FLOWERS

Care for Spring-flowering Bulbs

As spring-flowering bulbs go through the flowering process, keep three care tips in mind:

1. If practical, remove spent flowers with a scissors or a hand pruner. This allows the plant to conserve its energy for bloom the next year rather than using it to produce seed.

2. Be sure to allow foliage to die naturally — it is needed to manufacture food that will be stored in the bulb and used for next year's flowers.

3. Don't fertilize. The roots of these plants start to shut down after flowering. Fertilizer applied at this time is wasted. Instead, fertilize during the fall at the time bulbs are normally planted and again in the spring when new growth pokes out of the ground. (WU)

VEGETABLES

Fertilizing Cole Crops

If you planted cole crops such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower around St. Patrick’s Day, we are near the time when they will need a little fertilizer boost. These plants need to mature before summer heat arrives, so they must grow quickly while the weather is cool. A sidedressing of fertilizer about 3 weeks after transplanting helps plants continue to grow rapidly.

Use fertilizers high in nitrogen for sidedressing such as nitrate of soda or blood meal at the rate of 2 pounds per 100 feet of row. You may also use lawn fertilizers that have close to 30 percent
nitrogen such as a 30-3-4 or 29-5-4 but the rate should be cut in half to 1 pound per 100 feet of row. Do not use lawn fertilizers that have weed killers or preventers. Fertilizer must be watered in if timely rains don’t do that job for you.

We have a sheet available that gives recommendations on how to sidedress specific vegetable crops. It can be found at:
(WU)

Red Plastic Mulch and Tomatoes

Plastic mulches have long been known to provide advantages for vegetable growers including earlier fruiting, increased yields and weed control. Lately, colored mulches have been noted for advantages over traditional black plastic mulch. The color of choice for tomatoes has been red. Normally production of marketable fruit increases when using red mulch instead of black, but the amount of the increase varies depending on weather throughout the year. There may be no increase during years of near-perfect weather, but as much as a 20 percent increase when growing conditions are less favorable. Average expected increase is about 12 percent.

So how do you apply plastic mulch? Commercial growers have a mulch-laying machine that applies the trickle irrigation line and the mulch in one operation. Home gardeners must do this by hand. The first step after soil preparation is to place a trickle line near the center of where the mulch will lay, as the plastic will prevent rainwater or overhead irrigation from reaching the plants. Then construct trenches for the outer 6 inches of the plastic mulch. This allows the center of the bed to be undisturbed with the edges of the mulch draping down into the trench. Fill the trenches to cover the edges of the plastic. This will prevent wind from catching and blowing the mulch. If the soil has been tilled, a hoe is all that is needed to prepare the trenches. (WU)

**TURFGRASS**

**Henbit in Lawns**

The plants with the little purple flowers that are starting to make themselves known in home lawns are 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. Though it actually comes up in the fall, most people do not pay much attention to this weed until it starts to flower. Trying to kill it at this late stage with an herbicide
usually is a waste of time and money. Though the plant may be burned back, it will rarely be killed. So what do we do? Remember, this is a winter annual; it comes up in the fall, matures in the spring and dies as soon as it starts to get hot. All we can do now is keep it mowed until nature takes its course.

However, we can do something next fall that will help next spring. Henbit usually germinates about mid-October. Spraying with 2,4-D, Weed-B-Gon, Weed Free Zone, Weed Out, or Trimec in early November can go a long way toward eliminating henbit next spring. Plants are small during the fall and relatively easy to control. Choose a day that is at least 50 degrees F so the henbit is 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 before the henbit has put on much growth. (WU)

Proper Timing for Crabgrass Preventers

Crabgrass preventers are another name for preemergence herbicides that prevent crabgrass seeds from developing into mature plants. Many people have a somewhat foggy idea of how they work. They don’t actually keep the seed from germinating; rather, the very young germinating plant is killed. Crabgrass preventers are just that – preventers. With few exceptions they will have no effect on existing crabgrass plants. Therefore, preventers have to be applied before crabgrass germinates. Additionally, they don’t last forever once applied to the soil. Microorganisms and natural processes begin to gradually break them down soon after they are applied. Therefore, if some products are applied too early, they may have lost much of their strength by the time they are needed. Most crabgrass preventers are fairly ineffective after about 60 days, although there is considerable variation among products. (Dimension and Barricade last longer. See below.)

