

Impatient Gardener Series: Gardening Q&A

March 17th, 2021

- What is this?



That is the gall of a disease called cedar apple rust. (the bottom picture is an apple tree leaf showing symptoms of infection. This fungus spends the winter on cedars and in the spring when it rains turns a crazy orange color and looks like it has tentacles. During that time spores from the gall can spread to nearby apple trees and cause an infection there.

More information can be found here:

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/focus/index.cfm?problem=cedar-apple-rust>

- What is the best time of year to prune asparagus?

It can be done anytime after the ferns turn brown. I think it is better to do it in the fall so that insects do not overwinter there.



- I bought a golden delicious apple tree (which I'm beginning to regret). If I don't spray it at all, and only use cultural practices, will it likely die, or will I just have a reduced harvest? PPFS-FR-T-21 shows the fungal diseases listed for nearly every month--if I must spray, do I really need to that often?

It kind of depends on environmental conditions, I think. If it is a rainy year you will have more problems and sprays would be more important. I don't think it will die quickly but will hang on and linger.

*For anyone reading this, pick a variety that has disease resistance and grows well in Kentucky.

<https://www.uky.edu/hort/sites/www.uky.edu.hort/files/documents/HortFact3003.pdf> *

- Also, it says to use copper to control fire blight, but all the products I find online list copper as a fungicide. It will kill bacteria as well? Better than streptomycin?

I think copper will kill bacteria as well. Here is more information:

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/copper_formulations_for_fruit_crops

I think that streptomycin is used commercially but not by homeowners because of the potential for resistance.

This is what fireblight (a very common and destructive bacterial infection of apples and pears) looks like:



- How long will BT live in its original container in my garage? As in, many years, or not long at all?

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/id/id156/id156.pdf>

I didn't know that this publication from UK existed. Water based formulations are good for one year, dry and oil based last at least two years, it may vary according to the brand you have.

- How to check if seeds are viable.

Ragdoll test. <https://blog-yard-garden-news.extension.umn.edu/2020/01/ask-extension-how-do-i-know-if-my-old.html>



Take a moist paper towel and lay 10 seeds in a line across it. Lay another moist paper towel over that one and roll it up as in photo. Put in plastic bag and wait a week or two and see how many seeds sprout. That will show you germination percentage.

- When do I prune my hydrangeas?

It depends on what kind you have. Big leaf and Oakleaf bloom on old growth so they should be pruned after they flower in the summer. Panicle or smooth should be done in fall or winter. They bloom on new growth. If you prune at the wrong time of year, you may not get blooms.

<https://currituck.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/06/time-to-prune-hydrangeas/>

- Crawdad damage



<https://ext.vt.edu/lawn-garden/turfandgardentips/tips/crayfish-in-lawns.html>

vs

Mole damage



- Why are the transplants I started so tall and skinny?

They probably aren't getting enough light. If they are at a window, make sure it is south or west facing. You may have to add supplemental light. If you are using a grow light it may need to stay on longer. (14-16 hours though it can vary by plant)

- How far should the grow light be from transplants you are growing?

4 to 6 inches

*Side note: a heat pad designed for growing transplants may be helpful for germination. But after germination occurs, be careful to not keep plants too warm if they are cool season crops.

- What is perlite?

It is small pieces of lightweight volcanic rock. It helps increase air spaces and water drainage.

- The soil test I did for my garden said I needed lime. When can I apply it?

I would do it before planting. Lime is not a nutrient, instead it changes the pH of the soil. So do not add it unless a test says you should. The pH range I like to see for a vegetable garden is between 6 and 7. People that add lime every year and when it is not needed end up above 7 and that starts a whole new set of issues.

Sometimes a lot of lime is called for. I don't like to recommend more than 100 lbs of bagged lime per 1000 square feet. If the test calls for more, I like to break it into two or more applications spaced out several months.

Changing the pH of the soil takes time.

Application of wood ash can also increase the pH

- Potato varieties:

https://grayson.ca.uky.edu/files/id-133_vegetable_cultivars_for_ky.pdf

POTATO, IRISH—*Russet*

Norgold Russet	midseason	S
Norkota (russet)	midseason	

POTATO, IRISH—*White*

Superior	early season	S
Kennebec	midseason	LB, TMV

POTATO, IRISH—*Red*

Dark Red Norland	early season	
Red Gold	early season	
Adirondack Red	early-midseason	
Red Pontiac	midseason	

POTATO, IRISH—*Yellow*

Yukon Gold	midseason	MR
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How to grow potatoes: check Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky:

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/id/id128/id128.pdf>

- How do I know if the soil in my garden is too wet?

Get soil from the garden and make it into a ball. Drop on foot and if it breaks apart easily its dry enough. If it stays a ball then it's too wet.

- Mark Your Calendars: two classes coming up. If you are signed up currently and receiving emails from me, you will continue to get information unless you tell me to stop. Which fine.

The Good, the Bad, and the Not Really Bothering Anything: Garden Insects: Tuesday, April 13th at 12 noon

Diseases in the Garden: Tuesday, April 27th at noon