

# gardening

## Garden for cattle

By Pat Leuchtman  
leisure Columnist

On a swath of rich flatland along the river in South Deerfield, the Cooperative Extension Service has what might be considered an open air laboratory. I met with Dr. Stephen Herbert, Extension agronomist, while test plots of soybeans and corn were being harvested.

Dr. Herbert was in charge and he explained that this particular experiment called for the intercropping of soybeans and corn to produce a high protein silage with a more digestible fiber content.

Corn was planted with the soybeans in various patterns. For instance, one plot might have a row of corn followed by three rows of soy-

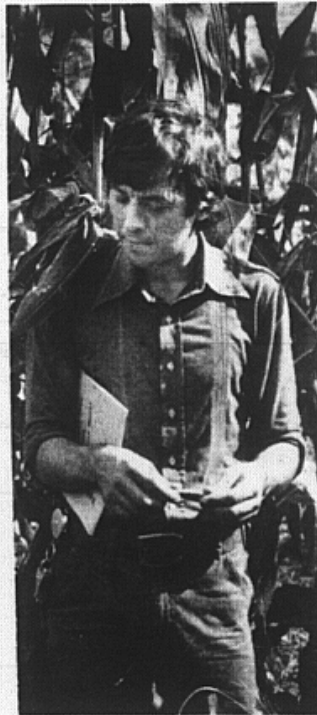


Photo by Betsy Reilly

Dr. Stephen Herbert amongst his soybean and corn.

beans, while another plot would have corn and soybeans growing in the same row. There were seven variations, in plots measuring about 25 by 18 feet.

Ideally, the corn and soybeans

should reach maturity and be ready for harvest at the same time so different varieties of soybeans were grown with only one variety of corn.

To control some of the other variables, all the test plots are fertilized in exactly the same manner and treated with equal amounts of herbicides.

This experiment was very carefully designed and it was impressive to see the care and precision used in carrying it out. Samples of the harvest are taken from each test plot, numbered, then dried and analyzed. The results of all the plots are tabulated and compared.

The aim of this experiment was to find a silage mixture that would provide high grade protein and digestibility so that a farmer could cut his

I was particularly interested in an ongoing experiment concerning small grain crop rotation and the use of various amounts of manure. I personally find the use of crop rotation and manures as a means of maintaining soil fertility reasonable and desirable, so I was glad to see that the Extension Service was doing experiments in this area as well as in the area of chemical agriculture.

Dr. Herbert said that the service always tries to be responsive to the needs of farmers and that there was a growing concern among Massachusetts farmers about the rising cost of chemical fertilizers.

He told me that Dr. Malcolm Hill, regional dairy specialist, has been involved with experiments concerning the safety and efficiency of using sludge created by sewage treatment plants on agricultural land. If the use of sludge becomes more common and widespread, it would solve the problem of sludge disposal and it would aid the farmer who is looking for a way to fertilize his soil without resorting to petroleum-based fertilizers which are becoming more and more expensive.

The Extension Service does studies and research on subjects that are of importance to the dairy industry and to commercial vegetable growers, but also to the home gardener.

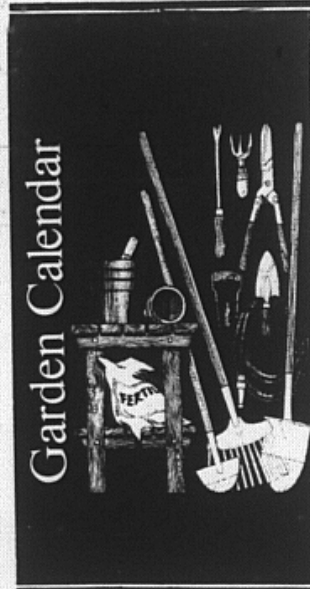
The following information is provided by the Franklin County Extension Service:

### Now is the time to:

- Collect cones, acorns and seed pods for holiday decorations.
- Clean up your vegetable garden to prevent insect and diseases from overwintering (if you haven't already).
- Screen tender plants from winter winds.
- Fertilize houseplants.

### Note:

- If weather is dry, water your evergreens before the ground freezes solid.
- Gardens and lawns can still be limed.
- If you are planning on having a live Christmas tree this year, a hole should be dug now where it will be planted.




costs on expensive feed supplements for his cattle. The ease with which he could bring in the harvest was also considered an important factor.

The dairy industry is important in Massachusetts and the results of the Extension Service's experiments with weed control, fertilization and plant densities are made available to the industry through the Dairy Digest, a monthly publication prepared by the Agricultural and Veterinary Department, the Agricultural Engineering Department and the Soil Science Department. This magazine has subscribers all across the U.S. and in several foreign countries.

Even if you are not interested in a vegetable garden, the service can provide you with information about flowers and about landscaping.

When we called Tina Smith, home horticulturalist at the Extension Service, for information about how to control the Japanese beetles that are killing our roses, we rarely give thought to the larger organization and the information it amasses and makes available to all of us.

During the winter I will be writing more about the Extension Service and the results of some of its testing with vegetables. It is a valuable service and should be recognized and appreciated.



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