

PESTS.

These ideas will hopefully be a benefit for our newer members. Although I'm learning new things all the time. Prevention is always better than cure. So before planting your crops use these strategies in your plans to help increase your yield and reduce pests.

CROP ROTATION ; probably the most important strategy. If possible try to use a 4 year cycle, for each bed with a different start. This may be difficult on smaller plots. Although not the only cycle this is a good starting point

Brassicas (greens) – Potatoes / roots – Alliums (onion family) – Legumes (peas, beans)

Other crops like salad leaves/ fruits , squashes, sweetcorn can be grown anywhere in the cycle.

Try to avoid planting root vegetables after alliums as some onion pests can be a problem with root veg.

CROSS INFESTATION : some pests can remain for some years. Cysts of wireworm/eelworm up to 8 years.

To avoid infecting other beds :

Never use infected plants in compost heaps. Destroy by burning

Wash tools in disinfectant after use before using in another bed. I have a bowl of diluted Jeyes fluid which I keep and use throughout the year. A quick wash with an old brush takes no time. PS. Do not use Jeyes fluid to disinfect the soil. It kills good as well as bad and is illegal under EU regulations!??

COVERING : covering young plants with good quality 1mm netting or fleece in the spring is well worth the investment. Avoid buying cheap fleece. In my experience it never lasts long and rips easily in the wind. Making a wooden batten frame to hold the netting (stapled) is even better.

Many substances can be bought to cure problems these are some cheaper ideas that have worked for me.

Idea	What to do	Its effect
Companion planting	Plant pot marigolds (candula) or herbs particular basil between brassicas and legumes	Reduces aphids particularly blackfly. Flowers attract pest eating insects like hoverflies
Chrysanthemums	Mulch Flowers (+leaves) and dilute to make insecticide spray. Plant around asparagus	Contains Pyrethrin a good general insecticide. It's the only thing that controls asparagus beetle
Sacrificial planting	Plant nasturtiums. Cut old potatoes in half attach to a stick bury between rows of seed potatoes 10cm deep 50cm apart	Aphids love them so aphids particularly blackfly go to them rather than to your veg Attracts wireworm away from your potatoes. Check regularly and kill any wireworm present. (The stick shows where you put the potato.)
Resistant varieties	research information about pest resistant varieties. Generally F1 varieties are better but can be more expensive. Potato variety database is very good. http://varieties.ahdb.org.uk/	Common ones I use Resistaflly – carrot fly Mira sarpo (main)– potato- blight Pentland (1 st /2 nd) – potato- cyst eelworm Gladiator – parsnip- canker
Tree spraying	Commercial tree washes are very expensive. Mix separately equal quantities of lime and copper sulphate to water. 20gr/ litre. Mix thoroughly in a sprayer. WEAR GLOVES Spray fruit trees after leaf drop (Oct) and just before leaf bud (Feb). On a dry windless day. Copper sulphate. Buy online ~ £10/kg	Prevents all fungal infections on fruit trees and fruit bushes. Leaf curl on peach trees. Since using I have had much healthier yields of cherries, redcurrants and plums. This is a homemade version of Bordeaux mixture. A lot cheaper than commercial tree wash.

I hope this is helpful to some of you.

Good digging

Richard Collins (plot 4)