AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

From the Ground Up

BATH COUNTY AGRICULTURAL NEWSLETTER

University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

Cooperative Extension Service
Bath County
2914 E. Hwy 60
Owingsville, KY 40360
(606)674-6121
Fax: (606)674-6687
Bath.ca.uky.edu
Like us on FACEBOOK
Bath County Agriculture

MARCH 2017

UPCOMING MEETINGS/DATES TO REMEMBER:

- WIC/SFMNP PRODUCER TRAINING MARCH 20 at 6:00 p.m. – Bath County Ag Center
- Opening day of Bath County Farmers Market: June 16, 2017
- Opening day of the Bath County Produce Auction: TBA
- Bath County Agricultural Fair dates: July 5-8, 2017

A NOTE FROM THE AG AGENT:

I would like to take just a moment to introduce myself.

My name is Rob Amburgey and I am serving as your new Bath County Ag agent. My first day on the job was February 8th.

I originate from Montgomery County, but I have served the last 26 years as a county agent in Boyle and Jessamine Counties.

I look forward to meeting and working with each of you and I hope if you are around, that you would stop by the extension office and introduce yourself. I will be spending a large part of my time this spring getting to know the people and the area of Bath County and I look forward to meeting as many folks as I can early on.

If you have any concerns related to agriculture, horticulture, gardening, bugs, weeds or any other troublesome pest, give me a call and we will try to help you solve it.

FORCING BRANCHES OF WOODY PLANTS INTO FLOWER

Rick Durham –Extension Horticulture Specialist

Winter can be dreary at times. A few branches of flowers from the garden would give us hope that spring is just around the corner. Why not force some branches from spring-flowering trees and shrubs into flower early? Some plants well suited to forcing include forsythia, red maple, spirea, and dogwood. Others include apples, pears and peaches, as well as crabapples and ornamental pears.

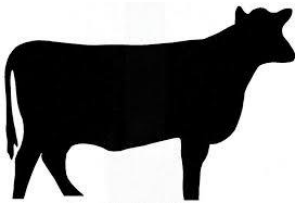
Follow good pruning practices when you remove branches. Prune back to an outward facing bud or remove branches entirely by cutting back to a natural branch point. A first priority for pruning would be branches that appear diseased, crowded, or growing downward. Once you have brought the branches indoors, make a fresh slanted cut at the base of the branch just before you add it to a vase. Place the branches into slightly warm water containing a floral preservative. You can make your own preservative solution with 2 cups lemon-lime soda, 2

cups water, and ½ teaspoon chlorine bleach. Keep the branches in a cool (60-65F) area, away from direct light, and change the solution every 4 or 5 days. Once flower color is evident the branches can be moved to a well-lit room and arranged to suit the occasion.

LIVESTOCK

Questions to Consider When Planning for Pasture Fly Control – 2017

By Lee Townsend



The price break on early orders is a big incentive to make control purchases well before the pest season begins. Here are a few things to consider as you weight the options and make your decisions on face fly and horn fly control:

What is your key pest? A key pest is one that is there every year, and when it is bad, causes significant losses in expense, management time, and effort. In Kentucky it is usually either the face fly, and associated pink eye, or the horn fly. Since face flies and horn flies are around every herd, the one that is consistently the greater problem is the one to build the program around. While most fly control products and approaches are labeled for both pests, there are some differences in effectiveness. The face fly is the more challenging pest because it spends very little time on animals, mostly on the hard-to-treat face where it feeds on tears, saliva, and mucus. In contrast, blood-feeding horn flies spend most all of their time on the more easily treated sides and back of cattle. Select the control strategy that puts the protection where it is needed.

What are your grazing practices and pasture set-up? If cattle are in pastures with controlled access to water and mineral, then forced-used or self-treatment options like dust bags, back rubbers, or automatic spray devices can be economical and effective. Careful hanging of dust bags or suspending fly-flips or other supplemental treatment devices to ensure treatment of the head and face can give very good face fly and horn fly control. Adjusting the nozzles on automatic sprayers will direct the liquid to the target most effectively. These self-application systems require some maintenance and their insecticide dispensers have to be checked and refilled as needed.

