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For A Growing Minnesota

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Check Corn Hybrids for Lodging

Watch for excessive lodging in corn hybrids this fall. Herbert Johnson, plant pathologist at the University of Minnesota, says hybrids with severe faults like excessive lodging should be eliminated. Inspect demonstration plots of many hybrids to select new ones to add next year. In addition to susceptible hybrids, excessively high populations, low potash and soil insect injury can cause lodging. Harvesting the crop as early as possible will reduce chances of losses. For more information, ask your county extension agent for a copy of Plant Pathology Fact Sheet No. 3, entitled, "Stalk Rot and Lodging of Corn."

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Stem Blackening in Soybeans

A dark or black color of soybean stems and pods may result from at least two causes, but neither results in serious problems. Herbert Johnson, plant pathologist at the University of Minnesota, says some soybean varieties have a dark pigment that develops late in the season, but this is normal and causes no trouble. It's a smooth, uniform coloring.

The other cause of stem blackening is a fungus disease called "Pod and Stem Blight." In this case, the dark color results from a series of small, black, circular bodies that occur in lines on the stems. This is not a serious disease, although it's often conspicuous late in the season.

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Standing Corn Gives Good Snow Protection

Leaving a few rows of standing corn this fall will give you an inexpensive snow catch. John Neetzel, forestry specialist at the University of Minnesota, suggests leaving a few rows of corn standing along long driveways and other places where you need protection against blowing snow. The standing corn gives you better and more economical protection than a slat snow fence, and provides food and protection for wildlife at the same time. You can pick corn left for a snow catch by hand this fall, or use the picker next spring.

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Lime Needs Time to Act

Don't wait until your new seeding is planted next spring before applying lime on alfalfa fields. Curtis Overdahl, soils specialist at the University of Minnesota, says spring surface applications won't benefit the immediate crop. Overdahl says changing an acid soil to one neutral enough for alfalfa takes at least six months, even when lime is well mixed with surface soil.

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Have a Safe Harvest Season

There are two requirements for a safe harvest season. First, your equipment must be in good repair and second, you must be in good shape. If you're working from daylight to dark, you'll probably be plagued with fatigue during the entire harvest season. And when you're tired, you aren't alert. Take a mid-morning and mid-afternoon coffee break to pick you up. Fifty percent of the harvest accidents happen after four o'clock in the afternoon. The time lost during a coffee break will be more than made up by your increased efficiency -- plus the possibility of avoiding an accident.

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The Correct Width Curtains

To look well, curtains and draperies must be wide enough to hang in soft, graceful folds. When you're buying or sewing new curtains, plan for fabric width twice to three times as wide as the window or window and wall area to be covered. When using very soft and sheer fabrics, you may need up to three or more times the width of the window. Draw draperies should be two and one half times as wide as the window or window and wall area to be covered. Never buy skimpy draperies or curtains; it's better to have them fuller than you need.

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Preparing Protein Foods

Is the cheese on your cheeseburgers always dry and stringy? And are the eggs you serve for breakfast always tough?

Tough and dry eggs, meat and cheese are often results of efforts to speed cooking by using high temperatures. Protein is an important nutrient in all meats, eggs, milk and cheese. Protein coagulates or becomes firm when heated. At very high temperatures, protein becomes firm too rapidly and overcooking results, leaving a tough product.

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Don't Overcook Vegetables

Do your fresh vegetables lose their bright color when you cook them? If they do, you're probably overcooking them.

For best color, texture, flavor, and food value, cook vegetables the shortest possible time, suggests Grace Brill, extension nutritionist at the University of Minnesota.

Air, heat and water cause losses of nutrients when cooking vegetables.

To prevent the loss of nutrients by air, keep most foods covered while cooking.

Some nutrients, especially vitamin C, are destroyed by heat. So, cook vegetables the shortest possible time to make them attractive and nutritious.

Minerals and some vitamins are dissolved in water. Use the smallest amount of water possible to cook vegetables to the desired stage.