

Excerpts from...

A Gardener's Guide for Survival in the Modern World!

by H.R.H. Prince Charles.



Appropriate Clothing and Preparation for the Shy Gardener

Gardening by its very nature is a dirty job and you will obviously get covered in the soil of your garden, which is unique. To make sure you can get clean with the minimum of hassle it is recommended to wear either a set of overalls, or a complete set of old clothes (jumble sales are good). If you are to wear gardening gloves make sure they are cotton as all others will mark your work. Have some nice warm clean clothes and boots to change into before you get home. And in today's disposable society it is hoped that you would get rid of your dirty old clothes and boots in wheelie bins, industrial skips or an allotment bonfire.

The tools you use for gardening will vary, and for some crops you won't need any at all. If you do use any tools make sure they are clean, no greasy fingerprints, before you put your gloves on. The only thing that will shift them is warm soapy water. Be thorough: even the batteries inside a torch have been touched, and you wouldn't want to drop anything while you were out and about! On the subject of dropping things, it's easy to lose things such as jewellery and specs when working hard so take them off beforehand or fix them to your person.

If you need to use a vehicle, it's worth parking away from your garden and walking in, as tyres leave those horrible distinctive marks. Leave someone with your vehicle as there can be thieves and other unexpected people about. Splashing your number plate and around it with mud will mean no-one will remember it. Remember when you get home to vacuum and clean the whole thing. If you find yourself

walking through the countryside early in the morning, go cross country or via footpaths, people walking on roads attract attention. Oh, and get rid of your directions before you go!

The Best Time to Go

The best gardening time for the shy gardener is obviously at night. And at the new moon is better than when it is full. You have two main choices; around 3am is the dead hour, but remember how long the job will take - slightly earlier in the evening and you'll have more of an excuse to be out and about. Remember the countryside can be a busy place, especially in the autumn and winter, as gamekeepers and poachers are regularly about. At this time a light of any sort will draw attention. It is worth bearing in mind that only nutters and gardeners are out when it's pissing it down, and it will wash away any trace. Remember dew, you'll get drenched anyway.

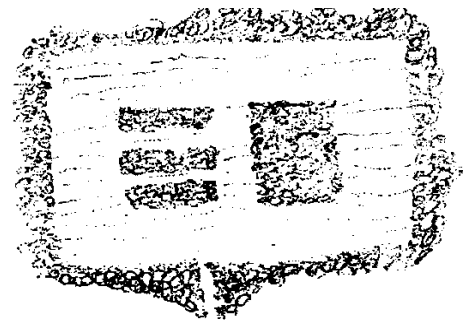
How to Spot Your Crop

First step is to get the six-figure grid reference for your release site - this is available from Joseph Pereira, DETR biotech unit, 0171 890 5277 (phone and ask for GMO public register and the GMO Grid Reference List), or from the internet at <http://host.envirolink.org/shag/>. or <http://www.foe.co.uk/>. Unfortunately most of the grid references you'll be able to get will be of the main farm building rather than the field itself. Don your wax jacket, bird book and binoculars, or take out a dog for a day in the countryside. Get yourself a "pathfinder" map and head for the fields. If you're lucky and they're being responsible (ha!) it'll be the only crop

of that variety in the area. If not then check them all, a farm may have multiple release sites.

What does it look like? The release site will probably consist of several smallish rectangular areas of the crop (approximate sizes are listed in the register of the sites). Each area is separated by several feet of bare earth. The whole site is surrounded by a several yards wide strip of bare earth surrounded by a barrier crop. The barrier crop will usually be the same type as the release crop.

The different areas of the release crop



will be marked out either by signs, or more likely just by small white rods. The different areas are for different things, at least one will be a control crop, i.e. non-mutant to use as a comparison. The other smaller test sites will be the mutant crops. The mutant plots may have even more markers to the extent of each individual plant having its own white marker rod. Also if a release site is to test pesticide resistance, the plots with weeds in are more likely to be controls and plots of the crop where no weeds are growing will be mutants. For release sites in greenhouses or labs, look for the paperwork.

