

Public attitudes

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to influence policies or programs of the federal government.

Fully 70 percent of the public says they understand only a little or hardly understand at all how to go about trying to influence a decision being considered by the executive branch of the federal government. Just 29 percent say that they fully or mostly understand how to do this.

Nevertheless, the public

highly values participation and the machinery for broad participation.

Eight-two percent rate direct representation as very important on decisions concerning the safety and quality of the food they eat.

By four to one the public chooses putting up with some delay in order to let people have a say in the big decisions, rather than getting things done quickly

at the expense of citizen input.

Seventy-nine percent of the people feel that we should be moving toward a country with many chances for citizens to have a say in government decisions and which expects its citizens to give some of their time to politics; while just ten percent feel that we should be moving toward a country which doesn't have such

expectations but which has few chances for citizens to have a say in government decisions.

The ability of government to increase citizen participation in the decision-making process has more to do with conveying a sense of the importance of participation to the citizen rather than making it more convenient.

Community vegetable gardens enhance civic pride

UNIVERSITY PARK — Community vegetable gardens are becoming popular again.

Hundreds of gardens have been planted in towns and cities during the past several years.

Such gardens make sense where many people find the essentials of life almost priced out of their market. And in many cases, they may not be able to purchase some vegetables they like because they are not available.

Neighborhood self-help is important, and vacant lots can be cleared of debris and become green again.

But developing community gardens is not

always easy, says J. Robert Nuss, Extension horticulturist. Community gardeners must cope with roving dogs, rubble, poor soil, contaminants of various kinds, vandals, and, in some situations, bureaucrats.

While the production of fresh vegetables and small fruit is an important goal of community gardening, there are human values too. People learn how to do new and different things, thereby gaining confidence in themselves. Pride is contagious, and community gardening may be the first step in a neighborhood revival. Children can be helped by older citizens, thus helping to bridge the generation gap.

Ritter reviews Pa.

fruit situation

UNIVERSITY PARK — The winter so far has been good for prospects of excellent fruit crops, said Dr. C. Marshall Ritter, Extension pomologist, Penn State.

Some of the problems of the last growing season included cool, cloudy, and rainy weather conditions, with the summer being several degrees cooler than normal.

Cherries were generally small.

The peach crop was less than expected, but quality was high, even though the total crop was less than average.

Last year was an excellent year for growing strawberries. However, in some areas, production was down, he noted.

The production of blackberries and other brambles was average. Lack of good fertilization and fundamental pruning practices were causes for low production in many instances.

Thorough renovation of the strawberry planting must be practiced if good strawberry crops are to be realized.

Pear production in Pennsylvania was troubled by worse than usual fire-blight. Fire-blight reached epidemic proportions with the help of a cool, wet, summer. Pear production was about average, but 1979 quality was not good.

Pennsylvania apple orchards produced a huge crop, reports Ritter,

however, size was not as good as average. Trees were full of apples which didn't "pick out" as expected.

The Golden Delicious crop was rusty showing poor color. But there was nothing growers could have done about this, Ritter adds.

Orchardists are doing a better job of training their trees than they were ten years ago, Ritter said. During the past five years, our programs in pest management have given growers a greater comprehension of how spray programs can help to grow better crops, he added.

Based on leaf analyses, it appears that we are still applying too much nitrogen for top quality fruit production, he said. Increasing emphasis on levels of the plant nutrients has improved the firmness and keeping qualities of fruit.

Fruit trees went into this past fall in good shape, and there are no major problems so far this winter. The warm fall spell came too early to be of any effect on flower buds, explained Ritter.

The trees are in good shape so far, and barring undue cold snaps or extremely warm weather during the next few months, they have the flower buds to produce another good crop of fruit in 1980, he noted.

Orchardists are concentrating their plantings. More trees per acre are planted now than was the practice 10 years ago.

Growers now should start planting their new orchard establishments two or three years before they actually set the young trees. Planning involves getting the old trees out, site selection for new plantings, land renovation and ordering new trees.

Soil separation before the new trees are planted is important to assure that the new fruit trees get off to a good start, urges Ritter.



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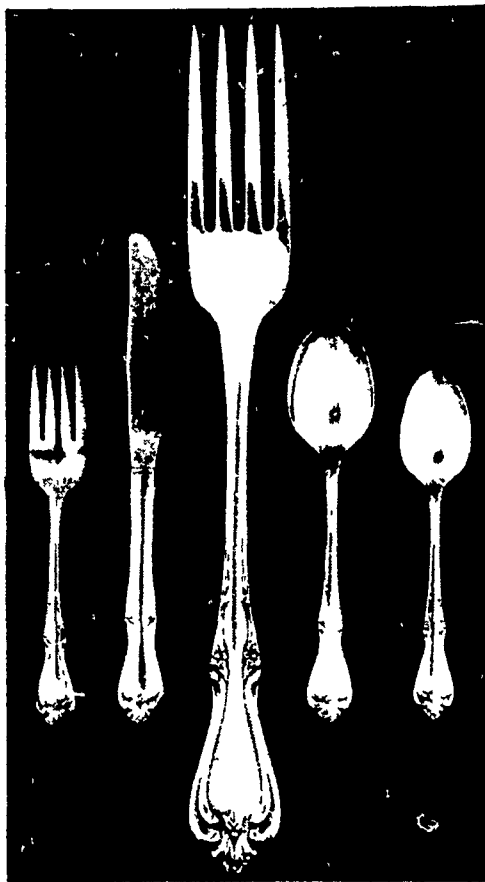
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