

Good Growing with the Garden Gal Program #009 December 2017

Survey Forest-Evaluate Season/Day Length Effects / Brussels Sprouts TO DO THIS MONTH – Survey the Forest / Evaluate the Season

SURVEY THE FOREST

- Now is a great time to get a really good look at your trees as there are no leaves and minimal snow
- Look at:
 1. Tree species (Winter tree ID class March 3 at 9:00 at Kenwood – BYO snowshoes)
 2. Tree height & diameter
 3. Stocking density (explain basal area / 90 – 180 for northern hardwoods, varies for pine plantations)
 4. Tree health
- Forestry assistance available through many conservation districts

EVALUATE THE SEASON

Take time to think about each crop you grew and

- Which varieties did you like particularly well? Which ones not so much?
- Note on a map any areas with a weed problem – could be an indicator that the soil needs tweaking
- Make a note of any insect and disease problems you had so that you are prepared for them next year.
- If you haven't done so already, make a map of where you grew what so that you can rotate crops next year.

IN THE KNOW – How Day Length Affects Plants

- When the amount of daylight falls below 10 hours per day, plants essentially stop growing
- In the Cadillac area, that time period is Nov. 6 until Feb. 4. Reduce this by three days on both ends for Munising in the Upper Peninsula; extend it by nine days for Decatur, Illinois.
- If you bring a plant (such as an herb plant) indoors where it's warm for the winter, the plant will become very leggy because light and temperature are out of balance with each other.
- If you have a heated green house in winter, you need to supplement with additional light.
- Without supplemental light and heat, it is possible to harvest throughout the winter, even though crops are not growing.

CROP OF THE MONTH – Brussels Sprouts

KEY ASPECTS

- They are a very long season crop and need to be started in early May.
- Grow in an irrigated, fertile soil where the pH is above 6.0
- To trigger sprout production, pinch out the growing point at the tip of the plant three weeks before the average first frost.
- Wait to harvest until they have been hit by a good, strong frost. They can usually be harvested well into December. (On Nov. 10th, we had 10° F, covered plants with row cover, and are still harvesting them as of Dec. 1st.)
- If you think you don't like them, try slicing them, toss with a little olive oil and salt, and broil until edges are well-browned.

MANAGING INSECTS

- They are susceptible to cabbage worms and aphids, just like other crops in the cabbage/broccoli family.
- While they are young, use floating row covers to protect from cabbage moths. Be sure to bury the edges.
- Aphids don't usually show up until late summer / early autumn. Use forceful spray from a water hose to knock them off the plants.

Next Month:

Things to Do: Order seeds; set up record keeping system

In the Know: Types of seeds

Crop of the Month: Onions