

Corn By Degree (Days)

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was done on the basis of known GDDs of the test plot varieties and by tracking local GDDs.

(A tassel on corn is the male reproductive part, whereas the silks are the female parts. The pollen comes from the tassels, falls down to the silks and travels down the silks to where it combines with the female part in the ovary and forms a seed which develops into a kernel. If the silks are too dry, or insect activity destroys them, it this can prevent proper fertilization and thus reduce the number of kernels on an ear of corn.)

He said he thinks that many more people should be using it instead of the relative days to maturity because they can be more precise in planning, planting and harvesting. Increased precision can mean less wasted time and fewer missed opportunities.

In the publication, Roth wrote that GDDs are not universal in reporting by companies, so farmers should be aware of industry inconsistencies and ask for the GDD basis.

"Hybrid growing degree day ratings are available from most seed corn companies. Not all companies are consistent in their calculation of GDD requirements.

"Some seed companies, for example, use growing degree days from emergence to physiological maturity.

"In this instance, GDD ratings should be increased by about 150 to be comparable to those calculated from planting.

"When GDD requirements are not provided, they can be estimated from days to maturity ratings."

The publication contains a chart for rough conversions.

Roth also warned that there are other factors affecting the growth

of corn.

"Growing degree day requirements to mature a specific hybrid may also vary between seasons because of factors other than temperature that affect corn development."

Drought for example would seem to be a factor.

"That variation, however, will usually be much less than the season-to-season variation in the

days to maturity system."

GDDs are also being recommended for pest management, especially with Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

By following the GDDs, the emergence of certain pests can be predicted fairly certain. That means that any field scouting to check on population levels can be better scheduled, and control spraying can be much better anticipated for effectiveness.

Lists of activity GDDs for some insect pests of trees, ornamentals,



Planted at the same time as the other varieties in a test plot, this corn variety requires more growing degree days to mature.

grasses and row crops are available through Extension and can be used to predict emergences and plant injury times.

With insects, the activity base temperature (for corn it was 50 degrees) is different for genus and species. There are some computer

programs that can more accurately predict GDD than the simple daily high and low temperatures.

For more information on using GDDs as an effective tool for the farm, contact a local Extension office.



This corn variety requires fewer growing degree days to reach this stage of tassel development than some others. Using seed company data of GDDs, and keeping a record of local GDDs, it is not difficult to make better judgements on crop maturity requirements than by using the standard "relative days to maturity." By understanding specific historic season trends, determining which corn varieties to select for a specific farm, even field, can be done better.



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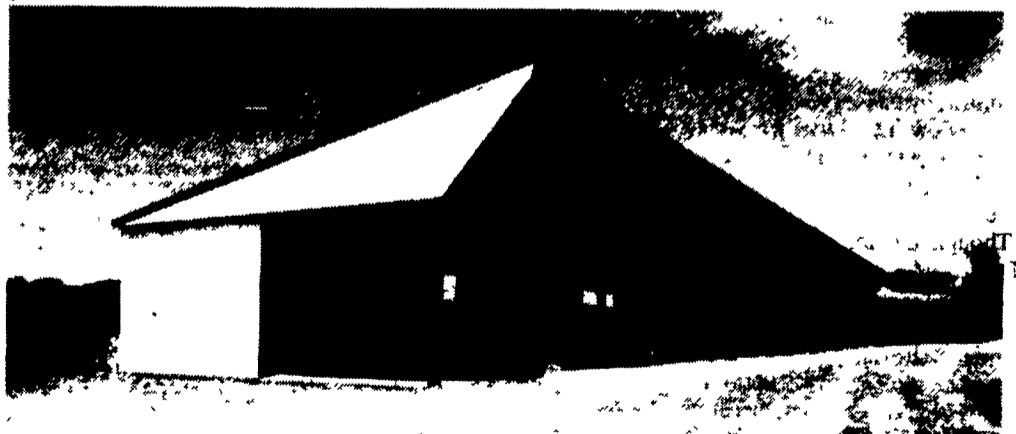
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