Horticulture 2013 Newsletter
No. 15 April 16, 2013

Video of the Week: Herbs for the Kitchen

UPCOMING EVENTS

Horticulture Club Bedding Plant Sale

The Kansas State University Horticulture Club will be hosting its annual Bedding Plant Sale April 19-21. There will be over 30 types of perennials, annuals and herbs. This is a great way for faculty, students and the general public to purchase plant material grown by Kansas State horticulture students. Come early to get the best selection! For any other questions please contact Anna Clary at annac@ksu.edu

April 19 - Kansas State University Gardens 10am-6pm
April 20 - Kansas State University Gardens & Union Plaza 10am-6pm
April 21 - Kansas State University Gardens 10am-4pm

TURFGRASS

Henbit and Chickweed in Lawns

The plant with the little purple flowers that have been showing up in home lawns is called henbit. If you are not sure this is what you have, check the stems. If they are square rather than round, you have henbit. A plant that also is low growing but has round stems and tiny white flowers is chickweed.

Both these plants are winter annuals and start to grow in the fall. They spend the winter as small plants and so most people do not pay much attention to them until they start to flower. Trying to
kill either one at this late stage with a herbicide usually is a waste of time and money. Though plants may be burned back, they will rarely be killed. So what should you do? Remember, these are winter annuals that will die as soon as it starts to get hot. All you can do now is keep them mowed until nature takes its course.

However, you can do something next fall that will help next spring. Henbit and chickweed usually germinate about mid-October. Spraying with 2,4-D, Weed-B-Gon, Weed Free Zone, Weed Out, or Trimec in late October to early November can go a long way toward eliminating these plants the next spring as plants are small and relatively easy to control. Choose a day that is at least 50 degrees F so the young plants are actively growing and will take up the chemical. Spot treating will probably be needed in the spring to catch the few plants that germinate late. Use Weed Free Zone, Speed Zone, Weed Out, Weed-B-Gon, Trimec, or one of the special henbit herbicides early in the spring before they have put on much growth. (Ward Upham)

**Orchard Grass in Tall Fescue Lawns**

Orchard grass often infests tall fescue lawns. Unfortunately, orchard grass is lighter green and faster growing than tall fescue, so it is very visible. Homeowners complain of the light green tufts of grass wherever this weed has become established. Even worse, there are no herbicides that will kill the orchard grass without also killing the turf. About the only good thing about orchard grass is that it is a bunch grass and does not spread.

Orchard grass often comes in as a contaminant on grass seed, especially K-31 tall fescue. Buying good grass seed is the first line of defense against this weed. Orchard grass is a pasture grass and therefore is not found in the “weed seed” portion of the seed label. Rather, orchard grass will be listed as “other crop seed.” Try to buy grass seed that has 0.0% “other crop seed.”

Control options are few and painful. Use glyphosate (Roundup, Killzall Weed and Grass Killer, Kleeraway Systemic Weed and Grass Killer and others) to spot spray orchard grass clumps. Any lawn grasses you hit will be killed, so keep the spots sprayed as small as possible. Wait until the spots have turned brown and then cut out the clumps and replace with a small piece of sod. Large numbers of orchard grass clumps may mean it is more practical to kill the entire lawn and start over.


**ORNAMENTALS**

**Accumulated Stress Taking a Toll on Trees**

We have received reports of evergreen trees in numerous areas of the state dying suddenly.
Probably the most common tree to go down has been blue spruce but pines and even some eastern redcedars are expiring as well. The cause in most of these cases seems to be stress related. Not just stress from recent events but accumulated stress from the last several years. We have had two very hot, dry summers as well as a warm and very dry winter in 2011-2012. Even if we have excellent growing conditions from now on, we still may lose trees, especially in areas where factors other than the weather are stressing trees. For example, most of the redcedar and pine deaths are in windbreaks where competition for water has weakened trees.

If you suspect you have stressed plants, try watering if conditions are dry and outside watering is allowed in your area. Trees should be watered every two weeks. Trees transplanted within the last couple of years should be watered every week. Do not water every day as tree roots need oxygen. Overwatering can be every bit as damaging as underwatering. Water to a depth of 12 to 18 inches, if possible. Though this will not reach all the roots of a tree, it will reach the majority of them. Trees normally have at least 80 percent of their roots in the top foot of soil. Shrubs should be watered every week to a depth of 8 to 12 inches. Check depth of watering by pushing a wooden dowel or metal rod into the soil. It will stop when it hits dry soil. (Ward Upham)

