

The Use of ASPRIN

Martha McBurney, the master gardener in charge of the demonstration vegetable garden at the University of Rhode Island, had a bee in her bonnet. After reading up on the 'Systematic Acquired Resistance' (SAR) in plants, which helps boost their immune system, she became convinced that aspirin would render their immune system even stronger and keep them healthier. Although richly laughed at, last summer she tested 'aspirin water' on a variety of plants.

How much and how often?

The dosage Martha arrived at after numerous experiments was 1.5 aspirin tablets to two gallons of water (one aspirin tablet to 6ltrs). Important note: The tablets should be the uncoated type. (Solprin - 96 tablets \$3.40). She used a wetting agent to help the aspirin water stick to the leaves.

Finally, Martha devised a schedule of spraying once every three weeks, no matter the type of plant. The summer when Martha first started testing aspirin water was not the best, weather wise. It was cool, rainy and damp. Yet, by the end of the season, the plants in the raised beds on which the aspirin had been used looked like they had been on steroids. They were huge and green and insect free. Martha now recommends the use of aspirin on all types of plants, whether it be oats to orchids

Martha's experience caused scientists at the University of Arizona and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to start studying how salicylic acid (main component in aspirin) induces plants into releasing their natural defences against harmful fungi, bacteria and viruses. They envision it as a commercially viable alternative to synthetic pesticides.