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**Homes and Gardening**

**Burning Grass Poor Practice, Botanist States**

In Michigan, and similar northern regions where plant growth and succession is slow, fire is generally a poor tool for "enriching" pastures and helping growth, states Dr. Marion T. Hill, botanist at Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills. Bluegrass, for instance, is greatly weakened by fire.

Weeds usually thrive in areas that have been "greened-up" by fire. Ash, which contains large amounts of minerals, nourishes plant fruits and flowers. But at the same time, the burning which produces the ash also draws off nitrogen essential to sturdy vegetative growth. These chemical changes work to the advantage of weeds.

One distinct fault of fire is that it destroys all plant and animal inhabitants in the rich top dressing of the soil. The living organisms carry on many processes, both chemical and physical, that are essential to the fertility and improved structure of useful vegetation.

And, when fire goes beneath the top soil, which it frequently does, it completely disrupts organic content, biochemical processes, soil moisture and acidity. In this circumstance normal plant growth ceases entirely, leaving the land open to wind and water erosion.

The most serious immediate effect of fire is on wildlife. Aside from out-right slaughter or injury to innumerable animals, including ground-nesting birds, the destruction of food eventually starves many more, and tends to create a biological desert. Even local water supplies are polluted by alkaline from the ash.

In view of these dangers, Dr. Hill recommends that fire be used only with competent advice and for a specific purpose. One such purpose is heavy seed production, which may be accomplished by controlled burning about once in a decade.

**PRUNE RASPBERRY BUSHES NOW, AG. AGENT ADVISES**

Now is the time to finish pruning of raspberry bushes, if they haven't already been completed, advises Lyle Abel, Oakland County Agricultural Agent. The great work that the work on the raspberries has to be completed before growth starts this spring. It passes these suggestions along from Paul A. Larsen, Michigan State College horticulturist.

The first thing to do is cut out all old and weak canes. Then hit out the rest of the canes. For canes in the rows, keep rows narrow and leave 12 to 16 of the sturdiest canes for every four feet of row.

Larsen says the next step is to cut back the end of the canes remaining. Don't cut off more than a quarter of the cane. Most of the fruit — and the best — is produced on the upper half of the cane.

**PLANTING DATA for VEGETABLE PLOT**

VEGETABLE CROP	DAYS TO TABLE SIZE	HARVEST FROM 150WING LASTS	GROW FOR 4 PORTION SERVING
BEANS	45-53	4 WEEKS	1 FOOT
BEETS	55-60	6 WEEKS	1 FOOT
CARROTS	60-80	8 WEEKS	2 FEET
CUCUMBERS	45-75	4 WEEKS	2 FEET
ENDIVE	70-90	6 WEEKS	1 FOOT
KOHLRABI	60	3 WEEKS	2 FEET
TURNIPS	40-75	2 WEEKS	1 1/2 FEET
SPINACH	40-50	2 WEEKS	3 FEET
SWEET CORN	65-105	10 DAYS	4 FEET
ONION SETS	21	4 WEEKS	1 FOOT
PEAS	60-75	2 WEEKS	3 FEET
EARLY RADISHES	25	1 WEEK	1 FOOT
SUMMER	45	2 WEEKS	1 FOOT
WINTER	60	6 WEEKS	1 FOOT

CUT THIS OUT AND PASTE ON CARDBOARD FOR REFERENCE

**Plan Vegetable Garden To Fit Needs Of Family For Season**

Even a small home vegetable garden should be planned, to balance production with the family needs.

Without a planned production schedule, it is a common experience to harvest an over-abundance of quick growing crops in the early summer, and have none at all later in the season.

The garden can be evolved by estimating in advance how much of each crop your family can use during the period when its quality is high. Then general plantings can be made, so that when the first crop has passed its prime, another will be ready to harvest.

**Home Gardener May Choose From Wide Variety**

Home gardeners have an advantage in choosing vegetable varieties for their gardens, claims Oakland County Agricultural Agent Lyle Abel.

