**Vegetable Tricks**

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Some vegetables planted in the spring garden, including potatoes, sweet corn and summer squash, produce more successfully if you know a few tricks used by other gardeners.

Potatoes can be planted with special seed potatoes or supermarket potatoes that have sprouted. Cut them into pieces at least 1 by 2 inches and include one or more sprouts in each piece. Place a piece every 18 inches in a 1-foot deep trench in the garden. Cover the pieces with 3 inches of soil and then add more soil every week as the plant emerges from the soil. Always leave the growing part out of the soil. Fill the trench and hill up the plants if you have the soil available.

Begin harvesting potatoes when blooms appear on the plants. All potatoes can be dug up when the tops die and brown.

The key to successful sweet corn production is pollination and that can be a problem in a small planting. To improve pollination, plant the sweet corn in compact arrangements such as short rows that are 1 foot apart with plants 18 inches apart in the row. A circle planting also works.

Summer squash is another vegetable to plant by seed or transplant in March. Summer squash varieties include both vines and bush types. The bush types produce less squash but also require less space.

Sweet corn is bothered by corn ear worms but summer squash has an even bigger issue with squash vine borers. The moths lay eggs on the developing plant and the eggs quickly hatch to release the larva to bore into the stems. At some point in early summer, the stems will either disintegrate or at best they may be unable to support fruit production.

To slow down infestation by the borers, apply Sevin to the growing point of the squash every week. Organic gardeners can try the same strategy with Spinosad.

**Gardening Tasks**

It is time to plant some of the spring vegetables. There is a brief window of time left to plant the cool weather vegetables such as carrots, radishes, lettuce, beets, English peas, turnips and potatoes by seed. Place onion plants in the garden. March is also the month to plant green beans, summer squash and sweet corn.

Remember that paperwhite, daffodil, iris and other naturalized bulbs must have their foliage decline to brown naturally before it is trimmed off if the bulbs are going to be replenished for next year’s bloom.

There is still time to apply Amaze, Crabgrass Preventer, or XL to prevent sand burs next summer. It must also be applied about May 15.

Spray fruit trees every week to produce blemish-free fruit. Use Captan for fungus and carbaryl or malathion for insects. Organic gardeners can try neem oil and Spinosad.