**FRUIT**

**Fruit Bud Damage from Cold Temperatures**

With the cold temperatures last week, gardeners may be wondering at what temperature fruit buds are killed. The following will give you some guidelines but remember that the actual damage is going to be influenced by the weather before the temperature drops. An extended warm spell before the cold snap may result in more damage due to a loss in cold hardiness. Though not listed below, apricots should be similar to peaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apple</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>10% Kill (°F)</th>
<th>90% Kill (°F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silver tip</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green tip</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Half-inch green</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tight cluster</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bloom</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Petal fall</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit set</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pear</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>10% Kill (°F)</th>
<th>90% Kill (°F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swollen bud</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bud burst</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green cluster</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Checking for Fruit Bud Damage

A companion article in this week’s newsletter identified critical temperatures required for damage to fruit buds to occur. For most areas of the state, temperatures would only have been damaging to fruit trees at or near full bloom.

To check for low temperature injury that has already occurred, use a sharp knife or a single edge razor blade and cut buds in half. Remove buds from the tree and make the cut starting at the base.
and cutting upward. If the fruit pistil (see image) in the center is greenish-white to cream color, no damage has been done. However, if the fruit pistil is dark brown or black, it has been killed. Cut a number of buds to find a percentage killed.

Some loss of buds is actually beneficial for peaches and apples. These trees often produce far too much fruit and require thinning for top quality. As a rule, we want an apple and average of every four inches and a peach and average of every six to eight inches on a branch. We can often achieve this with only 10% of the original buds developing fruit. (Ward Upham)

Eliminating Unwanted Fruit From Trees

We have had several calls recently from people asking how to keep trees, such as crabapples and sweetgum, from bearing unwanted fruit that can be messy and hazardous. Crabapples are the easiest to control by applying the common insecticide Sevin (carbaryl) soon after the blossoms have dried on the trees. DO NOT apply Sevin during bloom because it is extremely toxic to bees. Spray trees thoroughly with 2 tablespoons of Sevin per gallon of water. Check the label on the Sevin to make sure this use is present. Stems on the crabapple fruit should turn yellow and wrinkle, and the tiny apples should start to drop in 7 to 10 days. If drop hasn't started in two weeks, a second application may be needed. Sevin remains effective for about 35 days after full bloom, but the fruit will become more difficult to remove as it increases in size.

Florel is sold in many stores as a fruit eliminator. The active ingredient is ethephon, a chemical that releases ethylene, which causes fruit to drop before it sets. According to the label, a foliar application of Florel will reduce or eliminate undesirable fruit development on many ornamental trees and shrubs such as apple, cottonwood, crabapple, elm, flowering pear, horse chestnut, maple, oak, pine, sweetgum, and sycamore. But how well it works and potential damaging effects depend on the dose and temperature. Activity slows if the temperature is below 60 or above 90 degrees F. Because Florel degrades quickly in water, applications should be completed within four hours of mixing. Timing of the application must coincide with full bloom, a stage that requires close observation with many of our trees.

Researchers at K-State's John C. Pair Research Center near Wichita have gotten mixed results using Florel on treated crabapples. With some varieties, fruit was substantially thinned. Others showed no effect. We cannot make firm recommendations on the use of this product without research results on other tree species. (Ward Upham)
Controlling Grassy Weeds in Broadleaf Plants

Most gardeners are familiar with herbicides that can be used to eliminate broadleaves (i.e., dandelions) from grasses (i.e., lawn). They may not be as familiar with herbicides that can take grasses out of broadleaf plants like shrubs. There are two major weed killer types that are used by homeowners to kill grassy weeds in broadleaf plants.

On the commercial side, the trade names for these products are Fusilade and Poast. Homeowner labeling is more diverse. I have seen Fusilade sold under the name of "Grass-B-Gon." Poast is sometimes sold to homeowners under the Poast label but I've seen it more commonly sold as "Hi-Yield Grass Killer" and "Monterey Grass Getter." There may be other trade names, as well. Fortunately, you can identify the product by the common chemical name listed on the label. Fusilade's common chemical name is fluazifop, and Poast's is sethoxydim.

If you decide to use one of these products, read the label carefully. Often, a crop oil must be added to the spray solution for the herbicide to work well. Some grassy weeds are harder to control such as bromegrass and sandbur.

Though both of these products can be used over the top of numerous broadleaf plants (including iris and daylilies), there are some differences in labeling. For example, if you need to control grasses in strawberries, choose Poast because it has a seven-day waiting period before harvest. Fusilade cannot be used within one year of harvest. (Ward Upham)

Contributors: Ward Upham, Extension Associate