Video of the Week: Attracting Birds to the Backyard

ORNAMENTALS

Pine Wilt and ODC Chitosan

In December I received a few questions about a product called ODC Chitosan. Our KSU entomologist Dr. Ray Cloyd wrote an article about this product last spring that we ran in this blog. You can find it here: 


Go to that link, then scroll down to the March 26th entry. Click there, then you'll have to scroll a little bit to find the article. (MK)

Bad Pruning is an Expensive Way to Save Money

http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/ac07d23d#/ac07d23d/22

The article above, from Tree Care Industry Magazine, discusses some good intentions gone wrong with some decisions about municipal tree trimming. (MK)
Now is a Good Time to Design Your Landscape

The dark, cold days of winter are a good time to dream and plan for the upcoming growing season. Have you always wanted to landscape your home but didn’t know where to start? We offer a number of publications available to help you accomplish your dream. This collection includes everything from general landscaping publications such as “Residential Landscape Design,” to specific works such as “Energy Efficient Landscaping,” “Landscaping the Farmstead,” “Naturalistic Landscaping” and “Low-Maintenance Landscaping.”

You can download printed publications free of charge from [http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=600](http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=600) or request printed copies from your local K-State Research and Extension office. There may be a small charge for printed copies of larger publications. If you need to know how to contact your local extension office, go to [http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/Map.aspx](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/Map.aspx) and mouse over your county. (WU)

### MISCELLANEOUS

#### Beekeeping for Beginners Course through Penn State

Penn State Cooperative Extension is offering a virtual beekeeping course via webinar. Webinars are web-based courses that provide training through the Internet. Presentations are viewed through your home computer with audio provided through the computer’s speakers. This yearlong course provides all the information needed to help new beekeepers manage honeybees.

Tom Butzler of Penn State, provides the following details.

The Beekeeping for Beginners will include the following:

1. A seven-part live webinar series (all sessions will be recorded and available until December 31, 2011)
2. Virtual beekeeping field day
3. Accessibility to instructors through virtual office hours and discussion forums
The registration fee for the one-year Beekeeping for Beginners is $150. Registration and agenda information can be found at: [http://clinton.extension.psu.edu/Hort/webinar/11Beekeeping.htm](http://clinton.extension.psu.edu/Hort/webinar/11Beekeeping.htm)

**Bird Feeding**

Severe winter weather is not only hard on people but can be a life and death struggle for birds. Though birds require water and shelter, food is often the resource most lacking during cold weather.

Many different bird food mixes are available as various species often prefer different grains. However, there is one seed that has more “universal” appeal than any other: black oil sunflower. Therefore, if you are new to the bird-feeding game, make sure there is a high percentage of this seed in your mix. White proso millet is second in popularity and is the favorite of dark-eyed juncos and other sparrows as well as the red-winged blackbird.

As you become more interested in bird feeding, you may want to use more than one feeder to attract specific species of birds. Following is a list of bird species with the grains they prefer.

- Cardinal, evening grosbeak and most finch species -- sunflower seeds, all types.
- Rufous-sided towhee -- white proso millet
- Dark-eyed junco -- white and red proso millet, canary seed, fine cracked corn.
- Many sparrow species -- white and red proso millet.
- Bluejay -- peanut kernels and sunflower seeds of all types.
- Chickadee and tufted titmouse -- peanut kernels, oil (black) and black-striped sunflower seeds.
- Red-breasted nuthatch -- oil (black) and black-striped sunflower seeds.
- Brown thrasher -- hulled and black-striped sunflower seeds.
- Red-winged blackbird -- white and red proso millet plus German (golden) millet.
- Mourning dove -- oil (black) sunflower seeds, white and red proso plus German (golden) millet.

Extended cold periods can also make water unavailable. A heated birdbath can be a tremendous draw for birds during times when all other water is frozen. Energy use is usually less than what most people expect IF the heater has a built-in thermostat.

If you would like more detailed information, the University of Maine has an excellent publication on the basics of bird feeding at: [http://extension.umaine.edu/publications/7124e/](http://extension.umaine.edu/publications/7124e/)

(WU)
Bringing Houseplants Down to Size

We sometimes receive calls from gardeners who wish to donate houseplants that have outgrown their location. In most cases, we don’t have room to accept plants and suggest that people bring them down to size by air-layering. Air-layering is a process where a branch is encouraged to form roots while still attached to the parent plant. After rooting, the original plant is discarded and the newly rooted one is potted as a replacement. Though this propagation technique cannot be used on all houseplants, it does work well on many that tend to outgrow their boundaries including croton, dracaena, dieffenbachia, Norfolk Island pine, rubber plant and schefflera.

It is best to choose wood that is about 1 year old. Older or more immature wood often roots poorly, if at all. Any place on the stem that is of the proper maturity can be used, but a convenient location is often about 12 inches from the tip. Following are the steps required for air-layering:

- Leaves should be removed around the area to be air-layered.
- Wound the stem. This can be done by making a slanting cut upward, an inch or more in length and halfway through the stem. Place a portion of a toothpick in the cut so it cannot close and heal. If the stem is seriously weakened, use a stick “splint” to prevent breakage.
  Another method that works well is to strip the bark completely around the stem in a band one-half to one inch wide.
- Apply rooting hormone to the wounded surface of the cut or the stripped portion of the branch.
- Pack a baseball-sized wad of moist, unmilled sphagnum peat moss around the wounded area so it forms a ball. This is where new roots will form. It is important to use the long, stringy unmilled peat moss rather than the more common milled material so peat moss does not fall away from the stem when released. Even unmilled peat moss may need to be secured with string to keep it in place.
- Wrap the ball of sphagnum peat moss with clear plastic wrap. Be sure to use enough wrap so that the plastic overlaps and prevents the ball from drying out. Secure the top and bottom edges of the wrap closed with electrical tape string or other convenient fasteners.
  Roots may appear in as little as a month though it may take much longer for the plant to be ready for transplanting. Check periodically to be sure peat moss remains moist. Water if needed. When roots have filled the peat moss, the plant is ready to be severed from the parent and transplanted. (WU)

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To view Upcoming Events: [http://tinyurl.com/fswqe](http://tinyurl.com/fswqe)

Horticulture 2011  E-mail Subscription
For questions or further information contact: Hort WebMeister.

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