What to do when you get there

Obviously the number of people you need will depend on the size of the release site. Most release sites can be done quite happily with a couple of gardeners, about four would be better, but it could take a couple of hours. Make sure you're suitably dressed and if possible go a little ahead to scout out the site. In Scotland police have staked out a test site, some sites have been alarmed with synthesised American voices booming out of the dark (unfortunately for them no-one responded to the alarm call), in Devon they hired security guards (the site was blatantly and responsibly decontaminated), and who knows what they're doing with private detectives. Paranoia, Boo! They who are careful stay free! Remember you are aiming to destroy the plants: you will either have to snap them off at the stem, or when uprooted pull them apart. At a release site in East Anglia, sugar beet was uprooted and left lying on the site, it was later replanted by the farmer (and later still dug up by concerned gardeners and removed from the site). Remember the release site is an experiment (with our future); if your aim is to disrupt this misguided experiment then you don't need to destroy all of the crop just 50 - 75%. Choose the plots with the mutant crops first; if you think you can identify the control crop then leave this until last. Spread the damage around, when you've done half a plot start on another, you can always go back to it later if there's time but you never know when you might be disturbed. It would disrupt the experiment if all the white marker rods were pulled up and scattered around, mixing the uprooted crops up in the remains of the crop. If it looks a mess it is less likely to be considered salvageable.

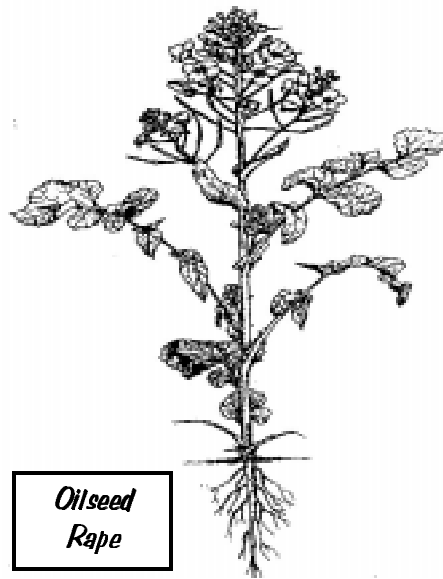
What you will be gardening

Oilseed Rape

There are two different breeds of oilseed rape that you might be gardening, winter and spring. The spring oilseed rape is sown between mid March and April, and harvested late September to mid October. The winter crop is sown late August to mid

September, flowering during May and is harvested mid July - mid August.

The plant has erect branching stems up to 3 foot high bearing deep lobed, grass green, bristly lower leaves and lobed blue upper leaves, with distinctive yellow flowers. It may be harvested early by breaking the stalk of the plant. This can be achieved by holding a large disposable stick outstretched and falling onto a row of the crop.



*Oilseed
Rape*

Maize

Maize is usually sown in late March - early April and is harvested between late June and early July. It has a single main stem with irregular long thin drooping leaves. It can be harvested in the same way as oilseed rape.

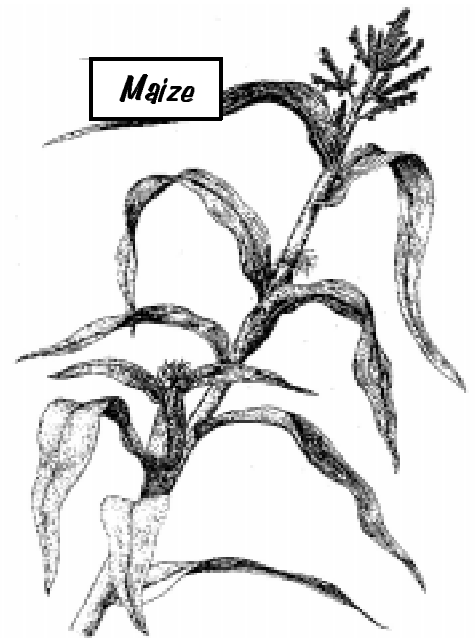
Tomatoes

This crop is usually sown in seed beds at the end of May and then transplanted to the test fields between late March and early April. It is then harvested between mid-July and early September.

They have a main stem which branches. Each branch produces five jagged weeping leaves. It produces a green fruit that turns red with ripening. To harvest early, pull or dig up the plant and snap the main stem.

Wheat

Winter wheat is sown between late September and early October and can be harvested between early January and late April. Spring wheat is planted in early March and harvested in August or September. When young it is difficult



Maize

to distinguish from barley, both of which look like large leaved grasses, but as they grow you can see that wheat has a much larger head. To harvest when young, pull up, if older use a "grass hook" (a type of crescent shaped knife)

Barley

Spring barley is sown February to March and harvested mid-May to mid-August. The winter crop is sown September to October and harvested July to August Garden as wheat.

Sugar Beet

This crop is sown in seed beds in late February and then transplanted to the fields between late March and late April, and is then harvested in early November.

It has a whitish conical root that produces a lot of stems each with a single irregular green and lobed leaf as well as a garland of flowers. It can be harvested early by pulling or digging up the crop and removing the root bit from the leaves and scattering in opposite directions.

Potato

There are a lot of varieties of potato grown in Britain, many of which it would be appropriate to garden. The description and the growing times of the plants will depend on the variety, but generally potato plants look like straggly tomato plants with either small yellow flowers or small green tomato-like fruit.