USING ROW COVER

Row cover is a lightweight blanket made of spun bonded polypropylene (nonwoven fabric) that allows sunlight, rain, and air to pass through to plants. Row cover is used to protect plants from harsh weather conditions, pests and to extend the growing season.

HOW TO USE ROW COVER

- Lay row cover over the plants you wish to protect with at least 6 inches of slack on both sides and either end of the piece to allow for seals or weights.
- Seal the edges of the row cover by covering them with soil or using weights such as grocery bags filled with soil. For delicate plants, use a wire frame or plastic hoops to hold the row cover above plants.
- For fruiting crops (plants that need insect pollination), remove the cover when plants are flowering.
- To weed under the cover, simply open from one side and pull back the fabric. After weeding secure the fabric again.
- Remove the cover weekly to water plantings. Although some water can penetrate the fabric it is advised to remove it to ensure a thorough watering.
- Row cover tears easily. Secure edges to prevent flapping around, which could cause tears. Also avoid weighing down cover with sharp edged bricks or stones.

ROW COVER FOR PEST PREVENTION

Row cover works well for protecting plants from some insect pests including: flea beetle, cabbage loopers, and cucumber beetles. Row cover should be used to prevent pests from attacking plants but is not necessary unless a pest problem has been identified. For best results install row cover at the time of planting. When using row cover for a flea beetle problem install the cover loosely over the plants allowing the wind to flap the fabric. The flapping fabric disturbs the beetles who will jump off of the plants if there is a lot of movement.

Warning! Once row cover is installed, routinely check that pests haven't found their way inside. If this happens it will accelerate your pest problem as they have protection from their natural enemies! If this happens remove the cover.

ROW COVER

The Garden Resource Program has a limited supply of row cover, which are available for active participants. If you would like to find out more about row cover availability call our office at 313-757-2635.

ROW COVER FOR SEASON EXTENSION

Using row cover is an inexpensive way to extend the growing season. The cover acts as a layer of protection from frost, freezing temperatures and harsh winds allowing earlier planting in the spring and later harvest in the fall. The cover gives about 4 degrees of protection, for example if it were 28 degrees outside it would be 32 degrees under the cover. Water & light will penetrate cover. It is recommended to remove cover during the day so that your plants will benefit from much needed light, especially in the fall as daylight shortens. Save your covers for plants that are sensitive to frost. The following plants do not need to be covered; broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, brussels sprouts, turnip, kale, spinach, rutabaga, carrots and any other cold hardy plants. They'll take a light frost. Root vegetables usually taste better after being chilled by frost.

Warning! In fall, if temp is over 60°F pull away during the day or too much heat will be trapped. Replace the cover in late afternoon to trap the heat inside.

This Resource Guide is prepared by Keep Growing Detroit for participants in the Garden Resource Program. For more info please contact 313-757-2635, keepgrowingdetroit@gmail.com or visit our website at WWW.DETROITAGRICULTURE.NET