Abel makes this statement after comparing the recommended varieties for home gardeners and the recommendations by Michigan State horticulturists for commercial vegetable men. The home gardener can plant any variety he wants, but the commercial grower has to worry about shipping quality.

Michigan State College Horticulturist Robert L. Carolus maintains that tomatoes and beans should be in every garden, and sweet corn if there is enough space.

Here are his variety recommendations:

For tomatoes, plant a few Early Wonder plants around May 15 for early eating, but have some covers handy for frost protection. Then later for main crop, put in more plants of Spokesdale or Long Red.

Beans are the most satisfactory home garden crop. This year home gardeners can plant the new Tender. They can be planted early and will withstand the cold. May 5 to 10 is not too early. For main crop and freezing, Top Crop should be planted after the middle of May. It is a good quality bean and is a good freezer if picked young.

A new sweet corn, Golden Beauty, is good for early planting. May 10 to 25. Some Carmel Cross can be sown around May 25. This will provide spread ripening for about three weeks. Golden Cross is a good canning variety. Planting dates may be later in northern counties.

A folder on Recommended Vegetable Varieties is available from the county agricultural agent's office, 1260 West Boulevard, Pontiac. Another comprehensive bulletin on "Home Vegetable Gardens", E-4, has been revised recently. It will be useful for reference by gardeners with large operations.

**NATION IN MIND**

National housing authorities report the average American family dwelling contains 10,500 board feet of lumber. Douglas fir lumber, noted as a framing material and for its structural qualities, is the most popular single commercial lumber species sold in the nation.

**The CIO Political Bosses are plotting propaganda in his schools**

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Sarah Vash Jones candidate for re-election to STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Michigan State College)  
Master farmer, and recipient of national and state agriculture and education honors, Miss Jones should continue her important work as a delegate on the State Board of Agriculture.

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Mr. Stafford—news-paperyman, publicist and educator—originally caused the State Board of Agriculture to open its meetings to the press, and so to the public. He will insure the affairs of MSC being handled openly, honestly and efficiently.

**Nature Manufactures Lovely Grains In Wood**

Nature is the manufacturer of the lovely grain which so intrigues users of softwoods like Douglas fir and west coast hemlock. In the next spring this wood grows very fast in large cells and in the dry summer months a slower growing, more dense cell pattern develops which makes contrasting light and dark areas in the wood.

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**Prefab Houses Have Good Points**

Prefabricated houses aren't all like those you see in the cartoons. You need to know the facts on prefabs if you're thinking even remotely of buying or building a home.

Just what is a prefab? It's a house that is partly built in a factory and shipped to the building site for final assembling. Prefabrication varies from panel construction to "fold-out" houses complete except for joining the walls.

A few prefab firms offer you the house package delivered to your site with complete instructions on how to build it. Much larger firms, however, work through local franchised builders.

How about cost? Household magazine reports that you can pay \$2,475 for a prefab package as it comes off the truck, or you can spend \$60,000 for a truly deluxe, oversize, prefabricated house. Most units are being built in the \$8,000 to \$12,000 class.

Quality of materials is one of the better prefabs plants. These plants generally use only the best grades of lumber because inferior grades may not line up in precision machinery, and also they can't risk any kickback from building codes.

What are some of the disadvantages of prefabs? Many prefabs in developments have been fitted to their sites with all the originality of a row of dominoes.

Building codes and opposition from a few craft unions have led to the prefab builder into costly letrous that undermine savings made at the factory.

Some of the improvements in prefabs homes include: (1) good insulation with vermin-proofing plans, more glass area and more built-in features, and (2) reduced cost through volume production and mass buying of materials.

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**Forest, Grass Fires Begin In Lower Michigan**

Fifteen forest and grass fires damaged 21 acres in the lower peninsula last week.

Three fires were reported the previous week to open the state's 1955 season.

Fires damage more acres in spring months than at any other period, although such early season burns are generally easier to suppress.

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