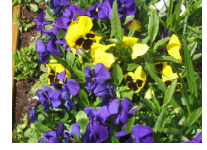


# The DILETTANTE GARDENER<sup>®</sup>

July 2010 Supplement  
and incorporating  
The Dilettante Cook



## GARDENERS BEWARE!

'One good turn deserves another,' is a well known old adage but sometimes it is not always 100% correct. Unfortunately this has recently proved to be the case in our locale. Since many years one kindly farmer provided cow dung for gardeners free of charge.

That practice was continued this spring and numerous people with horticultural interests secured quantities of manure, some old and some fresh dung was distributed to thankful but unsuspecting vegetable, fruit and flower growers, including your editor.

Some recipients realised early on that all was not well with their emerging crops, particularly potato growers. However it was not until the end of last week (10th July) that someone mentioned crops growing in a deformed manner in a garden on Josh Street, Invergordon to this writer that it was investigated. When I took a close look at the crop I was saddened by what was on show. The gardener obviously was meticulous in his preparation as each drill was the exact replica of its neighbours with few weeds evident. But the spuds exhibited grotesquely shaped shaws with practically no leaf growth what so ever.

I was informed that there were about seven gardens affected in the town by the same blight. Another adage goes something like, 'There's none so blind as those who don't want to see'.

Despite being aware of stunted and grotesque growth in my rose bushes and bedding plants I put it down to 'overfeeding'. How wrong can a fellow get? For I too was using dung from the same source and feeding all my vegetables, strawberries

and fruit bearing bushes with it in a liquid form into the bargain.

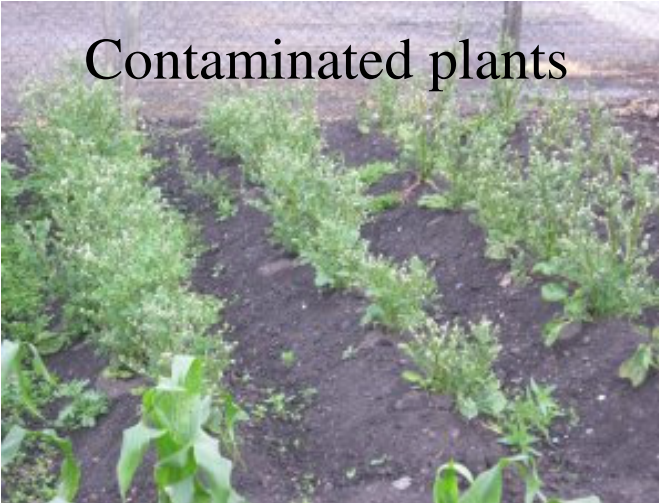
Apparently farmers use a pesticide to kill dockans and other weeds which grow in their grazing parks. When the weeds die down animals are reintroduced into the parks and are able to eat, and ingest, any residual pesticide during their foraging. The pesticide then passes through the animals and 'comes out the other end' apparently with no harmful affects to the bovines.

The contaminated dung now is said, when used on gardens to have adverse effects, especially on potatoes and their near relations tomatoes. Well we at Seacrest have found that the dung bearing the pesticide also has adverse effects on other crops.

As Morag and I have crops growing early in our Polytunnel and in the RBG we were well advanced with everything, to such an extent that we were able to eat, strawberries, potatoes, cabbage, lettuce, turnip, green peas, beetroot and radish for the past five weeks or so, all fed by the dung in liquid form. As soon as we realised the potential threat that the contaminated dung crop produce posed to our personal health, I contacted the Highland Council's Environmental Health Officer and got her to take samples of various vegetables and of the dung in question for laboratory testing.

Naturally as soon as we realised that we had been using contaminated manure we stopped eating our own produce. Now we can only wait and hope that the pesticide in question is harmless to humans. If the pesticide used is commonplace then all gardeners should be aware of the possible consequences of using farmyard manure in their gardens.

Contaminated plants



Healthy plants



**We welcome comments and queries from our readers, which we will endeavour to respond to through this publication. Your anonymity is guaranteed, and we look forward to hearing from you via email to [dilettantgardener@gmail.com](mailto:dilettantgardener@gmail.com)**

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