

# Fertilize plants properly

NEWARK, Del. — Many plants don't reach their full potential in the home garden because they're not fertilized properly. The kind of fertilizer, amount, method and time of application are all important, says University of Delaware Extension horticulturist Charles Dunham.

There are at least five ways to fertilize a plant; broadcast during bed preparation; banded next to seeds or plants at planting; sidedressed next to growing plants; applied in soluble form with water; and sprayed directly on the leaves in dilute form.

Many garden plants are ready now for supplemental feedings, says the specialist. At this time of year, sidedressing, liquid feeding and foliar feeding are the methods to employ. You can sidedress whether plants are growing in rows or singly.

For flowers and vegetables sidedress with either 5-10-5, 5-10-10, 10-10-10 or 10-6-4 fertilizer. Use the higher (10 percent) nitrogen formulations to stimulate leafy growth. Use the 5-10-5 or 5-10-10 as all-purpose sources.

To sidedress, place fertilizer in a

narrow band three to six inches to the side of plants and work it in lightly with a hoe. (Three inches away for small plants, six inches away from the base of larger ones.) Use two to three pounds of each 50 feet of row.

For single plants, scatter the fertilizer in a circle around each one, using one to four ounces per plant (about a handful). Larger plants will have a larger circle and thus will need a bit more fertilizer.

"Liquid feeding is an excellent supplemental source of fertilizer for summer feeding," says Dunham. "The response is quick and there's little danger of plant injury if you mix the solution according to directions."

Soluble fertilizers are best for this purpose. They're often quite concentrated (20-20-20) so rates of only one to three teaspoons per gallon are used. Apply at the rate

of one pint per square foot.

Foliar feeding is another excellent method for supplemental feeding. This technique also requires a soluble fertilizer. Many formulations for foliar feeding contain micronutrients as well as major elements.

The amount of fertilizer used in foliar feeding is often similar to the concentration for liquid feeding, though foliar solutions can be

slightly more concentrated. It's best to follow label recommendations.

Plants can absorb only a small part of their nutrient requirements through their leaves so foliar feeding is always a supplemental practice. Since these fertilizers can be added to sprays for insects and diseases, they provide an extra growth stimulus without any extra work on your part.

## Md. fruit and vegetable growers

# MDA's Jack Frey wants to talk to you

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Are you a small-acreage grower of fruits and vegetables who would like to expand your production? Are you a farmer who has thought of adding some fruit and vegetable acreage to diversify your operations? But maybe you have shied away from doing it because of marketing problems?

If so, Maryland Department of

Agriculture Marketing Division's Jack Frey wants to come around to talk to you about the future of expanded fruit and vegetable production for fresh market sale in the state.

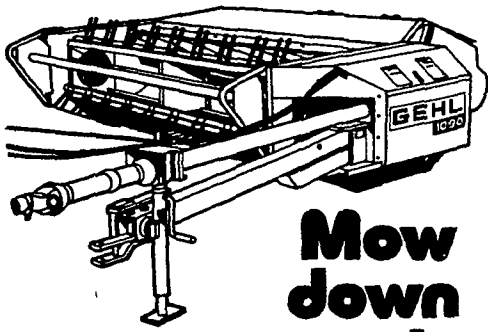
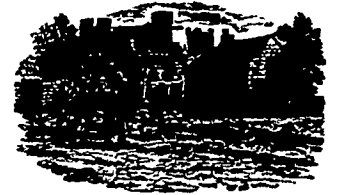
Frey is presently engaged in a study of production, expansion potential and, most important, improved marketing methods, for fruits and vegetables. He is basing

much of the foundation of the study on interviews with growers and would-be growers and, thus, wants to know who you are.

At this point, it appears the key element in increased production of fruits and vegetables and updated marketing of them is the creation of centrally located, pre-conditioning center for the produce, Frey observed.

A preconditioning center is a facility where produce is received, graded, washed, pre-cooled, packed and shipped out in large lots.

If you'd like to talk over future fruit and vegetable plans and marketing assistance, call Frey to set up a visit. During working hours, call 301/269-2181. At night, call (Eastern Shore 301/822-7852) or (Western Shore 301/923-2422).



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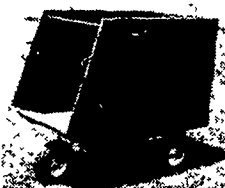
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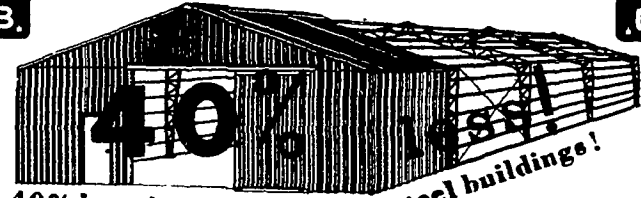
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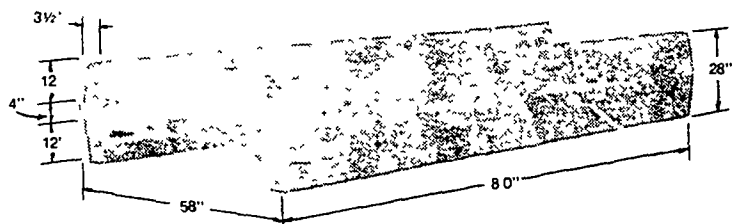
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