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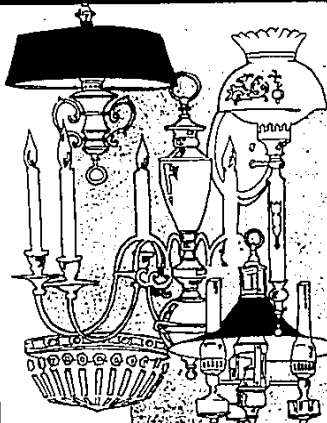
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veggies

Cucumbers: Hybrids have plenty of virtues

The liberation of the cucumber is a story with a definite feminine flair. While the first blooms opening in traditional varieties are males, it is the separate female blossoms that set the fruit. Poor fruit set is often due to overproduction of the male flowers on the cucumber vine.

Hybrid varieties of cucumbers have more virtues than vigor, however. The "new" cucumbers also have disease tolerance in their green genes. Old-time troublemakers like mosaic, mildews and leaf spots appear less frequently in plantings of disease tolerant genetically programmed hybrids.

What else is new in cucumbers? Hybrids for postage-stamp gardens. Little Pot Luck needs only a 18 to 20 inch area to produce bumper crops of 6 to 7 inch fruit, in a record 50 days. This diminutive dynamo does just as well in hanging baskets and containers.

Picking varieties can be distinguished from slicer by their heavy production of crisp, pickle-size fruit at one time. Be ready to fill the jars or crocks in 48 days when you plant Peppi.

Some important tricks for the best

cukes involve culture. The cucumber is a warm-season plant. Do not transplant too early in the season. The cucumber has a big appetite, too. Make sure you have plenty of organic material in the form of compost or well-rotted manure in your planter garden before setting out the cuke. Fertilize again midseason.

If nature does not keep soil moist, water your cucumber planting thoroughly each week. Make sure your sprinkler or hose delivers at least one inch of water or your cucumbers may end up with hour-glass figures.

Cucumbers may be the ultimate edible vine. Trellis your plants on fences, pole supports or even against the garage wall. If you have extra tomato cages, use them for the cukes. Gravitational pull makes straighter fruit when you use this suggestion from the cucumber bag of tricks.

Prompt picking is also essential for all types of cucumbers. A few overripe fruit will keep the plant from continuous production. This liberated lady also has another prejudice to dispel. Members of the cucumber family will not crossbreed with melons and squash.

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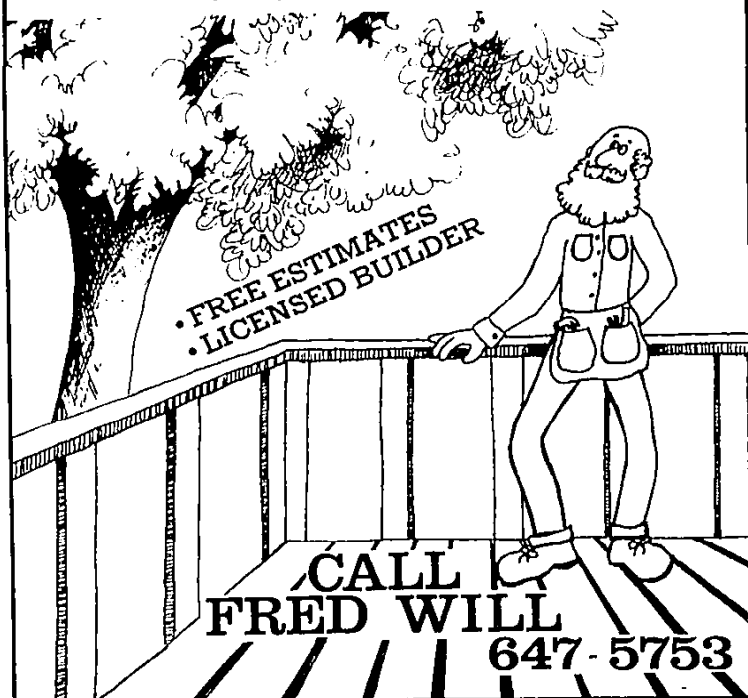


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