

Vegetable Crop Specialists

VEGETARIAN

March 16, 1955

No. 29

MR. COUNTY AGENT:

THIS IS FOR THE BIRDS....feathered species, that is.

Been wondering about those reports on playing an amplified recording of the alarm cry of the species to frighten birds? Seems some of the strawberry growers would seize on anything of promise to protect berries from robins about now.

CITY VS. COUNTRY BIRDS

R. T. Mitchell, U. S. Wildlife Research Biologist, working cooperatively with our Everglades Station, offers some good comments. Concerning the recordings he writes an inquirer that they have proven more effective against birds roosting in urban areas than those feeding on crops in the field.

Bird banders who have held robins in their hands know that the cry emitted by both adults and young, especially the young, often attracts numbers of excited robins and birds of other species to the immediate vicinity....like humans congregate at the scene of a fire or accident. Therefore, Mr. Mitchell says, it's unlikely that this frightening method is applicable to robins.

FIRECRACKERS, ETC.?

The rope-firecracker technique, described in Everglades Station Mimeo Report 54-2, may be useful in protecting sweet corn from blackbirds, but it is much less effective against robins and other species such as mockingbirds and catbirds that attack small fruit. Robins are inclined to react individually rather than as a flock even when large numbers are feeding together, and they are not as wary of man and his contraptions.

Guess we're still stuck with contraptions....scarecrows, celluloid windmills, spiroylene twirlers, strings, wires, nettings, firecrackers, shotguns, and what have you....none of them consistently effective in large plantings....until something better comes along.

So....if someone is all fired up over these "scare" recordings for robins, you may want to suggest he do a little whistling off-key....same results, and cheaper.

T O M A T O F I E L D D A Y . . Homestead, Sub-Tropical Station, Highlands Farm
9:30-11:30 AM Thursday, March 24, 1955

DOES SOIL FERTILITY INFLUENCE NEMATODE POPULATIONS?

Read a reliable account the other day saying it's likely all crop plants can be attacked by some parasitic nematodes....probably most weeds and wild plants, too. Why not?....several thousands of species of nematodes are known.

So, we think you'll appreciate being reminded that there is interest here in Florida in such an everyday question as that above, in addition to many others of a basic and practical nature among other Station and USDA researchers.

This particular reminder is a cooperative study between the Central Florida and Main stations, and follows interest in preliminary reports from elsewhere that as potassium increased in plant tissue, so increased the root knot population.

Dr. Phil Westgate and Joe Good are leaving off fumigants and checking the population of the awl and stubby root nematodes in the rooting zone for any influences from low through high rates of fertilizers. To date they've checked a spring crop of sweet corn and a winter crop of celery; the plots currently will go into a spring crop of sweet corn. Wisely, conclusions are not in order so far; they'll be sound contributions if and when offered.

IN PRINT ELSEWHERE....time to read lately?

GEORGIA: Speaking of keeping your eyes peeled we note a bulletin (285) discusses watermelon rinds in food products. Remember how the inquiries on new crop uses begin to come in when the price gets low? You might want to get one for advance reference. Among about everything related, it shows how mechanical means were adapted for peeling and shaping 40 to 50 melons per hour, with slightly more than half the man-hours of labor usually taken.

USDA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH: Want to keep your growers posted on the improved dehydrated potato process recently announced....along with potato-chip bars, puffs, and flakes. Contrary to what ex-GI's might think, that taste was due to ruptured starch cells....or so say the researchers. Did you know it was estimated over half the Hastings potatoes went to chips last year?

SOUTHERN COOPERATIVE SERIES: We're all for reference bulletins pulling together a lot of data in one place....think many of you would be interested in a new bulletin (36) covering among other topics influence of environment on nutritive value of plants. It's detailed, but think you'd have some use for it right next to your information on composition of Florida grown vegetables.

