

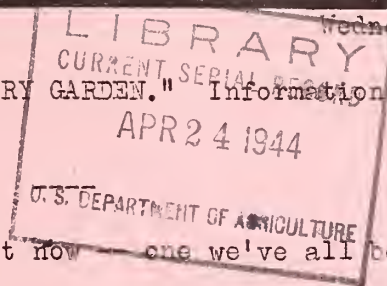
homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, April 26, 1944.

Subject: "BATTLING BUGS IN YOUR VICTORY GARDEN." Information from entomologists of U. S. Department of Agriculture.



"Invasion" is a timely word right now ^{one} we've all been talking about--but if you're a victory gardener, you'd better prepare to be on the receiving end of an invasion, before long. Yes, the bugs are coming--and if you're a good garden strategist, you'll be all ready for them...ready to head them off before they ruin good garden crops, and waste seed, and fertilizer, and labor that you've put into your garden.

So draw up the battle plans...line up your fighting equipment...and get ready for the invasion of the insects. Preparedness is half the battle--get the early comers, and there won't be so many later on.

What will you need for the battle of the bugs? That depends on what crops you have in your garden, because each one has its own particular enemies in the insect world. To find out what you'll need, I'd suggest you get a copy of the new Victory Gardener's Handbook of Insects and Diseases. This is a new bulletin, just written by government entomologists, and it tells what to do about each of the common garden pests...and in addition has drawings of the insects, to make it easy for you to identify them. To get the new handbook just write to the Office of Information U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C. Ask for the bulletin called "Insects and Diseases."

You probably know that some chemicals we commonly use to fight garden pests are hard to get now, due to the war. For instance, pyrethrum, one of the most popular spraying chemicals, is being used by the armed forces to control malaria-bearing mosquitoes...Manufacturers report that we will have a good supply of rotenone--one of the most useful insecticides.

The new insect bulletin takes these wartime shortages into account, and wherever possible gives directions for using other chemicals in place of the ones that are scarce now.

The advance guard of the insect invasion can do great damage to tender young plants, so it's important to be able to recognize them. One of the first insects to be on the lookout for is the cutworm. This fat grey worm likes to wander about a garden in the evening, cutting off tender young plants right at the surface of the ground. It's very active early in the gardening season. One way to keep the cutworm away from young transplants, such as cabbage and tomatoes, is to put a paper collar around the stem. To do this, just roll up a piece of cardboard, about post-card size, and set it in the soil around the stem, about half an inch from the stem. If the collar extends about an inch below, and two inches above, the soil, the cutworms won't be able to get through or around it to the stem.

To kill cutworms, the insect bulletin tells you how to make a poison bait of bran mixed with sodium fluosilicate, or paris green.

Another early insect to be watching for is the aphid, a very small fellow. Aphids, or plant lice, like to cluster on stems and underneath the leaves of plants and they stunt the growth and finally may kill the plants. Go after aphids as soon as they appear, with nicotine dust or a nicotine sulfate spray, or soap spray. The bulletin tells how to prepare and apply these.

Besides cutworms and aphids, two kinds of beetles are likely to attack your early garden: flea beetles...small black or striped insects that travel in crowds, and jump around like fleas...and bean beetles, yellow to reddish in color, with spotted backs. Flea beetles congregate on the topside of leaves, where they eat tiny pinpoints of holes. They like cabbage, tomatoes, and other plants...but they don't like dusty or powdery food, so dusting with lime or any other dust will repel them. The insect bulletin also tells how to spray for flea beetles.

As for the bean beetles...they'll eat any kind of bean. They lay their yellow eggs on the underside of the bean leaves, and the larvae that hatch from the eggs

are very destructive...so look for the eggs, and crush them by folding over the leaf. You can also control bean beetles by hand-picking them, if your garden's small enough so you can do a thorough job often.

In fact, hand-picking is often satisfactory in controlling all the larger beetles, caterpillars, and plant bugs--in a small garden--and if you pick often enough, you may get effective insect control without applying any insecticides. But you have to begin early, and repeat often, to make hand-picking effective.

To sum up, then, what I've been saying about garden insects: Be ready for them when they invade your garden; an early counter-attack will keep them from damaging the crops, and from increasing in numbers. Be on the lookout for the early bugs: cutworms...aphids...flea beetles...and bean beetles. And for the latest information on wartime methods of insect control, get the new free bulletin, "Insects and Diseases" from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington '25, D. C.

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