



**Seeding,
Weeding
and mulch
more**

For the avid gardener

Garden gimmicks don't always pay

Many stores display racks of seeds, garden aids, and garden miracles as impulse sales items at this time of year. Before buying any of these products, know what they can do, advises University of Delaware Extension horticulturist Charles Dunham. The convenience of a particular item may or may not be worth the time and effort saved.

No gadget can substitute for all the factors necessary to grow a plant successfully from seed: light, nutrients, growing medium, water and optimum temperature.

Here are descriptions of some of the most popular seed-starting supplies, with Dunham's comments on their usefulness.

Preseeded indoor trays and planters come in many forms — plastic or aluminum tray, box, or cube. Seeds (it is hoped) are near the top of an inert medium like vermiculite. There are few seeds compared to those in a seed packet. This item is touted for growing garden seedlings on windowsills, but a started "pac" of transplants can often be bought for the same price, Dunham says. Newer varieties are usually not available, and mixed colors are common.

Seed tapes have seeds imbedded in water-soluble material which should disintegrate on contact with soil moisture. These tapes are for outdoor use, and a furrow must be opened as for regular hand seeding. The spacing may not be appropriate for the flower or vegetable seed packaged. The tapes do not eliminate spacing and weeding.

Plant cubes or containers are preformed, compressed or full-size, peat moss cubes or pellets designed for direct seeding or for receiving seedlings to be grown to the transplant stage.

1 - Jiffy 7—a large, round, compressed pill, about 2 inches in diameter and less than 1/2 inch high, enclosed in nylon mesh. When placed in warm water, it will swell to 2 1/2 inches in height. It can be used for direct seeding or seedling transplants. It is available in trays of six, 12, etc., and is very economical in lots of

1,000. Some preseeded packs of six are available. It also comes in strips.

2 - Kys-Kube—a firm peat moss cube with a hole in the top. After moistening, it can be used for direct seeding, a seedling transplant, or starting cuttings. It is available in trays and packs.

3 - BR-8—a fiber-pulp cube, in dozen-cube strips, 3 x 10 inches, with a hole in the top. Different-size holes are available.

The windowsill "greenhouse" is often a small plastic tray with a dome or cover of stiff, clear plastic. Some have a bottom-heating cable and a ventilating facility. Though this item is advertised as a quicker means to germinate seed, a seeded tray in a plastic box can be as effective, Dunham says.

Soil-free mixes, such as Jiffy-mix, Redi-Earth and Pro-mix are combinations of peat moss, vermiculite and perlite in various proportions. Being weed-seed and disease free, they're excellent for indoor seeding and houseplants. Some contain nutrients in the form of slow-release fertilizer. They're available in small to 3-cubic-foot bags. Since these mixes are hard to wet, be sure they're full of moisture before seeding or transplanting.

Combinations of some of these products are also available, the specialist says. Before buying one that contains seeds, compare its price to that of good quality packet seed. Remember, these gadgets can't take the place of good gardening practices.



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APPLICATIONS:

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Lycoming plans Dairy Days

MUNCY — The Lycoming Co. Dairy Princess Committee has chosen June 22 through 25 as Dairy Days, and plans celebrations at the Lycoming Mall.

The highlight of the events will be the dairy princess pageant on Friday night featuring the following contestants: Linda Berger, 16, daughter of Mrs. Beverly Berger and the late Russell Berger, R4 Muncy; Wanda Muffley, 16, daughter of Stella Plank, R3 Cogan Station; Tina

Myers, 17, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Myers, R1 Cogan Station; Lori Rupert, 16, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carmen Rupert, R4 Muncy; and Tammie Ulmer, 16, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Ulmer, R1 Cogan Station.

Thursday's celebration will include ice cream eating and milk chugging contestants.

On Saturday, a fitting and showing demonstration, a butter churning contest, and a calf dressing contest will be held.


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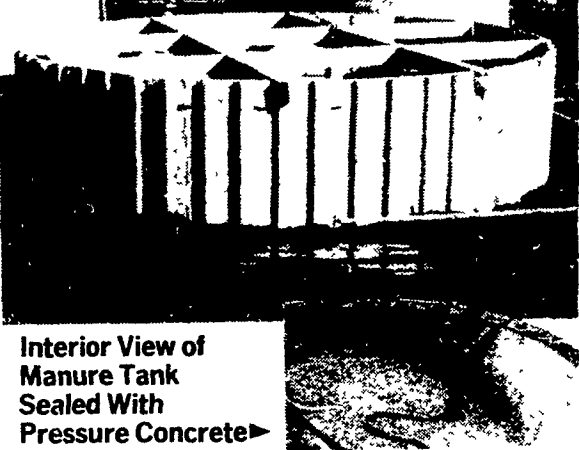
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