If animals are moved regularly in a rotational grazing program, then fixed application stations may be impractical. Insecticidal ear tags provide a portable fly control system that moves with the animal. Tags tend to give very good horn fly control and a reduction in face fly numbers per head. Spray or pour-on insecticides may be practical and very economical for horn fly control if there is a means of gathering up and confining / handling animals about once a month during the fly season.

What was your 2016 fly control program and how did it work? The "How did it work?" part can be difficult to judge, especially with the extra rainfall of early 2016. Wet conditions are good for fly breeding since the maggots develop in moist manure. Higher face fly and horn fly populations this past summer may be due more to weather conditions than product performance. However, it is important to consider your long term use patterns, especially if you rely on insecticidal ear tags. Continued use of insecticides from the same chemical family can lead to the development of pest populations that are more difficult to control. If you have been using pyrethroid ear tags for several consecutive years, incorporate insecticides with different modes of action into your program. Tags are available with insecticides having one of several ways of attacking the pest, and there are some combination tags that pair insecticides with different modes of action.

There are many options for pasture fly control. Matching products and application methods best suited for your key pest and herd management practices will help you pick an effective strategy.

LAWN AND TURF

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPRING LAWNS

Although it is still winter, now is a good time to think about your lawn and to begin planning your weed control and seeding activities.

One of the first considerations is annual weed control (crabgrass). In this part of Kentucky we try to apply a pre-emergent to the lawn to prevent the emergence of these pesky weeds. There are a good many products on the market, and most do a satisfactory job when applied between April 1 and April 15.

Broadleaf control is the next item to consider. Dandelions are the most noticeable of our lawn broadleaves, but others include plantain, chickweed, thistle, purple deadnettle, henbit, and a wide range of others. Most products used for broadleaf control contain 2, 4-d salts. When mixed properly, 2, 4-d will not harm the established grass.

In some instances, you may find yourself faced with a more stubborn weed, wild violet for instance. In these instances, a more aggressive approach may be needed. Products containing MCCP, dicamba, triclopyr or clopyralid may be mixed with the 2, 4-d to create a more effective broadleaf control chemical.

The product needed is based on the type of weed or weeds that you are trying to remove from your landscape.

The Bath County extension office can assist you through weed identification and chemical recommendations. This service is free.

At times, we deal with perennial weeds such as Bentgrass, Bermudagrass or Quackgrass. In these cases, a non-selective control program, such as glyphosate (roundup, Kleenup or Knock-out) or glufosinate products (Finale) can be used as a directed spray.

The one consideration that must be made early on is whether you are planning to reseed the area where you are considering treatment.

Most herbicides have some residual activity which can adversely affect grass seed germination (Roundup does not have this problem). In the case with 2, 4-D, the label should be followed regarding time of application and seeding times. The time to wait could be as much as 3 to 4 weeks. The time period after using a pre-emergent for seeding may be much greater. One product, Siduron, which is a pre-emergent, can be applied at the time of seeding new grass, but is better if applied a few days later.

The extension office has a publication, AGR-78 which has a fairly good listing of weeds and products labeled for their control.

For more specific information on home lawn care and maintenance, contact the Bath County Extension Office at 674-6121.

TURF HOLES AND EXCAVATIONS

By Lee Townsend

A variety of holes and excavations, ranging from mole runs to insect and earthworm diggings can show up in turf at this time of year. The large fresh mounds and runs from mole activity are relatively distinct but there smaller holes can be from a variety of different creatures.

Here are some signs that may be seen over the next several weeks:

1) Holes caused by green June beetle grubs are about the diameter of an index finger and may be surrounded by small mounds of loose soil and fecal pellets. These grubs work extensively in soils with high organic matter content. Usually, they remain deep in response to cold temperatures but they can stay active and visit the surface at this time of the year during mild winters. Unlike other white grubs, they come to the surface at night and may crawl long distances (10 ft. or more) on their back. Green June beetle grubs do not feed much on grass roots so their impact is primarily limited to areas immediately around tunnel openings. In extreme cases, grass can be killed, opening up places for weed germination.