For most of Kansas, crabgrass typically begins to germinate around May 1, or a little later. Therefore, April 15 is a good target date for applying the preventer because it gives the active ingredients time to evenly disperse in the soil before crabgrass germination starts. The April 15 target works well for most of the state, however for southeast Kansas April 1 is more appropriate, and for northwest Kansas May 1 is best. Additionally, weather varies from one spring to the next, and with it the timing of crabgrass germination. For this reason it is often better to base timing on the bloom of ornamental plants. The Eastern redbud tree is a good choice for this purpose. When the trees in your area are approaching full-bloom, apply crabgrass preventer. A follow-up application will be needed about 8 weeks later unless you are using Dimension or Barricade.

Dimension and Barricade are the only two products that will give season-long control of crabgrass from a single application. In fact, they can be applied much earlier than April 15 and still will have sufficient residual strength to last the season. Barricade can even be applied in the
fall for crabgrass control the next season. Dimension can be applied as early as March 1. Because of the added flexibility in timing, these products are favorites of lawn care companies who have many customers to service in the spring.

Though Dimension cannot be applied as early as Barricade, it is the herbicide of choice if you must apply later than recommended. It is the exception to the rule that preemergence herbicides do not kill existing weeds. Dimension can kill crabgrass as long as it is young (2 to 3 leaf stage). Dimension is also the best choice if treating a lawn that was planted late last fall. Normally we recommend not using a preemergence herbicide unless the lawn has been mowed 2 to 4 times. However, Dimension is kind to young tall fescue, perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass seedlings and can be applied as early as two weeks after the first sign of germination. Therefore, lawns established in the fall can be safely treated with Dimension the following spring even if they have not been mowed.

Note that products that contain Dimension and Barricade may use the common name rather than the trade name. The common chemical name for Dimension is dithiopyr and for Barricade is prodiamine. Remember, when using any pesticide, read the label and follow instructions carefully. (WU)

**FRUIT**

**New Guide for Home Fruit**

An excellent new resource for home fruit production is now available. It is called the Midwest Home Fruit Production Guide. The content is available online here: [http://ohioline.osu.edu/b940/index.html](http://ohioline.osu.edu/b940/index.html)

You can access the information by clicking on the pdfs, or printed copies are available for $9.50. At the moment, printed copies are on backorder, but if you want to check back later, the ordering site is here: [http://estore.osu-extension.org/](http://estore.osu-extension.org/)

Search for it either by the book name or by its product code, 940.

The book is sturdy, spiral-bound, and full color. There are 148 pages, with lots of photos and diagrams. It covers a range of fruits (apples, pears, apricots, peaches, strawberries, brambles, grapes, and more). Topics include selecting varieties, choosing the planting site, preparing soil, how to plant, how to fertilize, and how to irrigate. In addition to those general topics the guide covers insect, disease, and weed management. This book is suitable for backyard growers, small-scale commercial growers, Master Gardeners, county agents, and anyone interested in fruit production. (MK)
PESTS

Emerald Ash Borer

To date, emerald ash borers have not been recorded in Kansas. The closest presence is 280 miles east in Greenville, Mo., where they were first detected in 2008. Missouri’s 2009 statewide trapping project conducted at 64 high-risk sites in 47 counties resulted in negative recordings from those sites. Intensive trapping within an 8-mile radius around the original site resulted in no new finds for 2009.

Speculation is that emerald ash borers were introduced into North America (possibly as early as the mid to late 1980s) via wood used in shipping crates and pallets. The current EAB distribution map shows infestations adjacent to navigable waterways. Inland infestations have been attributed to dispersal through shipments of infested nursery stock, lumber, and firewood.

Although nursery stock and lumber shipments can be regulated, introduction of the borer through unregulated firewood transport is of concern in Kansas. This is the rationale for trapping at high-risk sites such as rest stops along major transportation corridors, at campgrounds, raceways, nurseries, forest debris dumps, pallet re-manufacturing sites, and sawmills.

