FRUIT

Storing Apples

You can enjoy apples from January to June with the right conditions. Some apple cultivars can be stored for longer periods than others. Some cultivars will stay in firm and crisp for about 6 to 8 months with good storage. The approximate lengths of time cultivars will keep well under refrigeration are as follows:

- Wealthy: 60 days
- Paulared: 90 days
- Gala: 120 days
- Jonathan: 120 days
- Grimes Golden: 120 days
- Honeycrisp: 140 days
- Golden Delicious: 150 days
- Empire: 150 days
- Delicios: 160 days
- Braeburn: 180 days
- Idared: 200 days
- Rome Beauty: 220 days
- Winesap: 220 days
- Fuji: 240 days
- Granny Smith: 240 days
- Arkansas Black: 240 days

The condition of the apples and how they are stored will strongly influence the storage period. Some guidelines to help assure good quality and maximum storage life of apples include:

* Store only the best quality.
* Pick as they are first maturing.
* Avoid skin breaks, disease or insect damage, and bruises on individual fruit.
* Store in a plastic bag to help retain moisture in the apples. The bags of apples may be stored in boxes to prevent bruising if they must be stacked or moved from time to time.
* Refrigerate at about 35 degrees F. An extra refrigerator works well.
* Sort about every 30 to 40 days to remove fruit that may be beginning to rot. (WU)
VEGETABLES

Asparagus and Rhubarb in the Autumn Season

Harvest is long past but now is the time asparagus and rhubarb plants build up needed reserves for the next year. Be sure to water during dry weather and keep plants weed free. Foliage should be left until all green is gone. It can then be removed or left for the winter to help collect snow. (WU)

FLOWERS

Spring-flowering Plants Blooming Now

Whenever we have a summer that puts a lot of stress on plants, bloom may appear on ornamentals that normally flower in the spring. We have noticed flowering on redbud, ornamental pear and crabapple recently. Lilac may also flower given more time. Fall flowering of plants is normally sparse and does not appreciably affect the amount of bloom the following spring. (WU)

ORNAMENTALS

Emerald Ash Borer Confirmed in Kansas

Emerald Ash Borer was confirmed in Wyandotte County, Kansas on August 29 and quarantine has been established for that county. Wyandotte County contains a portion of Kansas City. The press release announcing the confirmation contains the following paragraph.

“Emerald ash borer, which is a pest of ash trees that is native to Asia, was first discovered in North America near Detroit, Mich., in summer 2002. Since that time, the pest has killed millions of ash trees in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Wisconsin, Missouri, Minnesota, Kentucky, New York, Iowa, Tennessee and Connecticut. Financially, the
United States risks an economic loss of $20 billion to $60 billion because of this pest.”


Missouri has had Emerald Ash Borer for a couple of years and has developed an excellent resource titled “Emerald Ash Borer CSI.” It is viewable at http://extension.missouri.edu/emeraldashborer/pdf/EABCSI.pdf However, do not report suspected sightings to the number on the brochure but rather the Kansas Department of Agriculture at (785) 862-2180 or at ppwc@kda.ks.gov. (WU)

It's Pine Wilt Time Again

This time of year we see an increase in pine wilt symptoms, and this year is no exception. Though sometimes detected in white pine and Loblolly pine, Scots pine, and to a lesser extent, Austrian pine, are the primary hosts. Needles on affected trees initially turn a dull gray-green. In most cases, the foliage on the entire tree is affected at the same time, although sometimes you will see individual branches affected first. In contrast, the Diplodia tip blight disease most often causes the tips of individual branches to turn tan to brown. As pine wilt progresses, the needles turn from dull green to brown and remain attached to the tree. The color change normally occurs within a couple of weeks but occasionally may be stretched out over several months. Eventually, the tree dies. This year, we may see pines appear to die from pine wilt but may simply succumb to environmental stress. Regardless, any tree in which the twigs become brittle, is dead.

Trees with pine wilt cannot be saved. Any tree suspected of having this disease should be cut at ground level and removed from the site. Do not save the wood for firewood because it serves as a breeding ground for the pine sawyer insect. Diseased trees may be chipped, but I advise composting the chips for several months before using them in the landscape.

Currently, there are no chemical controls that will cure pine wilt in an already infected tree. However, we do have a couple of products that are partially effective as preventative injections. Greyhound and Pinetect both resulted in an 80 to 90 percent survival rate as opposed to 40 to 50 percent in untreated trees. (WU)

MISCELLANEOUS

Are Acorns Edible?
If you have an oak tree, you have probably noticed the acorns they produce. They usually don't last long once they drop because they are a favorite food of various wildlife species including squirrels and deer. But they are not as popular with people as some of our other native nuts such as walnut. Although all acorns are edible, some are better than others. Many are quite bitter due to high levels of tannin. The level of tannin in the acorn meat varies with the oak species. Some species have acorns that have naturally sweeter meats than others. Oak species can be split into two groups: white oaks and red oaks. White oaks usually have acorn meats with a lower tannin content than red oaks and are sweeter. Individual oak trees usually can be placed in one of these two groups by looking at specific characteristics. White oaks tend to have leaves with rounded lobes rather than the bristly points normally found with red oaks. Also, red oaks typically have deeply ridged, dark-colored bark as opposed to the grayish-brown, scaly bark of white oaks. Examples of white oaks include bur, white, English, chinkapin, and post oak. Red oaks include pin, red, black and Shumard oak.

Although the white oaks tend to have sweeter acorn meats than the reds, all oaks may have to be treated to leach out some of the tannin. To do this, place shelled acorns in a saucepan and cover them with water. Bring the water to a boil. Change the water when it becomes yellow with tannin. Repeat until the water remains clear. After the tannins have been removed, drain the water and place the meats on a cookie sheet and dry slowly in the oven on low heat. Taste test to make sure the tannins have been removed and the nuts are sweet. (WU)

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