2) Earthworm castings are similar in appearance to those left around a tunnel entrance by green June beetles. Brush away the castings and the tunnel entrance should be much smaller, about the diameter of a pencil. Earthworms are favored by food - organic matter, moisture, cool, light to medium-textured soils. They are less active in heavy clay or coarse sandy soils or acidic soils. Earthworm castings can be an annoyance but typically are a sign of a healthy soil.

3) Crayfish chimneys can appear where the water table is near the surface. The tunnels of these nocturnal arthropods can extend more than 3 ft below the surface. Crayfish activity is usually seasonal and will subside. There are no registered pesticide treatments due to the high potential for groundwater contamination. Over the long term, tiling or improvements in drainage may help to reduce crayfish activity but this often is impractical.

FRUIT

MANAGE BLACKBERRY AND RASPBERRY ANTHRACNOSE AND CANE BLIGHT IN EARLY SPRING

By John Hartman

Blackberries, raspberries and black raspberries grown in Kentucky are susceptible to stem cankers caused by fungi. Crop yields are reduced due to cane infections girdling the stems leading to wilting and dieback or due to partial girdling of stems resulting in loss of vigor and reduction in fruit size and quality. Anthracnose and other diseases such as cane blight, spur blight, and Septoria cane and leaf spot may cause similar symptoms. Black raspberries are especially susceptible to anthracnose.

Symptoms. Anthracnose symptoms are most striking on canes but can also occur on leaves, petioles, flower buds, and fruit. In the spring, reddish purple spots appear on young canes. As the disease progresses, the spots enlarge into an oval shape and the tan to gray centers become sunken with purplish raised margins. Diseased tissue extends down into the bark and partly girdles the stem. By late summer or early fall, the diseased tissue often cracks. Within these lesions, spores are produced which are spread by running water, splashing rain, and wind. Canes weakened by anthracnose are more susceptible to winter injury and eventually may die.

On leaves, anthracnose appears as small, irregular, yellowish-white spots. As spots enlarge, they may have a tan center with reddish margins. Spots sometimes drop out, giving a shothole symptom. Fruit infections are not common unless there is a high level of anthracnose in the planting. Infected fruit is typically dry and seedy.

Disease cause and life cycle. Anthracnose is caused by the fungus *Elsinoe veneta* which overwinters on the bark or within lesions on floricanes infected the previous season. In early spring, just as the canes are leafing out, fungal spores are produced on these diseased canes. These spores are blown, rain-splashed, or vectored by insects to young, rapidly growing, succulent shoots where new infections occur. Symptoms appear as small tan lesions in about a week. The primary damage to plants is caused by these early infections. Be aware that highly variable winter and early spring temperatures can caused injury to the stems of some raspberry and blackberry cultivars. These injuries can become points of entry for fungi causing anthracnose and cane cankers.

Apply liquid lime-sulfur or copper hydroxide in late winter/early spring, just as the buds are swelling and leaf tips are beginning to emerge. Fungicide applications are best made when new leaves are exposed only 1/4 to 3/4 inches; if they are larger, there is a risk of fungicide —burn. Later applications would require a half rate which would be less effective. See U.K. Cooperative Extension publication —Midwest Commercial Small Fruit and Grape Spray Guide 2017 (ID-94) for rates and timing. Carefully inspect bramble plantings; now or very soon may be the time to apply fungicides for managing these cane and stem diseases.

Plant clean, disease-free nursery stock. Cut out all diseased canes, cane "handles," and any infections observed on new plants.

Provide good air movement through the planting by removing weeds and spindly canes.

WINTER DECISIONS FOR HOME FRUIT DISEASE MANAGEMENT

By John Hartman

Primary infections for many fruit crop diseases occur in very early spring. Growers wishing to manage diseases of fruit crops more effectively should plan and act now so that when the rush of spring gardening activities begins in spring, important disease management operations can be implemented. With the rainy spring weather we experienced in recent years in Kentucky, home fruit growers are sure to be aware of the destruction caused by fruit crop disease problems. The following is a checklist of disease management activities backyard fruit growers might be accomplishing now, in winter, and in the coming weeks. Hopefully, this information will be helpful to County Extension Agents working with home garden clientele.

Apples. The diseases of concern in early spring are scab, cedar rust, and fire blight.