To date, emerald ash borers have not been documented in Kansas. Those encountering other metallic green beetles may think they have found an emerald ash borer, but native beetles are relatively large (5/8-inch long and ¼-inch wide) compared to the emerald ash borer, which is barely ½-inch long and 1/8 inch wide.

There is not much we can do to stave off possible introduction into Kansas, but there is little reason to begin preventative treatments against EAB on ash trees at this time. In areas where EAB become established, consider initiating preventative treatments when known EAB infestations are within 15 miles of your ash tree. For now the best thing to do is pay attention to status/distribution of the emerald ash borer in North America. It may be years before they reach Kansas. (RB)

Editor’s Note: To see this article in its entirety, as well as additional photos, go to: http://www.entomology.ksu.edu/Doc.aspx?id=4739
Indianmeal Moths in Homes

The Insect Diagnostic Lab has received multiple samples of a common household pest, the Indianmeal moth, Plodia interpunctella, in the last few weeks. In most cases, homeowners do not realize they have an infestation until they see the small, rather unique looking moths flying around the home, especially near lights (see photo). However, it is the larvae that are the damaging stage. These small, white to greenish or pinkish caterpillars attack a wide range of products found in the home. This includes cereal, cereal products, dried fruits, dehydrated vegetables, nuts, chocolate, candies, and other confections. As the Indianmeal moth larvae reach maturity they may wander far from the original food source to pupate, spinning a web, and leaving behind a silken train wherever they crawl. These silken trails and casings may be found in the corners of cabinets and pantries, under canned goods, or in other areas near the source of the infestation.

Control of the Indianmeal moth involves finding the source of the infestation and thoroughly cleaning the area. Treat infested or food suspected of being infested by freezing to 0°F for 3 days (larger items may take longer to cool to the center and may require 7 days) or heating to 150°F for 20 minutes. Clean pantry shelves and seal all cracks and crevices that may collect food particles. To avoid future infestations by this insect, avoid letting susceptible products sit unused and unprotected for long periods. If a product is going to be around for awhile, heat-or cold-treat these items and then store in tightly sealed containers such as plastic snap-lock containers.

For information on this and other stored-product pests visit:

(RO)NAMENTALS

Speaking of Pine Diseases

Now is a really good time to check for Dothistroma Needle Blight on Austrian, Ponderosa and Mugo pine trees. A pine sample from south central Kansas just came into the K-State Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab with classic symptoms. This disease tends to show up in crowded, mature pine plantings. The key is crowded plantings that lead to poor air circulation. Wet weather and poor air circulation all lead to increased disease severity. The last few years have been ideal for this disease.
If you are trying to sort out winter damage from Dothistroma needle blight, the first thing to do is to look into the bottom of the tree. Dothistroma causes needle shedding and tends to be more severe in the bottom of the tree. Essentially when you look into the bottom of the tree, the interior needles are gone and all of the lower limbs tend to be bare. Next take a look at the foliage. The needles will have scattered spotting and a half needle scorch. The outer needle tip will be brown and the inner portion of the needle will be green. Each needle will be affected in a different location.

You can contrast this with winter burn, which can also produce a half needle scorch but will always burn all of the needles back in exactly the same location. Plus, the damage tends to be on the outermost foliage.

The last thing to look for is raised dark fruiting bodies (acervuli) on affected needles. This is diagnostic sign for the disease. You may need a magnifying glass or 10X hand lens to see them, although when they are fully mature they are visible with the naked eye. The fungal fruiting bodies don’t start developing until late December or January, so now is a good time to look for them. If you don’t initially see them you can put the suspect needles in a Ziploc bag with a wet paper towel. The high humidity will help the fruiting bodies pop out.

Dothistroma needle blight and winter damage can look very similar. If you are going to spend money to treat for the Dothistroma needle blight disease then it is a good idea to confirm that the disease is present. Samples can also be sent to the K-State Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab at the following address. For more information on managing this problem see the pine disease fact sheet at the following Web link.


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To view Upcoming Events: http://tinyurl.com/fswqe

Horticulture 2010 E-mail Subscription

For questions or further information contact: Hort WebMeister.

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