

Fall Greenhouse Fix-up Tips

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The days are getting shorter and cooler, preparing us for fall and winter. Is your production plant (greenhouse) ready to perform flawlessly? Read the article on furnace tune-ups in this issue for additional tips.

Some other fix-up reminders include:

1. Replace poly film if it is discolored, dirty or of questionable age. It is easier and more comfortable to replace film in warm weather than to make an emergency repair on a cold, blustery night. Why gamble with a crop needlessly for lack of a strong covering? Perhaps this is the year to consider replacing the gable ends with a rigid sheeting material or glazing the entire structure?

2. Are the squirrel cage fans used to inflate the double poly houses bringing in outside (less humid) air? Why have excessive condensate between the poly layers block the limited fall/winter light? Check the fans for free movement and remove any obstructions (spider webs, dirt, dust, etc.).
3. Are the intake and exhaust louvers opening freely and sealing or closing tightly? Perhaps the louvers need adjustment, lubrication or replacement. Expensive heat can be lost and cold drafts can cause uneven plant growth.
4. Do the greenhouse doors fit tightly, do you need to install insulation around the edges or should you install double doors to reduce heat loss?
5. Calibrate your thermostats and replace those units which are too far off. Should you consider installing aspirated thermostats?
6. Are all your horizontal air flow (HAF) fans operating correctly and are they properly "angled?" If you do not have HAF, this may be the year to install it. HAF will eliminate cold spots in greenhouses.
7. Energy costs (fuel and electricity) will apparently cost more in the foreseeable future. Have you incorporated all possible energy conservation practices into the greenhouse(s)? Is it possible to retrofit an energy shade curtain into your house(s)? Can an insulation board be installed around the perimeter of your houses or on the north wall to conserve heat?
8. Keep bench crops free of overhead shade (hanging baskets).