- If you are ordering nursery stock, plan on growing disease-resistant apples. Nursery catalogs will indicate varieties that are scab-resistant.
- Prune out old fire blight cankers now, while it is still cold, so new infections won't occur.
- Prune also to thin the tree canopy to allow good air movement and sunlight penetration.

- Remove and destroy fruit mummies left on the tree from last season.
- Remove nearby cedar trees, source of rust diseases, if possible.
- Obtain fixed copper or Bordeaux mixture to apply to the apple twigs and branches just as the buds begin to swell next month.
- Obtain a scab fungicide with ingredients such as mancozeb, captan, myclobutanil, or thiophanate-methyl so that sprays can be applied as green foliage (green tips) is just emerging and repeated periodically throughout the spring months.
- Carefully read fungicide labels before making spray applications.

Stone fruits. The diseases of concern in early spring are peach leaf curl, plum black knot, and eventually brown rot and scab.

- Apply fixed copper or Bordeaux sprays now to prevent peach leaf curl. In some parts of the state, it may be already too late because, with recent warm days, buds may have begun to swell and leaf curl infections may have just begun.
- Prune to thin the tree canopy to allow good air movement and sunlight penetration.
- Prune out any diseased or cankered twigs and branches from the trees.
- Remove and destroy last year's mummified fruit still hanging in the tree or on the ground.
- Prune out black knot disease swellings from plum trees.
- Obtain brown rot and scab fungicides with ingredients such as sulfur, captan, or myclobutanil. Read and understand the chemical labels.

Grapes. The diseases of concern in early spring are black rot, anthracnose, cane and leaf spot, and downy mildew.

- Prune the grape canopy to allow good sunlight penetration and air movement, as well as to maximize fruit production.
- Prune out any diseased, dead, or cankered vines.
- Remove and destroy all of last year's fruit mummies hanging on the vine and lying on the ground.
- Apply lime-sulfur sprays to the dormant vines just as buds begin to swell to prevent anthracnose.
- Obtain fungicides with ingredients such as captan, mancozeb, myclobutanil, or thiophanate-methyl to be used for black rot and cane and leaf spot management.
- Be prepared to apply fungicides as the first green leaves are beginning to appear on the vines and to repeat the applications throughout the spring as called for on the pesticide label.

Brambles. The raspberry and blackberry disease of most concern in the spring are anthracnose and orange rust.

- Prune out dead and winter-injured canes.

- Apply lime-sulfur fungicide to the canes in early spring just as the buds begin to swell, but before green tissue emerges.
- Be prepared to remove and destroy orange-rust infected blackberries and black raspberries. These plants will appear abnormally whitish and spindly in early spring as they emerge from the ground.
- If orange rust is present in the neighborhood, remove and destroy wild blackberries growing in nearby fields and fencerows, if feasible.
- If, because of rainy weather last year, plants died from root rot disease, improve drainage in the garden or grow brambles on raised beds.

Strawberries. The diseases of most concern in spring will be fruit rot diseases.

- Apply straw mulch to the beds between the rows and under the canopy so that fruits will not have to touch the ground.
- Provide adequate spacing of the strawberry plants to provide good sunlight penetration and air movement to help reduce gray mold fruit rot.
- Hand remove dead leaves and stems from the strawberry bed to reduce the presence of the gray mold fungus.
- If sprays, such as captan, are to be used to prevent fruit rot, the sprays need to be applied to the strawberry flowers in early spring.

Blueberries. The diseases of most concern will be twig blights and cankers.

- Prevent twig canker diseases by avoiding stressful growing conditions. Mulch blueberries with organic matter, such as wood chips, and adjust the soil pH if necessary to provide favorable growing conditions.
- Prune out dead and dying twigs and branches from the blueberry plants.
- If, because of wet weather, blueberries are declining and dying due to root rot disease, improve garden soil drainage or grow blueberries on raised beds.

Backyard fruit growers will want to refer to U.K. Cooperative Extension publication I.D. 21, "Insect and Disease Control Program for Home Fruit Plantings Including Organic Alternatives," available at the Bath County Extension Office.

Robert Amburgey

Robert Amburgey

Bath County Extension Agent for Agriculture And Natural Resources Education