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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 1944

QUESTION BOX:

How use cryolite?

Best way to apply fertilizer?

How plant vegetable seed?

ANSWERS FROM garden specialists of U. S.
Department of Agriculture.

CURRENT SERVICE

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

3 Hh
2- It's that time of year, again, when the questions about gardening begin filling up the mailbags at the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Let's see how the garden experts answer some of these questions today. Here's the first one, from a gardener who says. "I've been told of a new insecticide called cryolite (cryolite) that is effective against bean beetles. Can you tell me something more about the use of cryolite, and where I'll be able to buy it?"

Cryolite is a comparatively new insecticide that many victory gardeners will probably hear about for the first time this year. It's useful against bean beetles, flea beetles, and cabbage worms. You'll probably be able to buy cryolite pretty generally, in 1- and 3-pound packages. It comes in powder form, and you can either mix it with water, for a spray, or use it as a dusting mixture. You'll probably find instructions on the package for using it.

Last year rotenone was the outstanding victory garden insecticide. But rotenone has to be imported from South America and it isn't as plentiful as it was last year. So this year cryolite will probably be used more widely. Although cryolite isn't as much of an all-round insecticide as rotenone, it will prove very useful in the garden.

If you want to be prepared for insects, and get the jump on them before they begin to damage your crops, you'll probably want to write for a copy of the new free bulletin telling about the insects and diseases that affect garden vegetables. To get a copy, write to the Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.,

and ask for the Victory Gardener's Handbook on Insects and Diseases.

Well, here's the next letter in today's mailbag. This homemaker writes, "What's the best way to apply victory garden fertilizer? How much should I use? My garden is about 30 by 50 feet."

If your garden is small, and intensively planted, you can broadcast the fertilizer and harrow or rake it thoroughly into the upper 3 to 4 inches of soil. But in most gardens it's better to apply the fertilizer in bands at each side of the seed rows, a little deeper than the seed.

Take your hoe and scoop out a furrow about 2 inches from the row where you're going to put in the seed or plants. (You fertilize before you plant seeds or seedlings, you know.) Make the furrow about 3 to 4 inches across and 2 inches deep. Put the fertilizer in the furrow, mix it thoroughly with the soil, and cover it about 2 inches deep. Make sure the fertilizer doesn't come in contact with the seeds or plants. Use about one pound of fertilizer to 25 or 30 feet of row, if rows are 2 feet apart. This method provides the most efficient use of the fertilizer.

Too much commercial fertilizer can injure plants, so don't overdo the use of it. For a garden 30 by 50 feet, figure on 50 to 60 pounds of standard fertilizer, such as the victory garden fertilizer available this year.

Now here's a question about garden seed. "I'm planting my first victory garden this year, and I don't want to waste any vegetable seed. I will appreciate advice on the correct way to plant it in order to get the best results."

The garden specialists advise adjusting the depth of planting to the soil: in heavy soil, plant shallow--in light sandy soil, plant deeper. The idea in this is to plant the seed just deep enough so the soil around it will keep moist. If the seed's too deep, it may be slow in germinating, or some of the sprouts may not push through. And if you plant the seed too shallow, it may wash out, or dry out before it germinates.

A good way to plant small seeds, is to draw the end of the rake or hoe handle through the soil to make a row. Have the soil fine, and smooth, and free from clods, trash, and stones. To plant larger seeds, make a row an inch deep, or deeper, with the corner of the hoe.

Try to get your row a uniform depth... otherwise you'll get an irregular stand of plants.

An important point to remember this year is, don't waste seed. Buy what you need-- no more; and plant what you need to get a stand. Planting more than you need not only wastes seed, it wastes labor too, because if the young plants are crowded, you'll have to thin them out if you don't want poor growth and poor quality.

When you plant beets or chard, put the seeds just where you want the plants to stand, because these seeds really are fruits, each containing several seeds, and you'll have to thin them. Plant cabbage, tomatoes, and onion sets right where you want the plants, too.

Victory gardeners and farmers will get more than 275 million pounds of vegetable seed this year-- but even though that sounds like a lot, there's none to waste. We need all the food we can grow from every ounce of that seed.

In addition to the seed our own gardeners are getting, American seeds are going to our troops overseas-- so they can have food they know and enjoy-- and seeds are also going to our allies and to liberated countries, to help them grow their own food. War food officials say that whenever it's possible, it's good shipping sense to send food in the form of seeds to our allies, the liberated countries, and our troops. The reason is the difference in shipping space. It would take quite a lot of cargo space for 500 bushels of rutabagas or 5 tons of tomatoes. But for the same amount of food, grown abroad, we can ship a pint of rutabaga seed, or an ounce of tomato seed-- quite a saving in weight and space.

