

Plant lovers corner

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Beautiful muskmelons—but no taste

If you have muskmelons or cantaloupes which have no taste, you are not alone. Commercial farmers as well as home gardeners are having this same problem, says James J. McKeehen, Delaware County Extension agricultural agent. There is no need to blame the seed company for selling you a poor variety, because the reason for "flat-tasting" melons is strictly due to too much rain and too much cloudy weather. Sunshine and dry weather are the ideal conditions for producing sweet-tasting melons. The sweetness comes from sugar and certain organic acids which are manufactured in the leaves of the melon plant. The leaves absorb sunlight, and through an intricate process called "photosynthesis," they produce the vital ingredients for taste, and move these from the leaves into the fruit. There's an old saying, "When lawns dry up from burning sun and no rain, melons are delicious." Of course, during dry periods you do have to supply melons with a lot of water — preferably between the rows and not on the leaves.

xxx

'Catfacing' in tomatoes is problem

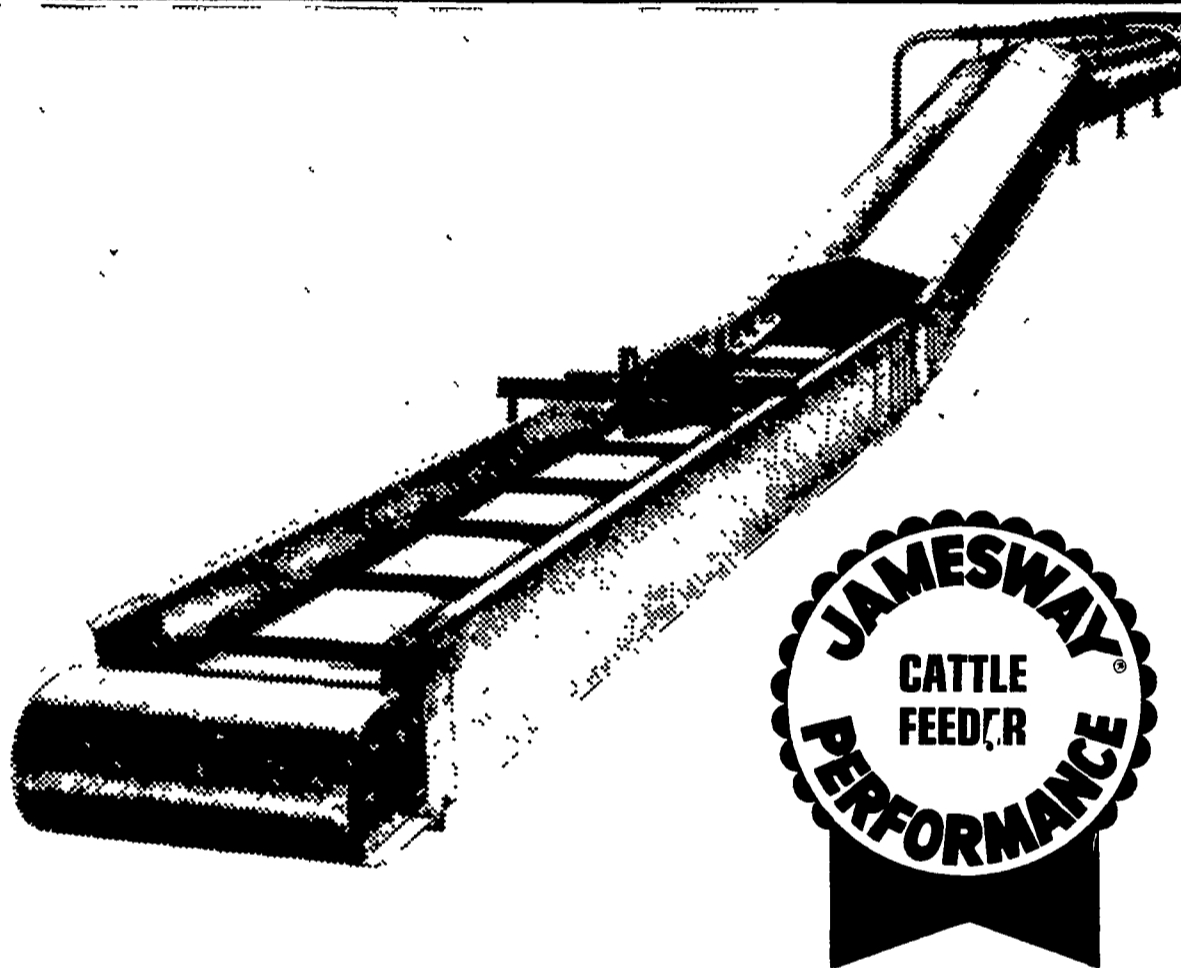
Some of your tomato fruits may have an abnormally large scar on the blossom end. Frequently this will be

accompanied by an opening in the fruit which may extend up the sides so that the whole fruit is seriously deformed. Sometimes the imperfections in the fruit give the appearance of a cat's face. This is not an insect nor a disease problem, says James J. McKeehen Delaware County Extension agricultural agent.