MAINE: Liked the thought conveyed in a bulletin (533) titled "Fewer Applications of DDT with Proper Timing Produce Equal Yields of Potatoes at Less Cost." If they can back it up, we'd say that one's tied up in a neat package for an Extension approach to their growers.

ANOTHER STATE: Ever been concerned that customary handling and cooling methods--developed for wooden containers--might be unsatisfactory when applied to different type containers? This can be an item as new packages are introduced, among lots of other important considerations. Glad to see a release from California (no big letters, please) showing they're studying this....great strides are being taken in the container industry.

MISSISSIPPI: Let's get back to the South! We hear of some forward steps over there in a program for blackrot resistance in cabbage. They say despite recommended control measures a high degree of resistance would be desirable. Ditto for us. It claimed resistance has been bred into some of their commercial cabbages but selecting for desirable, resistant types remains to be accomplished.

POTATO LABORATORY FIELD DAY....some preliminary notes from Hastings, March 15th.

POTATOES

Possibilities of Resistance to Corky Ringspot? Several selections and varieties were not affected with the disorder in previous tests; may be immune or may have just missed getting it. Merrimack and Plymouth (73-10) are among those which have produced good yields and, if immune, may prove suitable for commercial production. Checking other approaches to problem: effect of foliar sprays of B, Ca, Cu, Fe, Mn, Mo and nitrate-N in area affected last year; vermiculite underneath seed piece; comparing tubers produced from healthy and corky ringspot affected seed pieces.

Chlorine and Specific Gravity: Reported elsewhere that high specific gravity is associated with high yield of chips; however, several factors may influence specific gravity. Tests are being repeated to follow up on results showing increasing chlorine percentage in fertilizer from 1.5 to 8.0 resulted in a consistent reduction in specific gravity but had no consistent effect on yields. Side-dressing with 10-0-10 mixture carrying potash derived from muriate produced no additional effect on either yield or specific gravity. Tentative recommendations were that not more than one-half the potash be derived from muriate of potash.

Size and Spacing Whole and Cut Seed: In earlier tests highest returns were obtained from planting 2 ounce seed 8 inches apart in the row....2,460 pounds of seed per acre. Same results with whole and cut seed when both were of equal size and planted at same spacing. New study initiated to determine if higher percentage of US 1B potatoes can be grown into US 1A by applying more fertilizer and properly irrigating and draining the field in wet or dry weather.

Wireworm Control: Aldrin and heptachlor at 2 lbs. actual per acre controlled equally well in 1954 tests. One application of aldrin or heptachlor at 3 lbs. actual per acre controlled for two successive seasons.

Other Research Included: Checking effects of 2,4-D spray on set and color of skin; following several rates of dolomite, pH at various soil depths being determined to follow reaction changes in root zone due to rainfall and crop growth; plots at different soil moisture levels divided to include several times of fertilizer and side-dressing applications and two seeding rates; soil moisture, drainage, soluble and insoluble fertilizers, and yields being compared in flat and crowned beds; yields, percentage scabbed tubers and soil pH in non-limed and limed plots compared; freshly cut seed pieces treated with captan dusts and untreated seed being compared for stands and yields; named varieties and USDA selections in yield tests; residue studies with demeton; mechanical harvesting and importance of good handling. (See Mo below.)

CABBAGE AND CAULIFLOWER

Varieties: Badger Market cabbage, yellows resistant early type, on recommended list for trial plantings. Fertilizers: attempting to determine if application should be before or after transplanting cauliflower. Insecticides: cabbage seedlings indicate retarding of growth by some insecticides, and by some additives in formulations; comparing several conventional-type and systemics for aphid control; residue studies with diazinon and DDT.

MOLYBDENUM

Response to spraying molybdenum and effect on plant tissue nitrate-N levels in limed and non-limed plots being checked on potatoes, cauliflower, beets, mustard, peas, rutabagas, spinach, turnip, beans, peppers, squash and tomatoes.

Sincerely,



F. S. Jamison

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