

Give cold-stalled vegetables lift with foliar feeding

NEWARK, Dela. — Cool weather and heavy rains on Delmarva have created less than ideal growing conditions for many vegetable crops this spring. Cucurbits and warm season crops like tomatoes, peppers and eggplants, in particular, have suffered.

Because of the slowdown in growth, this would be a good time to consider using a foliar nutrient on these crops, says University of Delaware Extension Vegetable Specialist Mike Orzolek.

"Root development hasn't been what it should be, so uptake of nutrients from the soil is minimal," he says.

Foliar nutrients will stimulate

more root development and cause plants to resume normal growth.

"Foliar nutrients work best when plants have been under stress, and that's exactly what we're seeing," he says.

Other stressful conditions that warrant foliar feeding are dry weather, hail damage, disease, and insect feeding — in other words, anything that reduces growth or puts the plant into shock.

Foliar feeding has several advantages over conventional feeding through the soil.

"Probably the biggest advantage," says Orzolek, "is that nutrients are placed directly on the leaves, so that the plant's needs

are rapidly met. Compared to this, feeding through the soil involves a wait for soil/root exchange to occur, followed by translocation of nutrients from the roots to the top of the plant where most of the growth is taking place."

Foliar nutrients have another advantage. Because of their formulation they act as buffers, stabilizing the pH of the solution. So if you're going to apply an insecticide or fungicide at the same time, it will remain chemically viable for a longer time when mixed with these nutrients, he points out.

"Without this buffering effect, the pH starts to drop when

pesticides are put in solution and they quickly break down," he says. "But if you mix one of these pesticides with a foliar nutrient and get a phone call or it starts to rain, if probably won't matter if you can't get the material on the field for a few hours, or even until the next day. It will still be usable. Otherwise, you'd probably have to throw the chemical away and mix up a new batch."

Because they're liquids, foliar nutrients blend in well with most pesticides. Combined this way, you don't have to make a special trip across the field to fertilize, as you would if you were applying dry

fertilizer. This saves both time and energy.

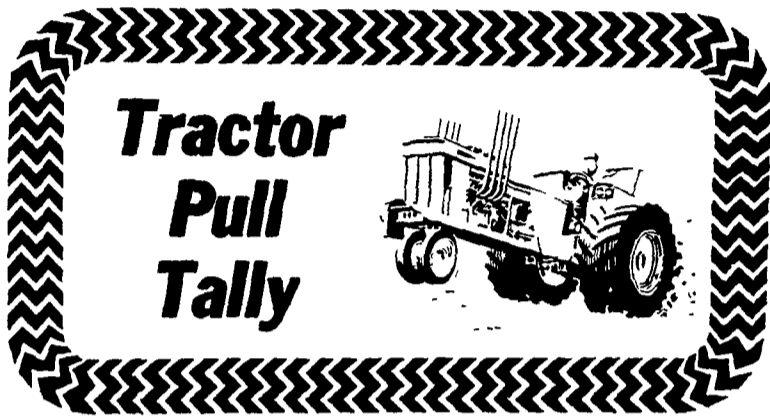
Several companies are now marketing foliar nutrients. These products are formulated to provide low rates of N-P-K plus micronutrients — either individually or in combinations tailored to meet the needs of the particular crops. One may provide boron for cauliflower. Another may provide additional potassium and calcium to improve fruit quality and prevent blossom end rot on tomatoes.

"Don't consider foliar feeding a substitute for your regular program for side dressed or broadcast N-P-K in their conventional forms," says Orzolek. "Use foliar feeds as supplements."

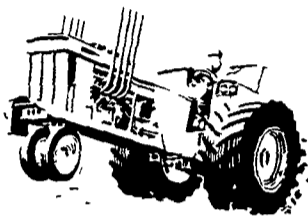
Even if there's been no special stress and plants are growing normally, some vegetable crops will benefit from supplementary foliar feeding. Applying boron this way on cantalopes, for instance, is a good way to improve fruit quality and increase storage life.

Use the same equipment you use for pesticide applications, when foliar feeding. These nutrients can also be flown on by airplane. Their benefit definitely outweighs their cost.

