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How to Combat Garden Pests

Some of the Foes are Enumerated in This Article. Various Treatments Suggested for These Troubles. Effort to Meet Conditions Requiring Attention.

The pests of the garden, both insect and fungous, are numerous indeed, but fortunately the means of combating them are also numerous. Of the many ways recommended to cope with the different destructive representatives of insect and fungous life some are good and others are impracticable. While several treatments for one phase of trouble may be discussed in this and articles which may follow they are mentioned because one method will be quite as efficient as another and of the number of remedies advocated some one may be applicable to one individual's conditions while another may not.

Root maggots.—Cabbages, onions, radishes and similar plants are often destroyed by a small maggot doing injury to the roots. In the case of the last mentioned plant the destruction is in the edible part which often renders it unfit for consumption and useless for sale. This insect is quite prevalent and should be combated before its presence is indicated by serious destruction. Where this maggot is likely to injure radishes it is necessary to use some decoction about the roots. Carbolic acid emulsion is recommended. This is prepared by dissolving 1 pound of soap in 1 gallon of rain water and while hot ½ gallon of crude carbolic acid is added to it and the whole emulsified. Before using, this mixture is diluted about 35 times with water. This liquid should be applied as soon as the plants are up and repeated every week or ten days. A small quantity poured around each plant at the surface of the ground will be sufficient for each application. This same preparation is recommended for cabbage and extensive experiments are now being conducted to determine its efficacy. The maggot in this plant eats at the roots, causing them to turn yellow and wilt to the ground. The egg is laid by a fly near or on the plant at the surface of the ground and the young maggot finds its way to the root after hatching from the egg. Advantage is taken of this circumstance in the use of the paper disc, which has proven itself to be a reliable preventative. The disc is made with six sides, in order to cut most economically from a large card. From 2½ to 3 inches across is sufficient size. From one side of the disc to the center a slit is made, and in the center a star-shaped cut is formed. When plants are transplanted to the ground this paper disc is put around the stem and pressed down evenly on the ground. The eggs cannot be laid within a couple of inches of the plant unless they be laid on it. In either case the young maggots after hatching will not be able to reach the roots in time to do any material damage. Tar-paper, felt discs are used in preference to tarpaper or building paper, as properties of the felt prevent it from curling and warping.

There is still another maggot which does considerable injury to onions by devouring the roots and eating its way into the bulb of the plant. This is known as the imported onion maggot. The adult, as those previously mentioned, resembles the common house fly and the maggot itself can be distinguished from the cabbage maggot only by the most careful inspection. In life history and characteristics they are very much the same and the treatment prescribed in the foregoing paragraph is applicable to this pest.

Plant lice.—Almost every farmer and gardener is acquainted to some extent with a large group of insects which attack most succulent plants. They are usually seen on the under side of the leaf, congregated in unusual numbers. Upon examination they appear pear-shaped, with large soft bodies and long legs and antennae. Some will have wings, others will be wingless, while on different varieties of plants the insects may have slightly different colors. These are commonly called "lice," "green fly," or "aphis." They do not confine their depredations to the garden only. Sometimes field crops are destroyed by them and the orchardist finds them a stubborn pest. The leaves of cane fruit and berries may often be seen curled and discolored, while on the under side of the leaf these insects are usually present. Their food is acquired by sucking and a contact poison is necessary to destroy them. Of natural ways and means of controlling this insect, the lady bird beetle and her larvae are both useful, while clean cultivation and the burning of all foliage and rubbish in the fall will destroy immense numbers.

Of the contact poisons, kerosene emulsion and whale-oil soap are efficacious. Kerosene emulsion is prepared by slicing one-half pound of common laundry soap and dissolving it in one gallon of rain water. While hot pour this mixture into two gallons of kerosene oil and churn vigorously for five minutes. A force pump is a very efficient implement to use in emulsifying this mixture. When thoroughly emulsified the mixture will be creamy in consistency. Before use the three gallons of emulsion should be diluted to thirty gallons of liquid. It is necessary to have the mixture thoroughly emulsified else burning may result.

For brown or black aphids one pound of whale-oil soap dissolved in four gallons of water may be used, while for green aphids one pound to six gallons is sufficient. Since these insects are found largely on the under side of the leaf it is necessary that the spray be applied there. It is a contact poison and must strike the insect.

Pyrethrum powder applied with some form of a blower will also be instrumental in destroying the insect. In many cases even cold water sprayed on the plant with considerable force will blow them from the leaf and the insect will perish before it can get back to do injury.

