

IN YOUR GREENHOUSE

June - the first month the small unheated greenhouse comes into its own, with crops of tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and - for the very venturesome - melons.

So much is written on tomato culture that it seems fatuous to reiterate the few sins committed by the growers. Forget the old "Don't feed until the first truss is set". Present-day practice is to feed from the start and a little Bio or Phos-trogen dissolved in the water for every watering. Secondly, forget the "4 trusses only" drill; keep feeding and keep picking fruit, 6 to 16 trusses are the crops of the big growers. It does mean a system of lowering the vines and running them along the floor and up again, keeping a minimum of 4 trusses vertical. Another common fault is keeping the greenhouse too close and humid - if avoidance of fruit splitting is necessary, increase night ventilation until the fruit feels dry in the early morning - this method also prevents cladosporium ("brown mould on the leaves"). DDT Fumite smokes will control white fly, and to assist setting tap the trusses or shake them.

Put cucumbers and melons in the far end of the greenhouse, run them on the cordon system - for cucumbers removing all side shoots (lateral growth), for melons stop all lateral growth behind the second leaf. Both require humid conditions and daily syringing with water that has been standing in the house all day.

Treatment peculiar to melons - they require hand pollination, remove all petals from the male flower and then push it into the open female flower, leaving the male in the female flower. Most important, melon plants must never be watered round the neck or collar of the plant as it causes canker and death, so keep the collar dry at all times.

Peppers require no special treatment - a 6" flower pot is large enough, feed regularly, "little and often" is the drill, and all can be grown in growbags.

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