Right now, while we're seeing cold damage on many vegetable crops, is a good time to apply foliar nutrients, Orzolek concludes.



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May 30

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1. C & E Pulling Team, Lebanon, Pa., 468 Chevy, 282.2; 2. Charles Brommer, Columbia, Pa., 2-440 Dodges, 279.8; 3. Zane Forry, York, Pa., 427 Ford, 269.11.

7000 Super Stock

1. Coleman Wheatley, Bethel, De., JD 4240, 297.4; 2. Bert Stauffer, Ephrata, Pa., Deutz 8006, 295.5; 3. Dan Greenleaf, Martinsburg, Pa., JD 4010, 262.11.

5800 FWD

1. Diehl Wilson, Winchester, Va., 1971 Ford, 275.6; 2. Ronald Kauffman, Holtwood, Pa., 1975 Ford, 267.3; 3. Willie Omgs, Winchester, Va., 1957 Ford, 266.6.

7000 Modified

1. Mike Hoff, Westminster, Md., Hemi, 300; 2. C & E Pulling Team, Lebanon, Pa., 468 Chevy, 294.6; 3. David Stockett, Davidsonville, Md., 2-429 Ford, 293.4.

9000 Super Stock

1. Tom Middleton, Ridgely, Md., IH 966, 280.7; 2. Coleman Wheatley, Bethel, De., JD 4240, 263.4; 3. Howard Meredith, Wye Mills, Md., IH 1066, 243.5.

9000 Open

Mike Hoff, Westminster, Md.,

Hemi, 300; 2. C & E Pulling Team, Lebanon, Pa., 2-468 Chevy, 295; 3. L & Z Pulling Team, Mt. Joy, Pa., 3-440 Dodges, 274.3.

6200 FWD

Diehl Wilson, Winchester, Va., 1971 Ford, 300; 2. Wilard Cahall, Townsend, De., 1979 Ford, 289.3; 3. Willie Omgs, Winchester, Va., 1957 Ford, 286.4.

12,000 Open

1. Mike Hoff, Westminster, Md., Hemi, 300; 2. Glen Darvell, McDowell, Va., Allison, 260.9; 3. Willard Will, Central City, Pa., Allison, 209.11.

Penn State hosts rabbit conference

UNIVERSITY PARK — Nephthys Patton, director of the rabbit research center of Oregon State University will be one of the featured speakers at the Rabbit Conference to be held at Penn State on July 10-11.

Other speakers to be featured at the event will include Edward Buss, professor of Poultry Science for Penn State; William Kennedy, director of the American Rabbit Breeders Assoc.; and, James Miller, manager of Dutchland Lab

Animals, Denver.

Many topics of concern for rabbit breeders will be discussed including: nutrition and disease management, managing a commercial breeding colony and commercial breeder equipment.

Information about the conference can be obtained by writing: Agricultural Conference Coordinator, 409 J.O. Keller Building, University Park, PA 16802, Phone (814) 865-9547.

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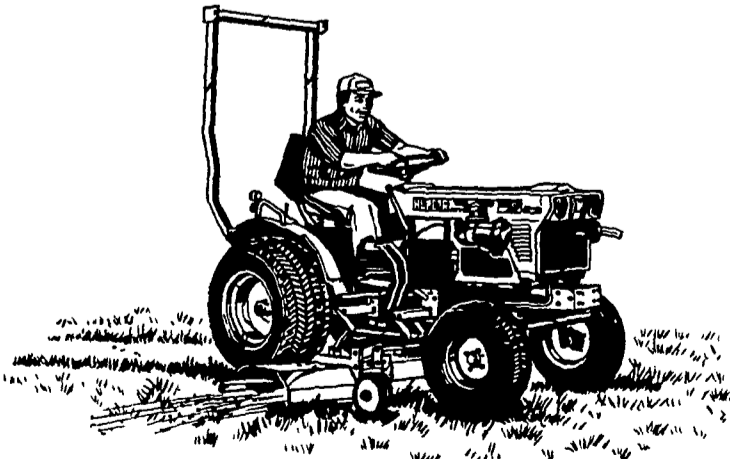
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