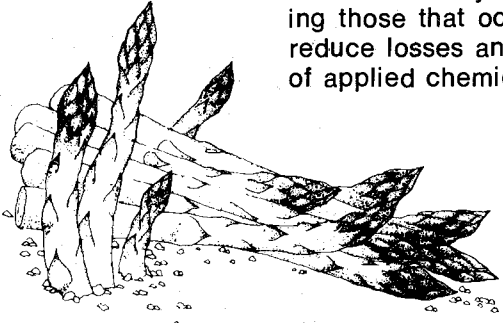


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Discourage Plant Diseases in Your Home Garden

Plant diseases can reduce the yield of vegetables and fruit crops. In addition, they may disfigure ornamental trees, shrubs, and flowers, thereby reducing their value in the landscape. There are several ways of guarding against plant diseases and treating those that occur. The following suggestions may help you reduce losses and combat plant diseases with a minimum use of applied chemicals.



1 Select a suitable location for planting. Some plants like sunny locations while others prefer more shade. Avoid extremely wet soils since they favor many root diseases. Improving drainage, where possible, will reduce these diseases.

2 Practice rotation within your garden plot. If possible, change your garden location occasionally. This helps prevent the build up of disease-causing organisms.



Select disease-resistant varieties where they are available. Check with your nursery or garden-center operator about this important matter before making a purchase.

4 Use *only* disease-free seed and transplants. Buy from a reputable seed company, greenhouse operator, or nursery. Do not accept any plants (even at bargain prices) that appear unhealthy. Remember that many disease-causing organisms can be carried to your garden on seeds and transplants.



5 Fertilize your garden on the basis of soil test results. Plants that are too weak or too vigorous, as a result of improper fertilization, will be more subject to diseases.

6 Do not overcrowd plants. This results in a high humidity beneath the plant canopy, which favors certain diseases such as downy mildew and Botrytis blight. Thin plants to permit free air circulation.



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- 7 Water properly. Try to maintain an even water supply and avoid dry-wet fluctuations. Avoid watering late in the day, since this will favor disease conditions. Remember that too much moisture will favor several root and foliage diseases.

- 8 Control weeds in and near the garden. Weeds help create a micro-climate that is ideal for development of fungus and bacterial diseases. They may provide the initial source for certain virus diseases.



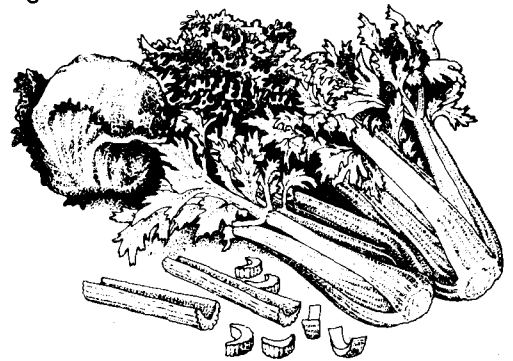
- 9 Control insect pests. They may carry and spread certain virus and bacterial diseases.

- 10 Destroy diseased plants as soon as you observe them in your garden. Otherwise, they may serve as a source of spread to other plants. Avoid composting diseased plants since several disease-causing organisms can live in the compost. It is best to remove and destroy badly diseased plants.



- 11 Spade under or remove and compost (or destroy) crop refuse as soon as possible after you harvest your garden. This promotes elimination of disease-causing organisms that could overwinter in crop debris left in the garden.

- 12 Remove and destroy diseased tree and shrub branches before a disease spreads. Sterilize pruning equipment between cuts. Use either rubbing alcohol or household bleach at the rate of 1 part bleach to 4 parts water. Pruning may be done at any time and it may be easier to spot dead branches before the leaves fall in the winter. Rake the fallen leaves and compost or spread them in the vegetable garden to avoid overwintering the disease-causing organisms under the trees.



- 13 Be alert to leaf diseases that occur nearly every year on certain trees such as willow, sycamore, hawthorn, and apple. Fungicide applications must be made as the leaves emerge in the spring or severe defoliation will occur in the summer. When falling leaves are seen, the time for treatment is long past.

These practices, carefully followed, will help you avoid destructive plant diseases in the home garden. Oregon State University Extension Offices have publications giving more information concerning many specific plant diseases and their treatment.

Revised by Duane L. Hatch, Oregon State University home gardening coordinator, from a publication of the Delaware Extension Service.

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