

The Home Garden

Small Fruits and Flowers

Vegetables

Care of Tomato Plants

BY the middle of January outdoor tomatoes should be coming to maturity. Birds may attack the fruit, but damage is reduced to a minimum if all fruit is picked as it matures.

Care must be exercised in defoliating the plants. This can be overdone, to the detriment of the crop. All that is necessary is to thin out the leaves should they be very dense, as they are likely to be on over-rich ground, and to remove those leaves which show signs of yellowing through old age.

By removing these older leaves, only useful leaves are left on the plant. Light may then penetrate to the fruit, and useless foliage does not check air from circulating freely. After being removed the leaves should be burnt.

The tying up of the plants and nipping out the tops when they reach the height of about 5ft or reach the tops of the supports should be attended to.

Tomato Glasshouses

By the middle of January the harvesting of tomatoes in the unheated glasshouse will be drawing to a close, and the house should be cleaned up in preparation for further cropping. On a still night close the house and burn sulphur in it at the rate of 2lb. per 1000 cubic feet of glasshouses space. Next morning the house may be opened and allowed to air.

The vines should be cut several inches from the ground and left suspended for several days to dry, so that they will burn readily and generate sufficient heat to dry and burn the roots, which are removed from the house at the same time as the vines and supporting twine.

After these operations have been completed the house should be thoroughly cleaned of cobwebs and dust, and the woodwork and concrete whitewashed or painted. This time of the year offers a very good opportunity of effecting any repairs that may be required.

The soil, if it is not to be removed and renewed, should be dug over and prepared for the sowing of a cover crop.

What To Do in the Vegetable Garden This Month

Summary of operations for the month (until the middle of February).

SEEDS TO SOW.

Spring cabbages, lettuce (allow to mature without transplanting), spinach, silver beet and carrots.

SEEDLINGS TO TRANSPLANT.

Savoy cabbage, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, leeks and celery.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR WARM DISTRICTS.

Continue sowings of dwarf beans for late cropping, and sow turnips and swedes.

GENERAL WORK.

Spray for potato and tomato blight.

Use derris dust to control white butterfly.

Water well when necessary, and maintain a surface mulch to conserve moisture and destroy weeds. Make this cultivation shallow where crops are approaching maturity.

Dig under any harvested crops, such as peas and beans, but burn potato haulms and cabbage and cauliflower stumps promptly.

Tie up and prune outdoor tomatoes.

Sow a cover crop on any ground that is not being used for cropping.

Harvest onions as they mature (see last month's notes).

Random Notes

Artificial Liquid Manure

MANY gardeners have difficulty in obtaining fresh animal manure, and this is a handicap in making liquid manure, which is so beneficial to so many crops. A substitute can