

Read Seed Packages for Success

MEDIA — Select by fact not fantasy. Pictures on the front of seed packages are almost always appealing, but, read the package before you get carried away. Packages for flowers, vegetables, grasses, and agricultural crops all have valuable information you need to know before you plant, says C. R. Bryan, Jr., Delaware Co. Extension agent.

The 1939 Federal Seed Act requires agricultural seeds sold across state lines to have specific information about variety, germination and purity. While originally intended to protect buyers of agricultural seeds, some flower and vegetable packages for home gardening carry much the same information.

If you are buying and ordering seeds, here are some things to look for to make the best selection for your garden:

—**Date**—be sure your seed is fresh. If you are buying for this year's garden, don't plant with last year's seed unless it's free or so far reduced in price, you don't really

care if a good many don't germinate. Some seeds are viable much longer than others, but how old seeds have been stored—a fact you won't know unless you packed them away yourself—has a major influence on seed germination. The date is usually listed on the back flap: Packed for 1984. Look for it.

—**Purity**—agricultural crops and grass seeds must indicate the percentage of each kind of seed in excess of 5% Weed seeds, inert matter (chaff, dirt, stones) must be also listed. Most flower and vegetable seeds packaged for home gardens are 100% the variety listed and therefore, do not have purity information. But, if you are buying a "garden mix" read the contents thoroughly.

—**Noxious-weed seeds**—states and the federal government maintain lists of noxious weeds and no package of agricultural crops can contain more of these than a certain percent. If any are present, the percentage must be stated.

—**Weight**—unless you are buying

seeds loose by weight, you can be misled by the size and type of packaging. Read the weight to figure your costs and yield.

—**Origin**—certain agricultural crop seeds such as alfalfa, clover, and non-hybrid corn grown in one area do not grow well in another so these seed packages list origin.

—**Germination**—if listed on the package, this percentage tells you how many seeds will produce plants under ideal conditions. The age of the seeds, how and when you plant them, also affects germination so this figure should be read with some caution. Home gardeners should probably count on a germination rate of about 85 to 75 percent when planting most seeds directly into the ground. Planting inside, in flats, under ideal conditions will probably produce higher germination figures.

—**Variety**—Most flower and vegetable seeds packaged for home garden usually list the variety, whether the seed is an annual, bi-annual, or perennial. If

the seed is a hybrid, that information is also on the package.

—**Culture**—nearly all seed packages have important information about how and when to plant, including the number of days to seed germination. Vegetable seed packages list number of days to maturity under ideal conditions. Most packages note spacing, height and spread at maturity, thinning directions,

special care instructions, and growth habit.

—**Packaging**—some seeds are sold in more than one way. Traditionalists will, no doubt, prefer standard packages but if you are impatient or less than confident of your planting abilities, you may want to try pre-packaged seed planting pots, seed strips, and other units that favor seed germination.

Computer booklet available

NEWARK, Del. — Farmers who have decided to buy a computer to help manage their farming operations face a bewildering array of choices and claims for equipment and programs. To make an intelligent selection, they must be familiar with machine capabilities and the language used to describe computer functions.

University of Delaware extension agricultural engineer Jim Scarborough has written a fact sheet which explains such basic

terms as BYTE, RAM, ROM, FLOPPY DISK, HARDWARE, SOFTWARE, MODEM and BASIC. The two-page publication also provides advice on some of the features to look for when buying a computer for farm use.

Copies of "Choosing a Computer for Your Farm Business" are available free from county extension offices in Newark (451-2506), Dover (736-1448) and Georgetown (856-5250).

Feeder pig show slated

CARLISLE — The South Central Pennsylvania Pork Producers will hold their Annual Feeder Pig Show and Sale on Friday, April 6, at the Carlisle Livestock Market.

This sale will be held in conjunction with the State Graded Feeder Pig Sale at Carlisle. These pigs will be suitable for 4-H and

FFA projects.

The show will begin at 10 a.m. The State Graded Sale will begin at 1:30 p.m. followed by the sale of show pigs.

For more information contact Kent Strock, 729 Williams Grove Road, Mechanicsburg, Pa. 17055 or phone (717) 697-2824.

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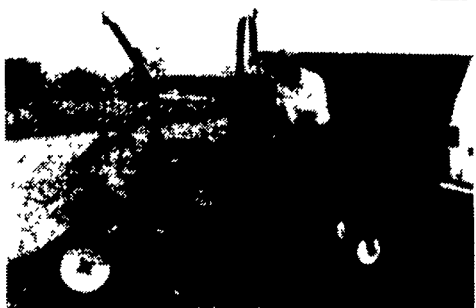
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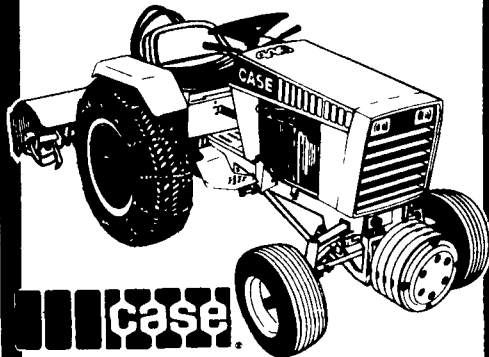
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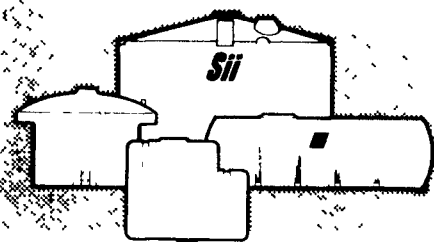
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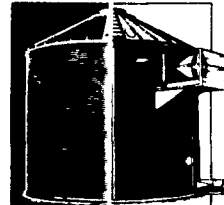


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