Asparagus beetles.—In almost any garden where asparagus is grown there will be small, colored beetles about one-fourth of an inch long feeding on the plants. There will also be a number of larvae or the young of the beetle, and combined the parent and offspring will do no small amount of injury. In the autumn the mature insect or beetle hibernates beneath convenient shelter in or near the garden, so it is expedient in the fall to collect and burn all foliage or rubbish that might protect this and other insects during the winter.

Chickens are very fond of the asparagus beetle and are a wonderful assistance in keeping them in check. There are also predaceous insects, such as the ladybird beetle, which will destroy large numbers. It should be said here in behalf of the ladybird beetle that it is a beneficial insect and should never be destroyed. Both the adult and larvae destroy large numbers of the injurious insects and are a very great factor in limiting their numbers. At this season of the year the shoots should be growing and storing food for next season's crop. Under these conditions it will be necessary to treat the pest accordingly. In the spring young shoots should be left as a decoy for eggs and beetles and afterwards destroyed, but during the hot weather in summer many of the larvae will perish if shook to the ground. Air-slacked lime dusted on the plants in early morning when the dew is on quickly destroys grubs and if some arsenical compound can be mixed with it many beetles will also be killed.

Wireworms and white grubs.—It is needless to describe these two enemies of a great variety of crops. The former is the young of the click beetle with which children often amuse themselves by watching it click to its feet when placed upon its back. The white grub is the larvae of the May beetle or "June bug" and has much the same life history as the wireworm. These worms and grubs often appear in the garden, but their depredations are most marked in land that has been in sod for a number of years. Since the larvae live in the soil for two or three years such lands should be sown with crops that the insects do not attack with vigor. Duckwheat and beans may be mentioned as somewhat undesirable to these insects. The first season that land is broken up there is considerable sod which serves as food, and growers should not be surprised if the injury is worse as a result of their feeding on the crop in the following year. Cultivation and rotation of crops is the practical remedy, but where a few berry plants are being attacked by the white grub and the grower desires very much to preserve them the kerosene emulsion described under root maggots will be useful. Dilute the emulsion about 10 times and pour on the ground around the infested plants. This should be done before a rain so the emulsion will be carried into the soil.

Currant worms.—Gardeners or farmers in general cannot fail to notice the denuded appearance of their current bushes throughout the summer when the currant worms are working. This pest is usually green

when in the larval stage, but it changes its appearance several times throughout the season. The worms appear in great numbers and quickly defoliate the plants, leaving the branches and framework of the leaves.

When no fruit is in evidence this pest can be destroyed by spraying with ¼-lb. of Paris green or 1 pound of arsenate of lead to 25 gallons of water. If the bushes are maturing fruit it would be better to use some fresh hellebore at the rate of 4 ounces to 2 or 3 gallons of water or, as a dry application, 1 lb. to 5 pounds of flour or air-slacked lime. Hellebore is poisonous to insect life, but sufficient quantity will not gather on the fruit to affect human beings in any way.

Tomato blight.—Tomatoes are attacked by both fungous diseases and insect life. The tomato worm is sometimes common, but it is large, easily apprehended and combated without difficulty. The blight is quite different and will first be observed by the wilted and darkened appearance of the plants. Bordeaux mixture as commonly used will be an efficient preventive and it should be applied as soon as any evidence of disease appears.

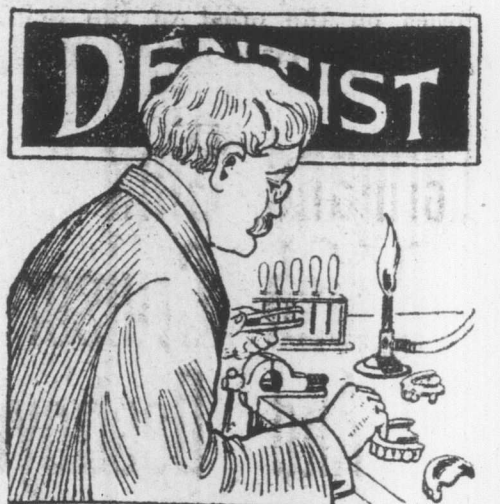
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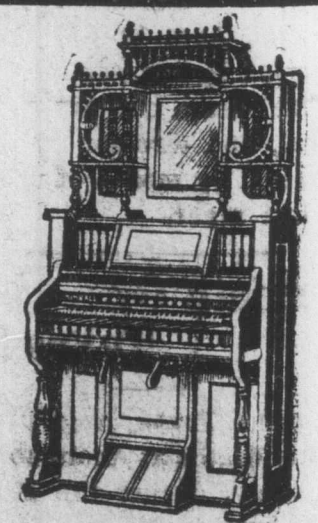
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