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## NEWSLETTER

JULY 2010

### The great white cabbage butterfly?

The great white cabbage butterfly (*Pieris brassicae*) is a new to New Zealand organism that is an unwanted pest in New Zealand. It is a distinctive large white butterfly which is often found on cabbages. The butterfly is regarded overseas as a serious pest of brassica crops in several countries. Brassica crops include: cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, rape, swedes and turnips. *Pieris brassicae* will feed on a range of host plants. These host plants are readily found in New Zealand, within home gardens, commercial gardens and as weeds such as nasturtium, wild radish, wall flowers and Alyssum. The level of damage is difficult to predict for a new species in a country and will depend on population build up, host availability, competitors and natural enemies.

**Caterpillars:** Newly emerged caterpillars are yellow with shiny black heads. After the first moult the colour changes to yellowish-green with yellow lines running the length of the body. Fully grown caterpillars are 45mm long, olive green with a yellow line along the top of the body. Distinguishing features of the mature caterpillar are that the body is covered in splotchy black dots and patches with short black hair over the whole body. The head is bluish-grey with black patches.



### Selenium Toxicity

The case in the news of the thoroughbred horses suffering from chronic selenium poisoning has raised several important points concerning the proper administration of this essential trace mineral. Like a lot of essential nutrients, a small amount does a lot of good but it doesn't mean that more will do more good. Horses require between 1-3mg of selenium on a daily basis. Supplementation should not be by a slap-dash approach.

Even 2-3 times the required daily amount over a long period of time, will cause chronic selenium poisoning. The changes seen in the feet can cause a lameness similar to that seen with laminitis. Acute poisoning symptoms involve most of the body systems and death usually results.

Vetpro's *Selenium K* is a powdered form of selenium. It is safer and more convenient to use a daily dose of organic or chelated Selenium as the 15gram daily dose is exactly one scoop. Using Selenium in the liquid form, using 5mg per ml concentration, you have to feed a daily dose of only 0.33ml, which requires very careful measurement. Any dose higher than required can cause a problem.



### ALSO AVAILABLE POTATO FERTILISER



### SEED POTATOES NOW IN STORE

***Rocket, Liseta, Jersey Bennes, Cliffs Kidney, Swift, Maris Anchor, Heather, Karaka, Nadine, Agria, Highlander, Allura, Purple Heart, Ilam Hardy***  
 Minimum one potato



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or

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# Garden Centre

## Tasks for July

- Prepare flower beds with compost and a general fertiliser
- Prune hydrangeas and roses
- Regularly trim conifer hedges from this month on
- Build up the vegetable beds with compost
- Major rose pruning is usually done in July, but if your area is subject to late frosts, postpone pruning until frosts has passed.

**Available in store**



**TOTAL TROPICAL Gourmet Flake Blend** is a freshwater flake food for all tropical fish

**TOTAL GOLDFISH Gourmet Flake Blend** is a flake food for all varieties of goldfish



## Available in Store - *Purple Heart Potato*



*Purple Heart* has an oval long shaped tuber with deep purple skin and purple toned flesh. It is classified as an Early Main crop with a growth period of 80-90 days. It is great for salads and to microwave.

*Purple Heart* is tasty and the talk at your dinner table.

## How will the tomato/potato psyllid/ Liberibacter affect my plants?

**On tomato** the symptoms are the yellowing and stunting of the growing tip and a cupping or curling of the leaves. Many lowers may fall off the trusses and fruit may be small and mis-shapen.

**On potato**, the disease causes stunting and yellowing of the growing tip, and the edges of the curled leaves often have a pink blush and plants

collapse prematurely. Plants that are infected at an early stage develop numerous small tubers. When fried they show dark zebra chip stripes, which may also be seen in fresh tubers and when boiled they are mushy with an earthy taste. Once the psyllid is established on the potato crop it is too late to affect control. By the time the symptoms are evident it is certainly too late. No NZ research has yet been done on this pest and none of the pesticides available to home gardeners that are likely to give control, are registered and approved for use on potatoes. Until more information is available, recommendations are: Where the pest has never occurred before - keep a close watch for the adult or small 1-3mm 'limpet' like insects on the undersides of the potato leaves. At the very first sign begin a spray programme. Where the pest has occurred previously - begin a spray programme 2-3 weeks after the potato tops emerge. It is important to begin early and carry out regular spraying through the season to stop the psyllid from establishing. If it establishes and

begins feeding, it will have already injected the toxin into the plant and spraying at that stage may control the psyllid but will not save the potatoes.

**Spraying should commence 2-3 weeks after emergence of the potato tops and be carried out at 2 weekly intervals initially and then 3 weekly until harvest.**