"Catfacing" should not be confused with blossom-end rot which has the entire bottom of the fruit decayed. There is no breakdown of the tissue in "CATFACING" ALTHOUGH THE FRUIT IS OFTEN SERIOUSLY DEFORMED.

"Catfacing" is most common when cold weather prevails at the time the first flowers form in the early Summer. The same conditions often develop in the Fall when flowers open in early September.

However, for some unknown reason "catfacing" this Summer seems to be associated with the hot weather. This defect generally results from poor pollination, resulting in uneven growth of the tomato which leads to scarring and malformed fruit. It is well known that some tomato varieties are more susceptible to catfacing than other varieties. The old-fashioned Beefsteak variety is very susceptible to catfacing and Manapal, a newer variety, shows a high degree of this condition. Some of the newer tomato hybrids like Supersonic or Ramapo rarely develop "catfacing," but this year it is common in most tomato varieties.



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Maryland Fair winners named

TIMONIUM, Md. - Two of the relatively new animal departments in 4-H competition at the Maryland State Fair continue to show gains in popularity. There were 28 exhibitors from nine counties on hand with 82 long-eared pets for the 4-H rabbit show held August 28, at the Timonium fairground.

In rabbit show competition, three Charles county sisters—Linda, Joyce and Patty Marvin of LaPlata—won most of the top honors. Linda, 15, placed first, and Joyce, 18, was second in senior 4-H rabbit judging. Meanwhile, 13-year-old Patty won the junior 4-H rabbit judging contest.

The two older girls placed second and fifth in the meat pen class. Linda also won best-of-breed honors in the Satin and Silver Marten classes, while Joyce did likewise in the Himalayan breed class.

Geoffrey Nelson, 13, of Woodbine, Carroll county won most of the top honors in the New Zealand class.

Fifty exhibitors from seven Maryland counties entered their frisky four-legged friends in the 4-H

dairy goat show August 29 in the livestock judging arena.

As in several past years, a queen-sized share of the honors in the goat show went to a contestant from the Gaithersburg area of Montgomery county. This year's grand champion in the "all other breeds" category was a two-year-old La Mancha milking doe entered by Joyce Stiles, 13, who lives in the Goshen area north of Gaithersburg.

Miss Stiles also won junior champion and grand champion honors in the dairy goat fitting and showing contest. Her older sister, Kathy, had won similar honors at the Maryland State Fair a few years ago.

Best doe in the goat show was a two-year-old Nubian female shown by Janet Lyn VanderLinden, 14, of New Windsor, Carroll county. Miss VanderLinden also placed second in the senior fitting and showing contest.

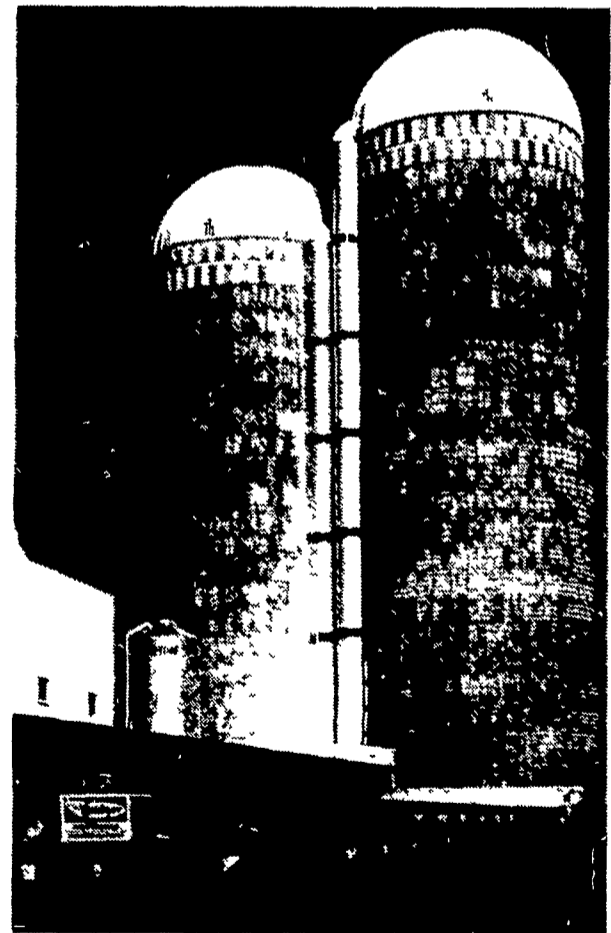
Another Carroll county resident, Jesse T. Kowall, 16, of Finksburg, placed first in the senior fitting and showing dairy goat competition. Kathi Smith, 13, of Cockeysville, Baltimore county, was runner-up in the junior contest.

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