

Horticulture 2023 Newsletter

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Video of the Week: [Buffalograss: Fertilizing and Mowing](#)

REMINDERS

- Turn compost pile after it cools
- Deadhead flowers. <https://tinyurl.com/y7vhao7x>
- Remove flower stalks from peonies and iris.
- Fertilize warm-season lawns such as zoysia, bermuda and buffalo.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kansas Turf & Ornamentals Field Day

The Kansas Turf & Ornamentals Field Day will be held Thursday, August 3 at the K-State Research Center in Olathe (35230 W. 135th).

The field day program is designed for all segments of the turf & ornamentals industry - lawn care, athletic fields, golf courses, landscape, nursery, and grounds maintenance. Included on the program are research presentations, problem diagnosis, commercial exhibitors, and equipment displays. There will be time to see current research, talk to the experts and get answers to your questions.

One hour of pesticide recertification credit in both 3A and 3B are available, as well as GCSAA education points.

For a copy of the program and to register to attend, go to <https://www.kansasturfgrassfoundation.com/>

VEGETABLES

New Potatoes



New potatoes are an early harvest of potatoes. They are immature and harvested about 6 to 8 weeks after planting. Check the size of the potatoes by removing the soil from the base of the plant. New potatoes are typically harvested when they are the size of a walnut. To harvest, dig the entire plant taking care not to damage the tubers. Allow the tubers to dry for several hours before gathering them. This will prevent the skin from slipping off the potatoes. Even after this curing process, these young potatoes do not store well for long periods of time. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Don't Over-fertilize Tomatoes



Too much nitrogen on tomato plants may result in vigorous plant growth without much fruit. Plants should be side-dressed with nitrogen three times during the growing season.

The first application should be applied one to two weeks prior to when the first tomato ripens. Two weeks after ripening, it's time for the second application. The third round of fertilizer should be applied one month after the second. Basically, there should be one month of time between each

application.

Common sources of nitrogen-only fertilizers include nitrate of soda, urea and ammonium sulfate. Blood meal contains primarily nitrogen but is not exclusive. Apply one of the following fertilizers at the rate provided:

Nitrate of soda (16-0-0): 2/3 pound (1.5 cups) fertilizer per 30 feet of row

Blood meal (12-1.5-.6): 14 ounces (1.75 cups) fertilizer per 30 feet of row

Urea (46-0-0): 4 ounces (1/2 cup) fertilizer per 30 feet of row

Ammonium Sulfate (21-0-0): 0.5 pounds (1 cup) fertilizer per 30 feet of row

Alternatively, lawn fertilizer, free of weed killer/preventer, can be used at a rate of 1/3 pound (3/4 cup) fertilizer per 30 feet of row. Choose a fertilizer that is about 30% nitrogen (the first number in the set of three). (Cynthia Domenghini)

FRUIT

Fruit Reminders



Maintenance to fruit trees will promote a healthy fruit yield.

*Thin fruit on apple and peach trees to a spacing of 6-8 inches between each fruit. This will improve fruit size and protect the branches from becoming overloaded.

*Remove suckers from the base of fruit trees and grape vines.

*Water as needed. During hot weather, about 1-inch of water per week is recommended.

* "Comb", or position, grapevine shoots to prevent tangling. This promotes more uniform sun exposure which affects the fruit quality and productivity of the plant.

*Follow disease and pest management protocol. For more detail on fruit sprays see our publication, ["Spray Guide for Growing Stone Fruit at Home"](#). (Cynthia Domenghini)

ORNAMENTALS

How Healthy is My Tree?



Determining the health of your trees is largely based on the amount of new growth each year. Observe the tips of the branches that are exposed (not shaded). A tree that grows less than 4 inches from the previous year is likely under stress and considered unhealthy.

Meristems are the part of the tree where new cells are formed and growth takes place. Apical meristems are at the branch tips. Growth here increases the canopy of the tree. New growth from these meristems is often identifiable by the color. The new twig emerging from the bud may be greener but the leaves are often a brighter shade as well. You'll notice the leaves attached directly to these new stems rather than lateral branches. New growth may also look more compressed than growth from previous years.

Though evaluating the amount of growth can help you determine if your tree is healthy, it does not tell you what may be the cause of an unhealthy tree. The effects of stress accumulate year after year. A drought two years ago can have an impact on growth of a recovering tree. The root growth may have been stunted and roots could struggle to take in enough water to support the tree as temperatures rise. When possible, ensure trees are receiving water to a depth of 12 inches every couple of weeks during the summer either from rain or supplemental watering. (Cynthia Domenghini)

TURF

Brown Patch on Tall Fescue



We have been receiving numerous reports of brown patch showing up on tall fescue. This disease is favored by warm night temperatures and extended periods of leaf wetness. If you go outside in the morning and the lawn is covered with dew and the temperature is in the 70s or higher, it means that conditions are getting right for brown patch. However, we have seen brown patch develop when temperatures stay above 60 at night. The fungus is primarily a leaf pathogen and does not attack the roots. During severe outbreaks, the fungus may invade the lower leaf sheaths and crown and kill plants. But in most cases, the turfgrass can recover from brown

patch. This recovery may take two to three weeks, depending on weather.

There is no way to eliminate brown patch from a lawn. It will persist indefinitely in the soil. Therefore, the disease is not carried from one lawn to another. In almost all cases, the limiting factor for brown patch development is the weather, not the amount of fungal inoculum. Although you can't eliminate the fungus, cultural practices – especially irrigation – can help control it. Don't water in the evening; instead, water early in the morning. This will help decrease the number of hours the leaf tissue remains wet and susceptible to infection. The frequency of irrigation is not as important as the time of day you do it. Don't overfertilize and certainly don't fertilize when brown patch is active. Also, don't allow your seeding or overseeding rates to become too high.

