

Is a new strain coming?

# Tobacco growers warned to spray for blue mold

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — To head off a possible blue mold epidemic this year an extension plant pathologist at the University of Maryland is urging tobacco farmers to start spraying their plant beds as soon as the seedlings emerge this spring.

Recommended chemicals for this purpose include ferbam, zineb, maneb and Polyram, says Omar D. Morgan, extension tobacco disease specialist and professor of botany at the College Park campus.

Morgan reports that blue mold is a fungus which attacks all types of tobacco and related garden plants,

such as eggplant. Last year, he noted, the disease caused an estimated loss totaling more than a quarter of a billion dollars to the U.S. and Canadian tobacco crops.

In southern Maryland, losses are estimated at more than \$5 million.

Morgan believes blue mold will return again in 1980 if the weather is cool and damp.

There is now the added worry that this may be a new strain of blue mold.

"But it's really too early to tell," the Maryland Extension specialist said recently. Backing up his concern were some unusual developments during the

1979 blue mold epidemic in southern Maryland.

"Last year was the first time that blue mold was found in the fields. The disease also went systemic, attacking tobacco plants internally. When this happens, chemical measures are ineffective," Morgan noted.

New this year will be a national blue mold early warning system. Dr. Morgan will be the liaison person for Maryland. Tobacco farmers should report any suspected cases of blue mold infestation to their county Extension agent, who will notify Morgan immediately.

Blue mold has occurred

sporadically in southern Maryland tobacco plant beds since 1931. But until last year it had not proved serious for over a decade. The fungus disease usually starts each spring in the South, and the

spores are blown north by prevailing winds.

The disease thrives in cool, moist weather. Prolonged temperatures above 86 degrees will stop spore formation, which spreads the disease.

In tobacco beds, blue mold attacks the upper surface of damp, young plant leaves. Here the spores germinate, with the fungus eventually boring through to the underside of the leaf, causing it to yellow and wilt.

## Courses offered in draperies and wallpaper

WEST CHESTER — The Chester County Extension Service is offering classes in Draperies and Wallpapering.

The Draperies Course will be held on Thursdays, March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 10 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

The series of five meetings is concerned with fabric

selection, how to measure and construction techniques. A variety of top of the window treatments will also be included. The instructor will be Doris Hoag. Registration is due Monday, February 25, 1980.

The Wallpapering course will be held on Mondays, March 10, 17, 24 at two different times of day from 1:00-3:00 p.m. and 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Learn the basics in the process of papering your walls. Instruction will include measuring and selection; patching walls and preparation; actual application; materials needed and their use. There will be an opportunity to practice the techniques for the wallpapering process. The instructor will be Linda Heim. Registration is due Monday, March 3, 1980.

The classes will be held at the Extension Office, 235 W. Market Street, West Chester, PA 19380.

There is a small fee for each course. For further information write or call the Extension Office at (717) 696-3500.

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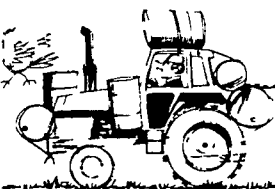
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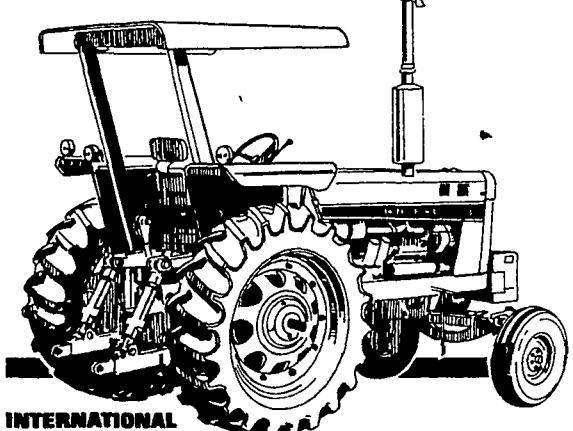
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