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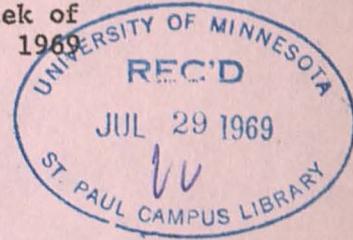
YARD 'N' GARDEN



EXTENSION
HORTICULTURISTS

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HARVESTING APPLES AND PEARS

It's important to pick apples and pears at the proper stage of maturity so they maintain dessert quality or storage capacity. If picked prematurely, they're likely to be small, poorly colored, sour, tough, off-flavor and subject to functional diseases such as bitter pit. On the other hand, overripe fruit may develop water core and internal breakdown.

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Usually there's a period of about 5 to 20 days during which apples can be picked with reasonable assurance that they will be free from storage disorders and develop good dessert quality. Two methods can be used to determine the proper time to pick.

1. Ease of separation of fruit. When an apple is ready to pick, it can be separated from the branch without breaking the stem by lifting it with or without a slight rotating movement.

2. Change in undercolor. With most apple varieties, the time to pick is when the undercolor changes from a leaf green to a lighter shade and eventually to a yellowish color.

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Pears are unlike apples since they attain highest quality when harvested in a slightly green stage and allowed to ripen in a cool basement. Pears left on the tree too long show core breakdown later. Pears don't keep for long periods, so eat or can them when they are ready.

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