Fungicides can be effective in preventing brown patch, but the two most commonly used products (Heritage and ProStar) are expensive and not available in small quantities to the general public. Homeowners do have access to some effective products including triadimefon (Green Light Fung-Away), propiconazole (BioAdvanced Fungus Control for Lawns, Fertilome Liquid Systemic Fungicide II) and myclobutanil (Immunox, F-Stop Lawn & Garden). Of the three, triadimefon may be the fungicide of choice because it protects the turf longer (3 to 5 weeks rather than 2 weeks). But my suggestion is not to use fungicides unless you want to maintain a blemish-free yard and are willing to pay for it. In those cases, you would need to be on a preventative spray program, which is very expensive, rather than waiting for symptoms and applying as a curative. These products do not cure an infection already present but are only effective as a preventative. Applications should begin in mid-June and continue through August. Often tall fescue lawns will recover from brown patch but infections this year seem more severe than usual and may require overseeding this fall. (Ward Upham)

MISCELLANEOUS

Look for Bagworms Now



Bagworms have been sighted already even though most homeowners don't call looking for help with controlling them until late-July into early-August. That's because right now they are small and hard to see. However, they are also much easier to control at this size.

Bagworms overwinter as eggs inside the dead female's bag. Larvae hatch and emerge from the bags mid to late-May in Kansas. The young larvae begin feeding on their host plants right away. It's recommended to wait to spray for bagworms until mid-June to ensure most of the

eggs have hatched. Young bagworms look just like the adult version only much smaller. If you see the empty bags as evidence of bagworms from the previous year on a plant, there are likely young bagworms on the plant this year as well.

Insecticides commonly used for controlling bagworms include:

Acephate (Orthene)

Permethrin (38 Plus Turf, Termite & Ornamental Insect Spray; Eight Vegetable, Fruit & Flower Concentrate; Garden and Farm Insect Control)

Bifenthrin (Bug Blaster II, Bug-B-Gon Max Lawn and Garden Insect Killer)

Lambda-cyhalothrin (Spectracide Triazicide, Bonide Caterpillar Killer)

Spinosad (Conserve; Natural Guard Spinosad; and Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew).

Spinosad is a very effective organic control for bagworms. Thorough coverage of the plant material is essential for good control of bagworms regardless of which product you choose. (Cynthia Domenghini)

Slime Molds



Not a truly a mold, slime mold is categorized in the Protista family. This single-celled organism is commonly found on organic matter such as bark mulch, turfgrass, strawbales, even tree trunks. It resembles a fungi and is often mistakenly identified as such. Colors of slime mold vary to include orange, brown, red, yellow, white and it is very slimy under wet conditions. When the slime mold dries out it create spores that are gray, white or purple. The spores break apart and disperse into the air in search of a new growing environment. Slime mold patches can be small, 4-inches across, up to one foot in

diameter.

Though unsightly, slime mold is not a real threat to your plants. It feeds on bacteria and fungi within the organic matter. On turfgrass slime mold can block the sunlight from the blades of grass inhibiting photosynthesis. Consequently, the leaf blades may turn yellowish in color. Chemical control is not recommended for eliminating slime mold but changing the environmental conditions can be effective. Since slime mold grows best in warm, wet conditions, allow the area to dry out, if possible, by reducing irrigation. Patches of slime mold can also be scooped off the host and discarded. Areas of lawn covered in slime mold can be mowed and the clippings bagged and disposed. (Cynthia Domenghini)

After-Effects of Too Much Rain



Many areas of Kansas have had saturated or near-saturated soils for some time now. Gardeners are likely to assume that watering won't be needed for quite some time after dry weather arrives due to such high soil moisture levels. Actually, watering may be needed much sooner than you expect.

Excessive rain can drive oxygen out of the soil and literally drown roots. Therefore, as we enter hotter, drier weather, the plants with damaged root systems may be very susceptible to a lack of water. Don't forget to check your plants for signs of wilting or leaf scorching and water as needed.

If irrigation is called for, water deeply and infrequently. Usually once per week is sufficient depending on the weather. Soil should be moist but not waterlogged. (Ward Upham)

Inexpensive Method of Watering Trees



In the previous article, we mentioned that excessive rain can drown roots making watering after the weather turns dry very important.. One of the more common means of water watering trees is the use of soaker hoses. Soaker hoses are notorious for non-uniform watering. In other words, you often receive too much water from one part of the hose and not enough from another. On small trees, circling the tree several times with the soaker hose will even out the amount of water applied but this isn't practical for larger trees. On larger trees, hooking both

the beginning and the end of the soaker hose to a Y-adapter helps equalize the pressure and therefore provide a more uniform watering. The specific parts you need are shown in the photo above and include the soaker hose, Y-adapter and female to female connector.

It is also helpful if the Y-adapter has shut off valves so the volume of flow can be controlled at the hose. Too high a flow rate can allow water to run off rather than soak in.

The soaker hose can circle the trunk at a distance within the dripline of the tree but at least ½ the distance to the dripline. The dripline of the tree is outermost reach of the branches. On smaller trees, you may circle the tree several times so that only soil which has tree roots will be watered.

Soil should be wet at least 12 inches deep as 80% of a trees roots are in the top foot of soil. Use a metal rod, wooden dowel, electric fence post or something similar to check depth. Dry soil is much harder to push through than wet and your probe will stop when it hits dry soil. How long it takes water to reach a 12 inch depth varies depending on the rate of water flow and soil. Record the amount of time it takes to reach 12 inches the first time the tree is watered. After that, simply water for that same amount of time. (Ward Upham)

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