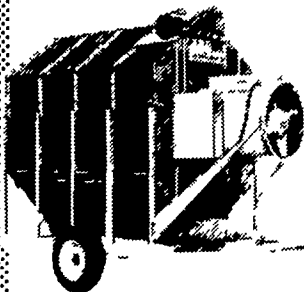
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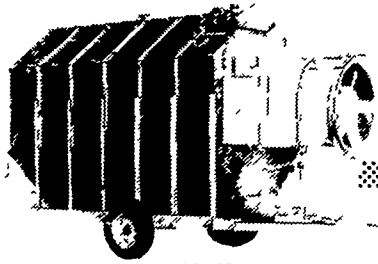
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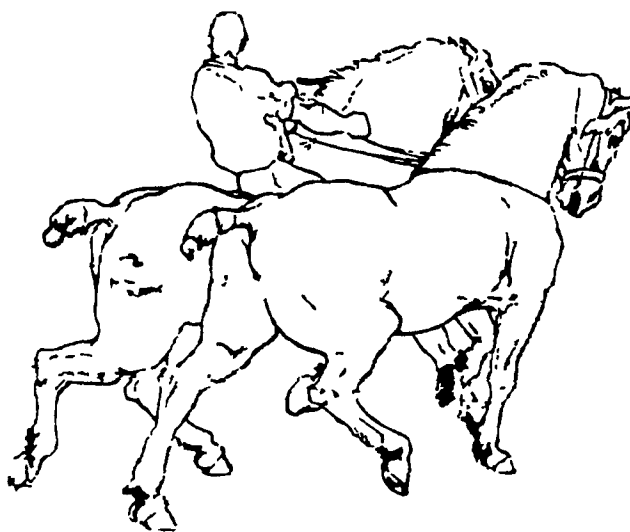
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