

March 12, 2012

Tomatoes:

- When buying tomato plants or seeds, be sure to buy varieties that are resistant to nematodes, fusarium wilt, and tobacco virus.
- The majority of heirloom tomatoes are not disease resistant and can bring fusarium and wilt diseases to your vegetable garden quickly when the plants are underfed, grown in soils with bad drainage or low pH, or when tomatoes are planted in the same area year after year.
- Some of the easy to obtain disease resistant tomatoes are *Better Boy*, *Beef Master*, *Big Girl*, and *Super Sonic*.
- When preparing your tomato garden, be sure to use the [LusterLeaf pH Tester](#) to ensure that the soil's pH is near 7. Add some *Bonide Hydrated Lime* when the pH is on the low side. *Hydrated Lime* provides the tomato plant with available calcium, which will prevent blossom end rot.
- The black spot that appears on tomato fruits is called blossom end rot.
- Feeding tomato plants with high salt index fertilizer will also cause blossom end rot easily, especially when the tomato plants are occasionally exposed to drought.
- Use [Plant Trust Vegetable and Flower Fertilizer](#) to feed the tomato plants one week after planting. This fertilizer contains many major and minor trace elements which allow for the best growth and better tasting tomatoes. Also, tomatoes love phosphate, which is in plenty supply in *Plant Trust Vegetable and Flower Fertilizer*.

Fruit Trees:

- If you have not pruned fruit trees and grape plants, do so as soon as possible.
- Grape plants pruned in the spring will bleed, but this will not significantly harm the plant. It is better to let the plant lose some sap now than to prune in the fall, which can lead to winter damage after a very cold winter in northern areas. Make sure the pH is near 7 when growing grape plants. If the pH is low, add [Bonide Hydrated Lime](#) and continue to monitor the pH.

Grass:

- Cut ornamental grasses to 2-6" above the soil level and feed with [Turf Trust](#).

Lawn:

- If you sown grass seed in the late-fall, winter, or this spring, then you cannot use *Green Light Crabgrass Preventer with Dimension* this spring. You must use *Lebanon Turpersan 4.6G* to prevent summer crabgrass this season. [Lebanon Turpersan 4.6G](#) is the only crabgrass preventer that contains siduron and no fertilizer. Two applications of *Lebanon Turpersan 4.6G* should be applied 30 days apart to prevent the germination of summer crabgrass. The first application should be applied when the forsythia flowers are dropping in your area. Use the 2 lb./1,000 sq. feet spreader recommendation as stated on the bag. Remember to follow all label directions.
- Annual bluegrass can be controlled with Ortho Max Nutsedge Killer. It can be prevented from coming up next season by applying *GreenLight Crabgrass Preventer with Dimension* in late August.

- Make sure you feed your lawn with [*Turf Trust*](#) if you have not done so this season, to help grow a deep root system.

Flowers:

- When buying New Guinea Impatiens, it does not matter if it is a branded or non-branded plant, in my opinion, because they both perform the same. Additionally, non-branded plants are less expensive.
- Do not buy New Guinea Impatiens that have been over-treated with growth regulators. They will look very compact and bloom poorly with only a few flowers.
- When preparing flower beds for impatiens, use *Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss* as a soil additive to prevent root diseases. Never use bagged top soil.